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June 2000 #7

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Why Nine Inch Nails and Other Hot Bands Write Music for PC Games

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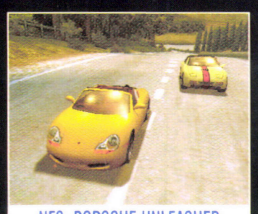
Star Wars Meets EverQuest
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"A wildly original game world, and some of the most frenetic action seen to date."
–NextGen Magazine, February 2000

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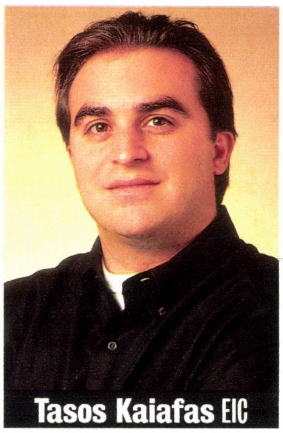
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Team Talk

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A lot more musicians are hooking up with game developers these days for an interesting reason: They like games.



Tasos Kaiafas EIC

I confess. I'm one of those people who usually turns off game music before hearing it. It's not always because I don't like the music. It's usually because it's too distracting (and I don't like it). If I'm playing a seriously competitive racing game, I don't want to hear some lousy techno track. I want to hear the engine revs and screeching tires. (Besides, I really can't stand techno.)

Sometimes I leave the music on if it truly enhances the experience. LucasArts' 1993 classic *X-Wing* was one of the early pioneers in dynamic music. Who can forget how that menacing Empire music would play when TIE Fighters approached? Bum-bum-bum, bum-ba-bum, bum-ba-bum. Man, that got your heart pumping!

Of course, LucasArts had *Star Wars* movies to mimic and their great music to use. But today a lot more game developers see the importance of game music and are turning to professional musicians to contribute their talents. Oftentimes the guys on the development team are just fans of a particular band and think it would be cool to get them for the music.

But a lot more musicians are hooking up with game developers these days for an interesting reason: They like games. That's what nine inch nails' Trent Reznor did. He was into *Castle Wolfenstein* and *Doom* so much that he got in touch with id Software to do the audio for *Quake*. In "Pretty Quake Machine" on page 54 in this issue, Reznor talks about his five-year hiatus from music and how he uses games to help his creativity.

Other musicians, such as Fear Factory, Garbage, David Bowie, BT, and Cypress Hill, are finding new and creative ways to express their music through games. Did you know game music was even included in the Grammy awards this year? Check out "Now Hear This" on page 48 to find out more. Also, don't miss our interviews with Vitamin C, Mötley Crüe, and Powerman 5000 frontman Spider One.

I guess PC games really do rock. Looks like I'm gonna have to start leaving the music on when I play.

Meet the Editorial Team

Joe Vallina



Deputy EIC

Moan, moan, bitch, grumble. Moan, moan, bitch, grumble. Moan, moan, bitch, grumble. Moan, moan, bitch, grumble. Moan, moan, bitch, grumble. Moan, moan, bitch, grumble.

Gary Eng Walk



Senior Editor

Gary thinks New York pizza is better than the "bread with tomato sauce and cheese on it" we get out here in San Francisco. Chicagoans can chime in at ipcgletters@incite.com.

Darren Gladstone



Senior Editor

Even though Darren has a boxed copy of *Messiah* on his bookshelf, he's still waiting for the "real one to get here." His rabbi keeps telling him not to hold his breath, but he just won't listen.

Steve Klett



Senior Editor

Steve was recently picked up by the Humane Society for mistreating his poor little dog Bailey with *Soldier of Fortune*. Write him at his new email: newfish@attica.gov.

William O'Neal



Senior Editor

Wil scored brownie points with Deputy EIC Joe by giving him a shirt that says "I love your mom" in big, bold letters. He's on vacation now in Uganda. Some sort of religious camp, we think.

Dave Rees



Multimedia Editor

Dave has a 6-inch scar that goes along the side of his head. He's currently trying to think up a good story about it to tell the ladies. Send your best yarn to drees@incite.com.

Paul Semel



Entertainment Editor

In addition to writing for *incite*, Paul writes a column for *Bikini* magazine in which he – get this – *gets to review beer*. And we thought playing games for a living was cool.

Di Luo



Editorial Assistant

Di's new nickname, in conjunction with the arrival of *Messiah*, is Di-sus. Get it? "Dee-zus"? Like "Gee-zus"? Forget it. He's an atheist anyway.

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Music in Games 48
More hot bands are doing game music than ever before. What's the deal?

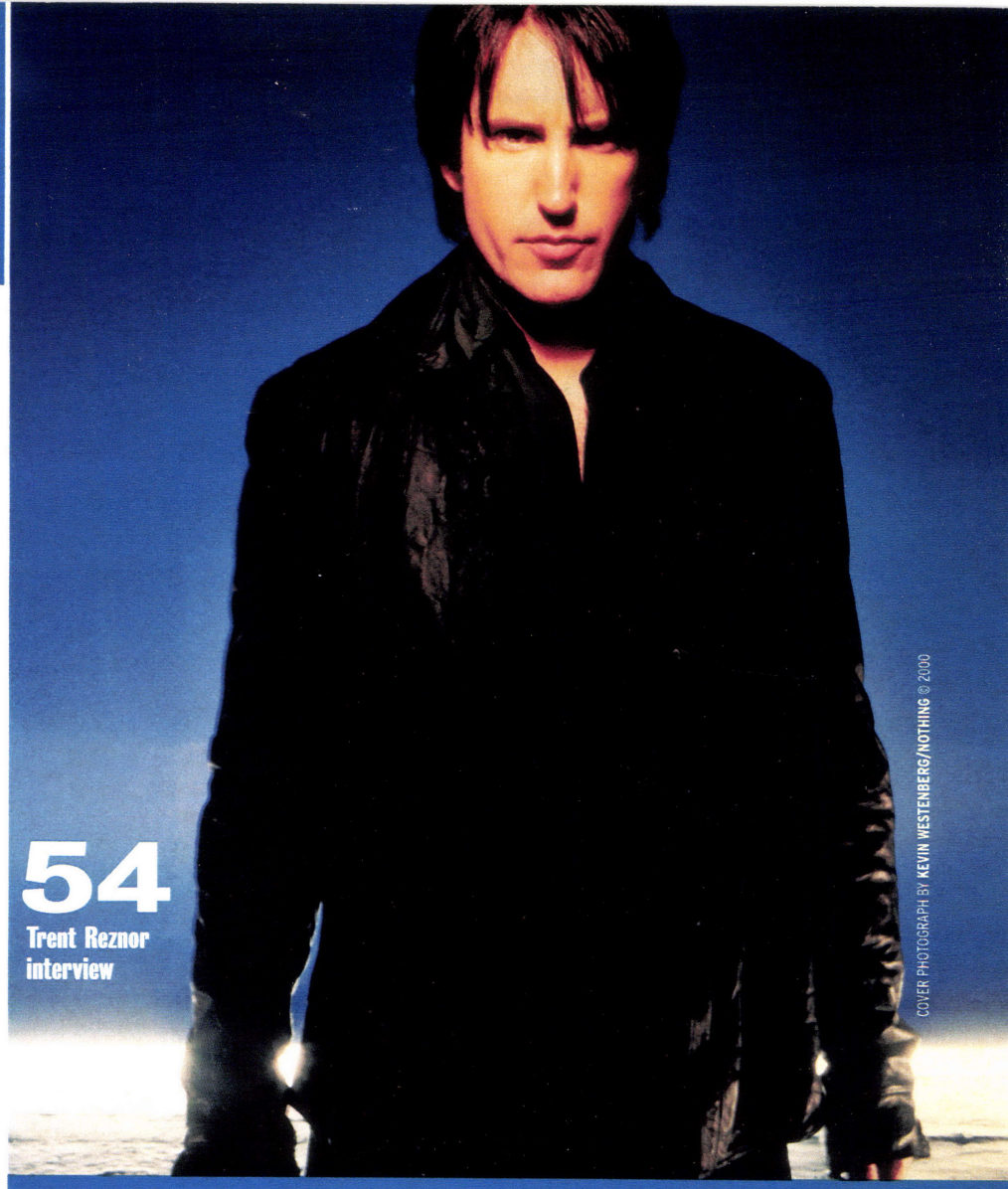
Trent Reznor 54
He did the music for the first *Quake*, and he games like a madman. Now what's he up to?

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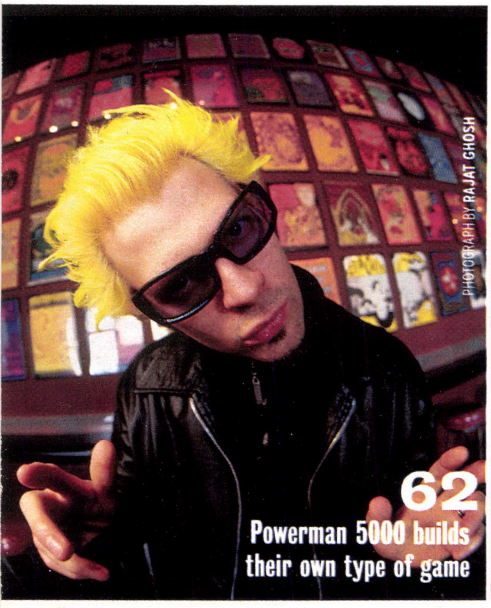
Dave Ruby 76
Our favorite cherub gives us the goods on his new show and what he thinks of *Messiah*.



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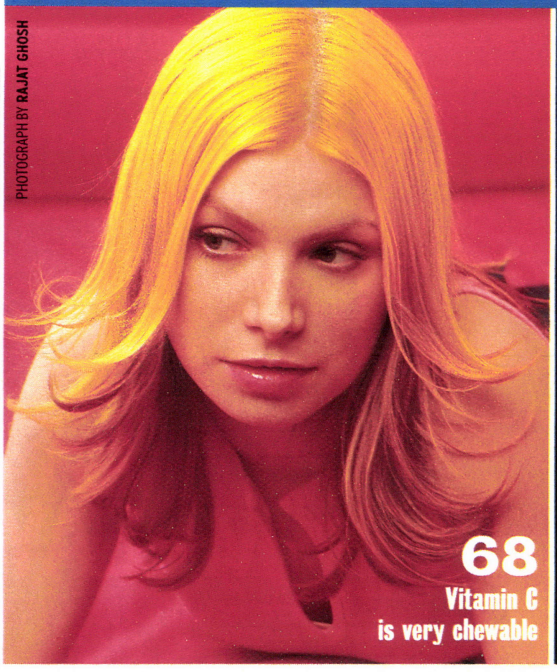
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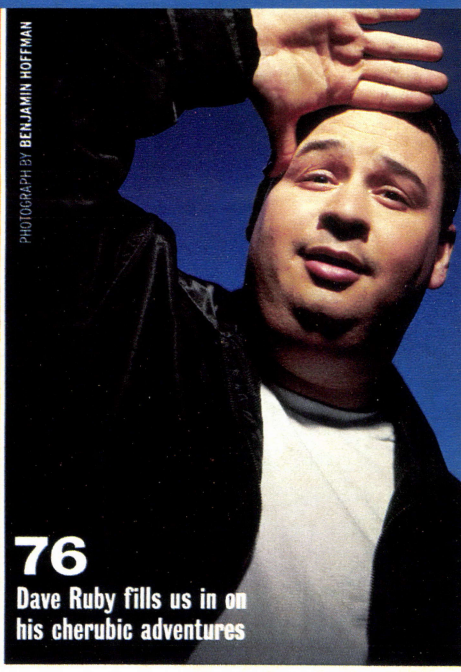
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PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJAT GHOSH

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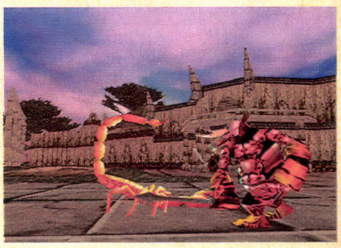
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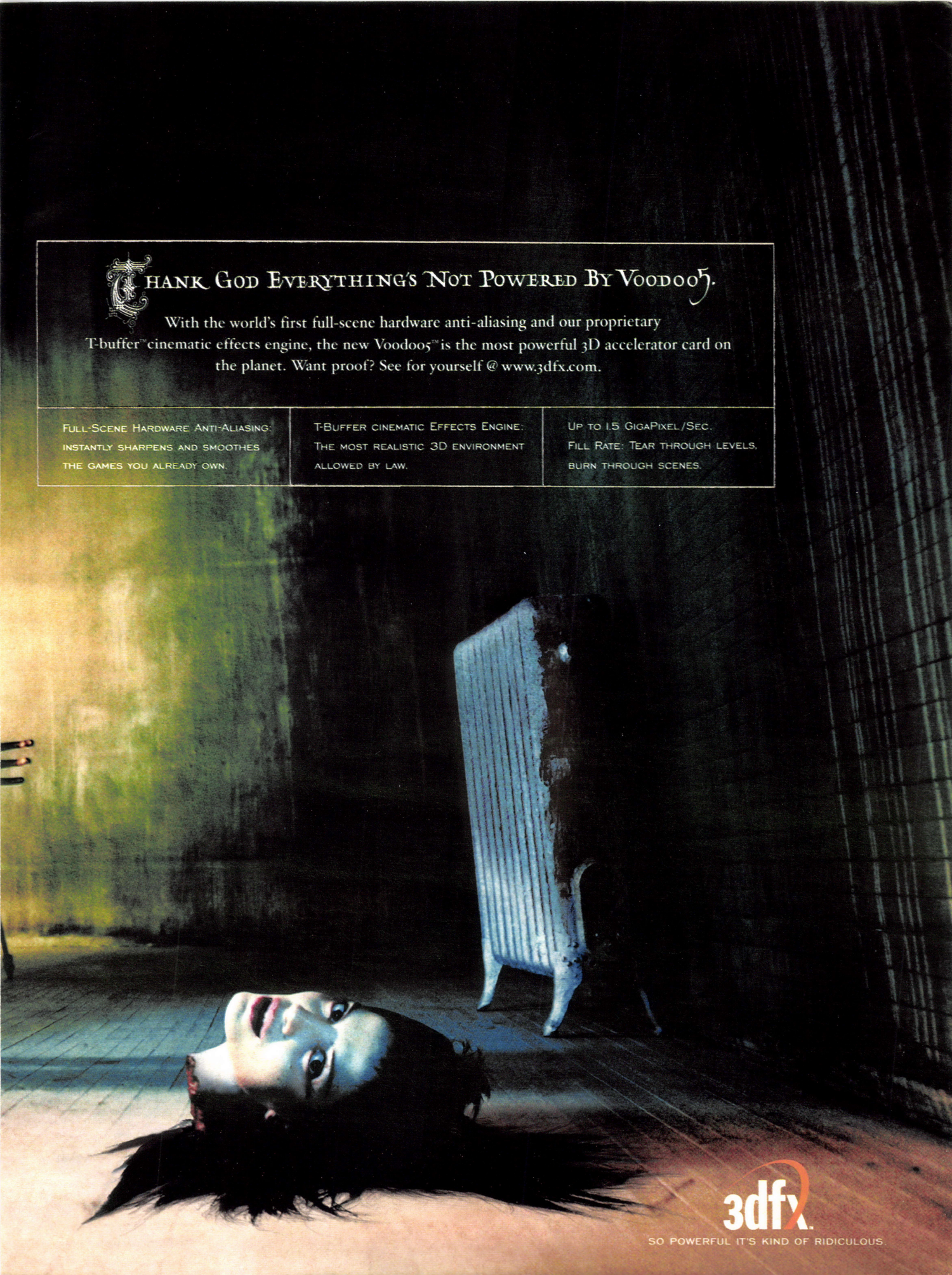
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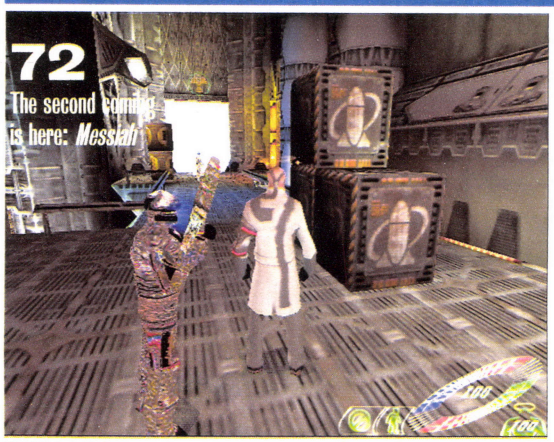
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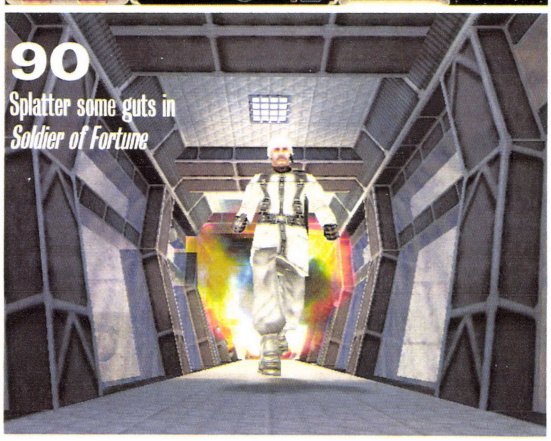




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ON THE incite CD-ROM

This month we're proud to bring you more hot games and exclusive videos you've come to depend on. Jump into the most expansive terrain this side of *Halo* and take a ride on a ground-based scout vehicle in our massive exclusive *Tribes 2* video. Hop over to our games department and become an instant musician with just a few clicks in our exclusive *MTV Music Generator* demo.

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PLAYABLE GAMES

Sammy Sosa High Heat 2001

Just in time for this year's season, 3DO brings us the best baseball game ever made for the PC.

Earth 2150

The Earth is on a crash course toward the sun, and a massive three-way war erupts. Can you dominate Earth's resources and escape to Mars before the blue planet turns orange?

MTV Music Generator

This form of interactive entertainment is about to turn you into a musician.

Trophy Bass Fishing 4

Chill out and spend a day gliding atop Lake Marion, South Carolina, where the bass and the catfish play.

Slave Zero Full Game

Install and play the full game for three hours! This is not a demo, folks. Order more time or purchase the game through NetActive's interface.

VIDEOS

Tribes 2

If you thought Tribes was too far ahead of its time, take a look at its next incarnation and recognize that technology is traveling at the speed of light.

Baldur's Gate II

Step into a glimpse of the next chapter in the best *Dungeons and Dragons* PC game series.

Vitamin C

Who's orange and red, sassy, and can dance with the best of them? The utterly chewable Vitamin C!

The X-Box

Sure, Bill Gates talked a lot about what the X-Box will be capable of, but this video shows you.

TOOLBOX

Tweaks

The ultimate collection is back, but stay tuned for next issue, when we bring you all-new tweaks.

Drivers, Patches, Gamespy

Each issue of *incite PC Gaming* includes various drivers and the most recent patches.

Having problems with your CD-ROM? Email us at cdsupport@incitepcgaming.com.

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8 The Big Story

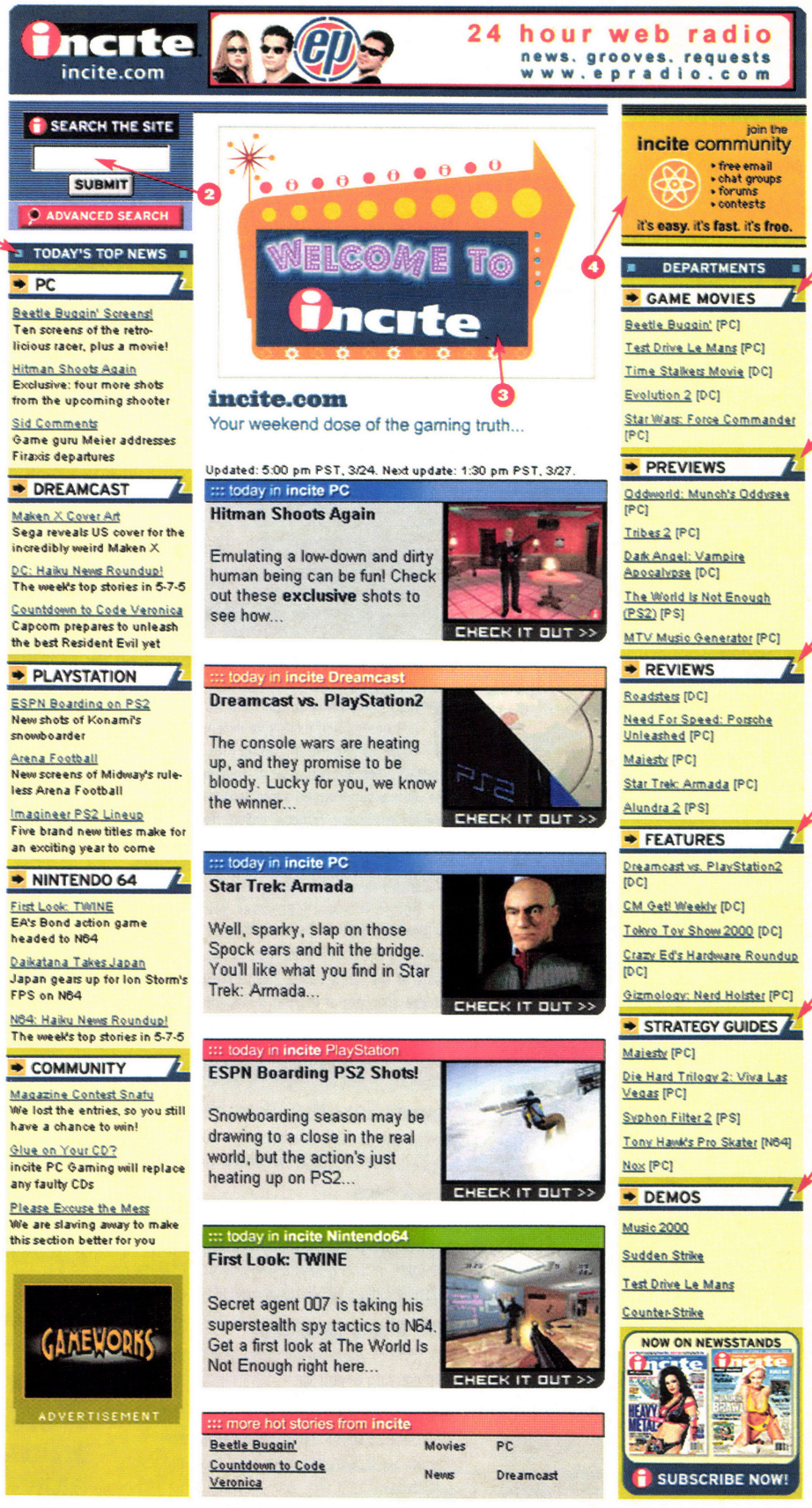
Dig into our multimedia-rich **Features** section for more on the games you love, the people who create them, and the best ways to enjoy them.

9 Helping Hand

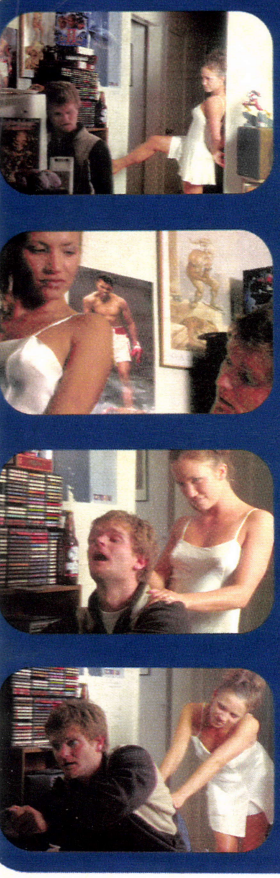
Check out our **Strategy Guides** section for all the latest codes, cheats, and strategy tips.

10 Take It for a Test Run

Not sure if *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* is the game for you? **Download** the demo here.



WE UNDERSTAND...





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LETTERS FROM READERS

To Voodoo or Not to Voodoo

I really enjoy your magazine, and I like the game reviews. I have been searching for the right 3D card and I'm not quite sure what to buy. I have a Pentium 200MHz and plenty of memory. I'm the kind of person who likes really good graphics. I was thinking of buying a Voodoo3. Is this a good idea? Thanks for the help and your time and good luck with your magazine.

Brandon Johnson
Wichita, KS

You probably can't go wrong with a Voodoo3 at this point, Brandon. But if you wait for a few months until the Voodoo4 releases, you should be able to pick up a Voodoo3 at a bargain price. –Ed.



Damn, You Guys Are Funny

In answer to your question on page 131, the picture, I believe, is Julie Strain's breast. P.S. My name is Ben and I am a proud homosexual and I live in St. Albert, Alberta, Canada. Why I tell you this I am unsure.

Ben
Via the Internet

Oh, this was tricky. Not. It's a closeup of Julie Strain's hooters. I should know, I'm a Julie too.

Stephen Doggett
Via the Internet

Okay... Stephen. –Ed.

If I'm not mistaken, I believe that would be a right breast, possibly the same one shown with its partner on page 69 belonging to Julie Strain.

Steven Hambacher
Via the Internet

It would be a picture of Julie Strain's boob on page 69 (coincidence?) Great magazine, just subscribed! Thanks.

Jeremy Wheeler
Brownstown, IN

In response to the "What The Hell" part in the back of this month's magazine, I would have to say that is Julie Strain's chest. And lovely it is :) The picture is taken from the full body picture on page 69 (Hmmm... odd number, wouldn't you say?)

Josh
a.k.a. Cryptech
Via the Internet



WHAT THE HELL? **We can't fool you guys. You know a boob when you see it.**

I recently picked up this month's copy of *incite PC Gaming* and saw the question on the bottom of page 131 about "what the hell" the picture is. It is a picture of Julie Strain's left tit (or breast if you prefer) featured on page 69 (coincidence? I don't think so) on the far right. Could I have a free subscription? Just kidding.

Joel
Via the Internet

Lots of readers thought we had an ulterior motive for putting the lovely Julie on page 69. We have no idea what you're talking about. –Ed.

The picture on the last page of the April 2000 issue is of somebody's breast. If that is wrong, what the hell have I been masturbating with?

MetalDoggF
Via the Internet

And the Winner Is...

Damn if that ain't my mother!

Garner Sorsdahl
Via the Internet

The last guy who asked "Are they real?" is dead.



Actually, every guy she's met is dead.

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HOT SHOTS



Baldur's Gate II

■ **PUBLISHER** Interplay ■ **DEVELOPER** BioWare

Welcome back to the deceptively beautiful Forgotten Realms. This teaser of a shot shows off the visual quality of *Baldur's Gate II*. The game's new environments and enhanced spell effects take full advantage of your 3D graphics card, and this shot reveals some of the new monsters in action.

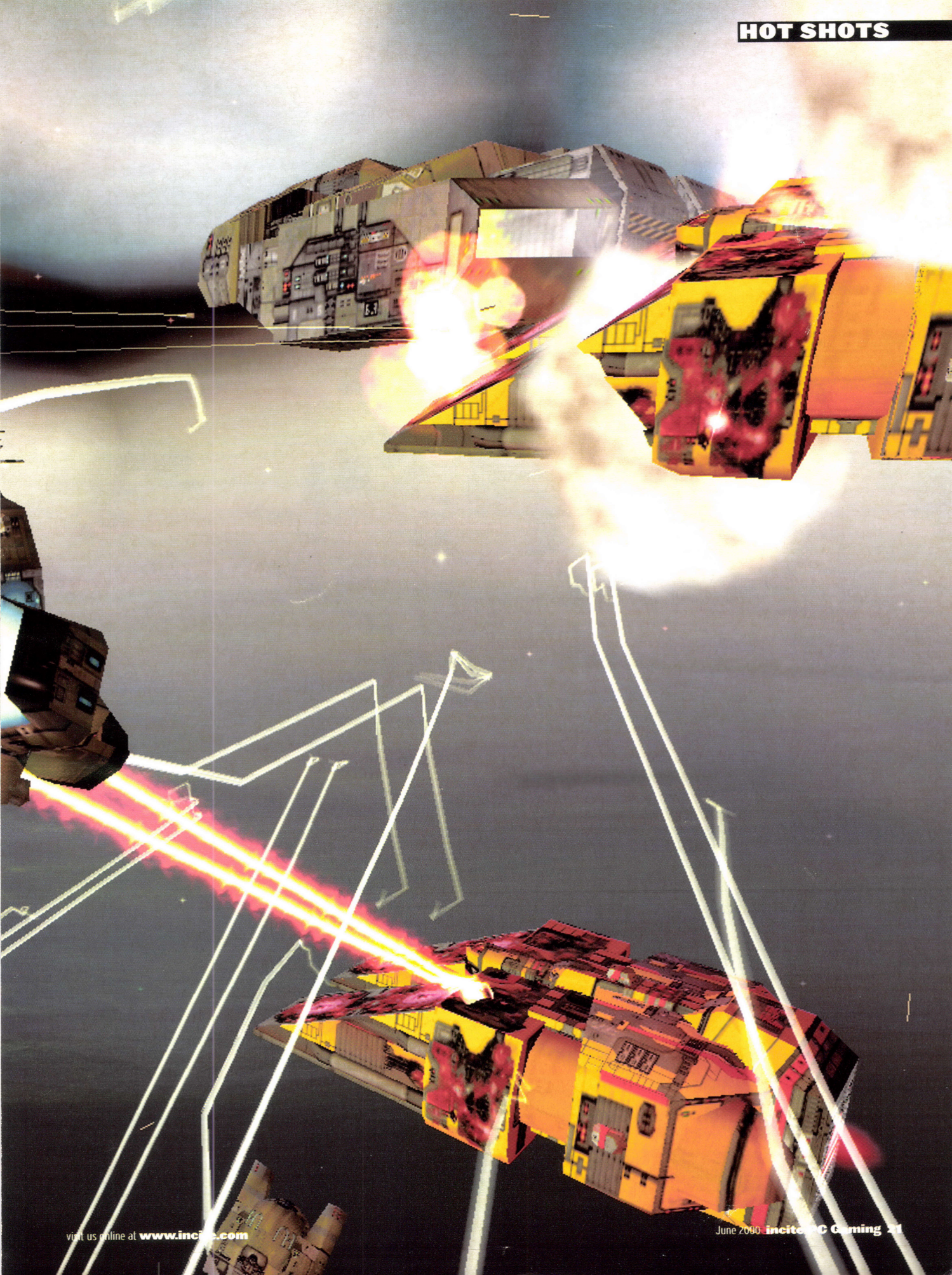




Cataclysm

■ PUBLISHER Sierra ■ DEVELOPER Barking Dog

Scenes like this epic interstellar battle in Sierra's *Cataclysm*, the upcoming second *Homeworld* episode, are very much indicative of just how visually sophisticated games have become. *Cataclysm* will feature a wide assortment of new space vessels that are arguably as detailed as those seen in modern-day science-fiction films.





Earth 2150

■ PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive/SSI ■ DEVELOPER Topware Interactive

We're not sure why, but *Earth 2150: Escape From the Blue Planet* isn't getting too much attention in the U.S. The Germans are crazy about it, and from this shot it's easy to see why. Everything in the game is modeled in 3D, so it looks realistic. But its innovations don't stop there. The game also has multiple maps running parallel, subterranean warfare, and day-night cycles.



IT'S ON THE CD!

Play the *Earth 2150* demo on this month's *incite* CD-ROM!



ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES BENNETT

SPACE RACE

Whip out those lightsabers and phasers: A sci-fi battle for the ages is taking shape between upcoming online games

Not even Yoda could have seen this coming: About a year from now, two massively multiplayer online RPGs – one based on *Star Wars*, the other on *Star Trek* – will compete for not only the wallets, but the obscene amounts of time required to play games of this type. Short of Patrick Stewart and Mark Hamill throwing down in a WWF ring, confrontations don't get much juicier for sci-fi fans than this duel. And like any engaging space tale, there are subplots galore that stir up these burning questions:

VERANT WAS RUMORED TO BE DEVELOPING BOTH GAMES. WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED?

News of Activision's online *Trek* game first surfaced in early February in a corporate conference call that discussed the company's quarterly earnings report. During this call Activision outlined its plans of a massively multiplayer game set in the *Star Trek* universe. It also named Verant as the developer, which must have surprised LucasArts, who also had a deal close to completion with Verant to develop its online game set in the *Star Wars* universe. Confused yet? There's more: Verant's Brad McQuaid confirms his company was in discussions to make the *Trek* game, but, as he stated on the *EverQuest* message boards hosted by the official Web site, "We're not doing both because of the perceived conflict of interest between such similar titles, simple as that." It's still unclear who rustled whose feathers first, but one thing *is* clear now: Verant will not be involved in Activision's online *Trek* project.

WHAT DETAILS, IF ANY, ABOUT EACH GAME ARE AVAILABLE? Not much. Rumors are flying around faster than a Jawa on speed, but here's what we know:

Activision needs to find a new developer for its *Trek* game before it's able to discuss details and *Star Wars* isn't much further along. Says a LucasArts spokesman, "*Star Wars* Online" is so early in its development that it won't even make a showing at this month's Electronic Entertainment Expo trade show in L.A. He was able to confirm the game will take place in the classic *Star Wars* universe's time frame, not the period seen in *Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (meaning players won't have to worry about bumping into Jar Jar Binks).

He also says the action will take place on at least two different planets. Luke Skywalker's arid home, Tattooine, is pretty much a lock to be one of those planets. Other reports claim that although players won't be able to assume the personas of their favorite *Star Wars* celebrities, they will be able to interact with the likes of Chewbacca and R2-D2 in the game. These details aren't official but make sense to us – can you imagine thousands of online fanatics fighting over the right to be Han Solo?

SO NOW THAT VERANT IS OUT OF THE RUNNING, WHO WILL DEVELOP ACTIVISION'S ONLINE STAR TREK GAME? Our best guesses: Turbine Entertainment, the studio that developed *Asheron's Call* for Microsoft, and Nihilistic Entertainment, which has RPG experience from working on *Vampire: The Masquerade*. A massively multiplayer game would be new to Nihilistic, but they've shown versatility with past projects such as *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2*, *StarCraft*, and *Requiem: Avenging Angel*. Plus, Activision is publishing *Vampire*, so the company already has a working arrangement with Nihilistic.

A dark horse in the running is Mythic Entertainment, a relatively unknown company whose massively multiplayer games are found on America Online, GameStorm, and MothershipGames.com. Creator of *Spellbinder: The Nexus Conflict* and the upcoming *Dark Age of Camelot*, it would almost certainly be a cheaper alternative. And though not many gamers know about it, those who do are happy, enthusiastic customers.

Gathering Scattered

Take-Two Interactive Buys Out G.O.D.



CEO Mike Wilson

Gathering of Developers (G.O.D.) – champion of the independent game developer – is ending its own independence by agreeing to be acquired by Take-Two Interactive. The humbled PC game company, which publishes titles from studios such as 3D Realms *(Duke Nukem)* and Epic Games *(Unreal)* has fallen on hard times. Delayed games plus weaker-than-expected sales for the few that G.O.D. managed to get out the door (such as Terminal Reality's *Nocturne* and *Fly!*) has left it in dire financial straits.

Wilson contends that G.O.D. can still adhere to its original mandate.

"The flaw in our model is that we only publish large projects, which require long development cycles and large advances," says Founder/CEO Mike Wilson in a letter sent to *incite PC Gaming*. "We haven't shipped many titles [and] as a result, very little money has made it back into our doors."

The effect on the games you play will be negligible – G.O.D.'s partner studios are still working on *The Blair Witch Project*, *Heavy Metal*, and *KISS: Psycho Circus*, among others. Further, Wilson contends that G.O.D. can still adhere to its original mandate to support independent developers.



IT'S LOOKING ROUGH The commercial failure of games like *Nocturne* (above) has forced G.O.D. to give up its independence.

Hot and Cold

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

212°F BOILING

■ ***Quake III: Arena* on Dreamcast**
Worlds will collide when *Quake III* is released on the Dreamcast. For the first time, PC and console players will both be able to enter the same online deathmatch. Our money's on the PC gamers.

■ ***SimCity 3000* Unlimited**
The new stand-alone game will feature new buildings with Asian and European themes. Developer Maxis stands to make even more cash from the best-selling *SimCity* franchise.

PIPING

■ ***Tacoma Adrenaline***
Microsoft unveiled this Web-only racing game on its MSN Gaming Zone. Not a bad ride, considering it's free and Web-browser-based.

■ ***Soldier of Fortune***
The green box contains the full, uncensored game. The red box features a watered-down version sans bloody entrails. Which box contains the game worth playing?

TEPID

■ **Gary "Messiah" Coleman**
To promote the ungodly game, Interplay had diminutive ex-*Diff'rent Strokes* thespian Gary Coleman plug *Messiah* at March's Academy Awards. A 6-foot-2 blonde paid $4,500 in an auction to accompany Coleman to the Oscars.

32°F FREEZING

Game BRIEFS

Buzz and miscellany from the trenches

You've played **The Sims** enough times by now to notice those scary progress messages that appear while loading. So just what is the program doing when "Reticulating Splines," "Inserting Chaos Generator," and "Balancing Domestic Coefficients" flash across the bottom of your screen? Absolutely nothing, actually. "They're inventions of [Creator] Will Wright's imagination," says a Maxis spokesman. Speaking of *The Sims*, expect Maxis to release an expansion pack this fall.... Up until March 26, it was looking more and more likely that **Angelina Jolie** would sign on to play Lara Croft in the **Tomb Raider** movie. That was before she won the Best Supporting Actress award at the Oscars, though. Now that she's a bona-fide AH-ctor, playing a busty action heroine might be beneath her. We weren't too pleased with the choice in the first place: Jolie would have needed to adopt a phony British accent for the part, which always raises red flags (witness Madonna's in *The Next Best Thing*).... Don't expect to see GT Interactive's first-person shooter, **Prey,** anytime soon. Announced with fanfare nearly three years ago, it's officially on hold for now and has no shot at coming out this year. GT, which won't even attempt to promise a release date (thus avoiding a *Daikatana*-like fiasco), has chosen to focus its efforts on getting **Duke Nukem Forever** out the door for



THE SIMS


ANGELINA JOLIE


TREADMARKS

Christmas.... It was a bittersweet victory for the winners at the second annual **Independent Games Festival** held at the Game Developers Conference in San Jose, Calif. The $10,000 grand prize for best game went to Longbow Digital Arts, a family-run business based in Ontario, for its 3D tank game, **Tread Marks.** Tragically, Longbow's president and lead programmer, **Seumas McNally,** died from Hodgkin's lymphoma less than two weeks after he accepted the award at GDC. To see and play McNally's winning entry, go to www.treadmarks.com.... **Hasbro Interactive,** the undisputed master of cash-cow megahits (*Frogger, Milton Bradley Classic Board Games*) has hooked up with game show producer Pearson Television to develop a *Family Feud* CD-ROM game. Pearson also produces *The Price is Right,* so can Bob Barker and his Showcase babes be far away?... The long-awaited **Independence Day DVD** will come loaded with a free one-month trial of the *ID4* online multiplayer game being developed by Centropolis Interactive and Mythic Entertainment. After you're hooked, the monthly fee is $9.95. Look for the two-DVD collector's edition next month.... Spurious tie-in of the month: **MicroProse** has boldly emblazoned boxes of its new fantasy adventure game, *Majesty,* with the words "From the publisher that brought you *RollerCoaster Tycoon.*" Isn't that akin to promoting *Showgirls* as "From the movie studio that brought you *Gone with the Wind*?... A trend to keep your eye on is **cross-platform multiplayer gaming,** which gives PC and console gamers the ability to battle each other online. **Quake III** will have this feature after the Dreamcast version comes out, as will G.O.D.'s new racing game, **4x4 Evolution.**

HIGH STAKES

Fox unearths a new Buffy game — and hopes it sucks big-time



BLOOD LUST
Fans get to walk in the slayer's shoes in the new Buffy game.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer groupies are in for a slay ride this fall when Fox finally releases a game based on the campy TV series. The third-person adventure will feature not only Sarah Michelle Gellar's title character, but also cohorts Angel, Willow, Oz, Xander, Cordelia, and Giles. In the game, fans will see the same combination of chopsocky action and sardonic wit as in the show and some familiar sights, including Sunnydale High School and The Bronze nightclub, not to mention lots of cemeteries, demons, and vampires, natch.

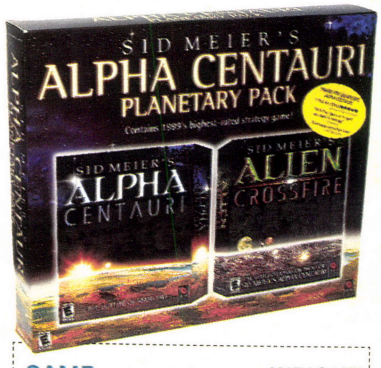
The Collective is in charge of development — a smart choice considering it's also developing a third-person action/adventure based on another TV series, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.*

Weighty Issues

PC games put on the pounds

Everyone talks about the American population's battle of the bulge, but have you seen PC games lately? It's not enough that the industry refuses to follow the lead of console games and ship its titles in shrink-wrapped jewel cases: Game boxes seem to be getting bigger, not smaller. Blame the audacious mass on publishers who more than ever want to give their customers added value in their titles, and so are cramming strategy guides, collector trinkets, and other fatty content into the bellies of PC games.

The table at right shows just how big some of the industry's biggest heffers have become.



GAME	WEIGHT
Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri Planetary Pack	2 lbs. 14.7 oz.
Ultima IX: Ascension Dragon Edition	2 lbs. 2.6 oz.
Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000 Pro	1 lb. 13.5 oz.
Mig Alley	1 lb. 6.1 oz.
Starfleet Command	1 lb. 5.2 oz.
NASCAR Legends	1 lb. 4.5 oz.
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation Millennium Edition	1 lb. 1.4 oz.

ANGELINA JOLIE PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZANNE TENNER/COLUMBIA PICTURES

CAMPAIGN ROADSHOW

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

TOP PRINT ADS FOR MAY

1 ACTIVISION
STAR TREK
ELITE FORCE

Forget "Boldly Going Where No Man Has Gone Before": Elite Force's slogan – "Set Phasers to Frag" – is a lot less pretentious and, more important, a lot more on the money. We don't know about you, but we always thought that "stun" setting was for wimps.



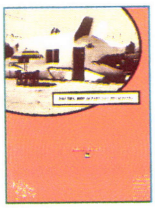
2 3DFX
VOODOO5

In case we didn't see enough rolling heads in *Sleepy Hollow*, 3dfx gives us this macabre ad where a turbo-charged hair dryer blows the noggin off of a poor lass.



3 YAHOO!
YAHOO! TRAVEL

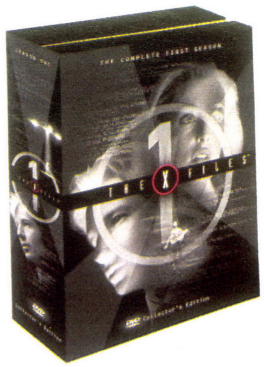
This ad for Yahoo! Travel warns us of everyone's worst vacation nightmare: trusting the travel agent and ending up in a tacky, pig-shaped motel. Okay, so it's not everyone's nightmare, but let's leave Homer and Marge Simpson out of this.

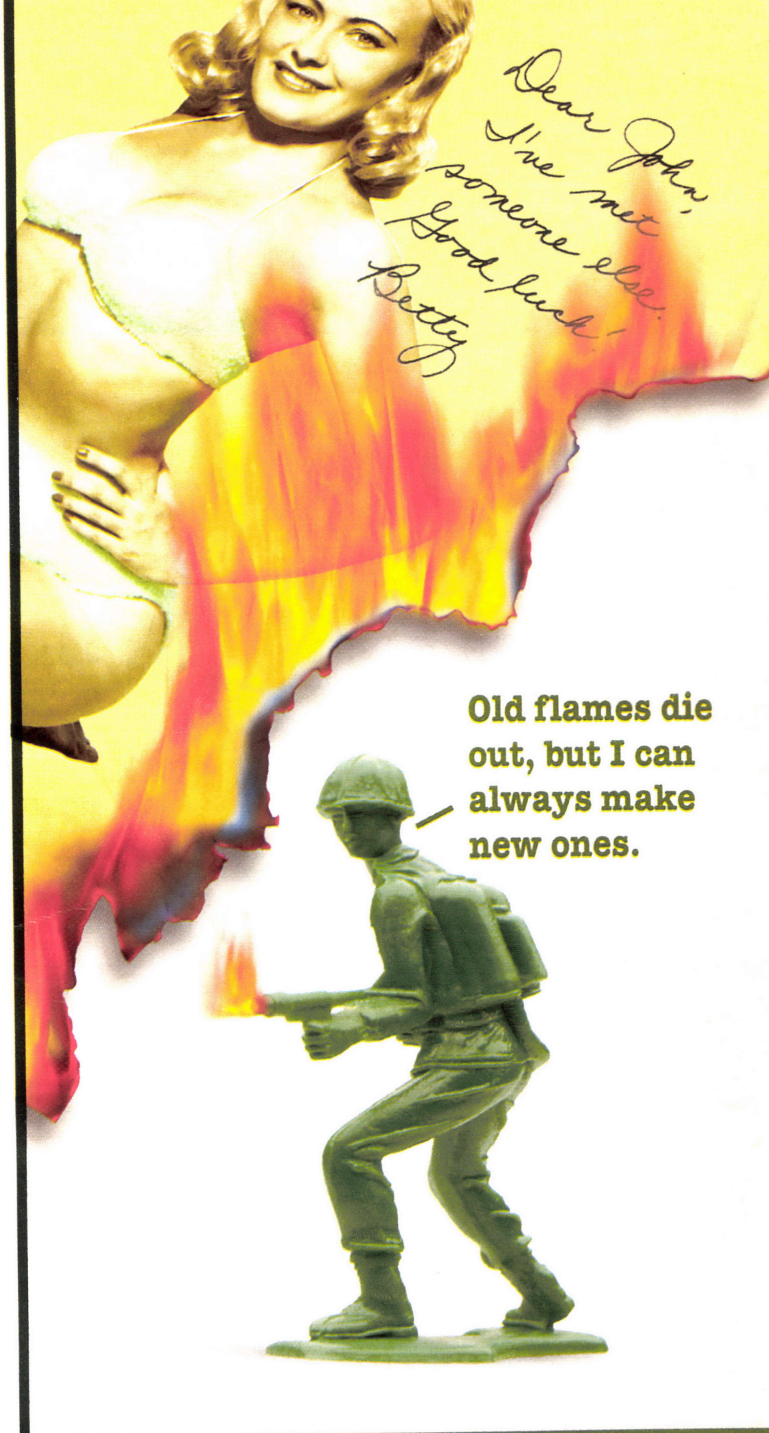


DVD OF THE MONTH

Back to the golden days of *The X-Files*

Blame the slick packaging and arm-buckling heft, but DVD boxed sets are dangerously seductive. The latest must-have collection gathers together the unexplained and the horrifying. *The X Files Season One: Gift Pack* ($149.98) gathers together the inaugural adventures of Mulder and Scully from the first season. If you're keeping a tally, this includes all 23 episodes, plus the pilot. Other goodies include "Behind the Truth" segments and a dozen interviews with creator Chris Carter. This goes all the way back to when *The X-Files* was still scary, and Scully still had our hearts safely in hand. Trust us, those lips look even more luscious in digital format.

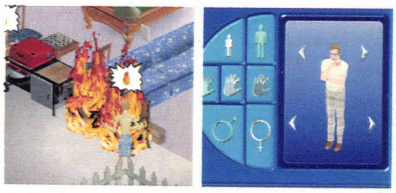




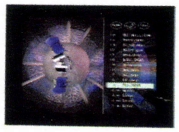
TOP 20

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

1 N — **The Sims**
• Electronic Arts • Simulation
Will Wright's latest masterpiece succeeded where other games have failed, namely, knocking Reege and his *Millionaire* game out of the top spot. Now if we only could figure out a surefire way to teach our Sim how to cook a good meal without burning down the place.



2 ▼1 — **Who Wants to Be a Millionaire**
• Disney Interactive • Lifestyle
Don't be surprised if this game finds its second wind next month and reclaims the No. 1 position.



3 ▼2 — **RollerCoaster Tycoon**
• Hasbro Interactive • Simulation
Memo to *RCT* fans: It's almost summertime. Get out of the house and go to a real amusement park.



4 ▼3 — **Centipede**
• Hasbro Interactive • Shooter
With a name like *Centipede*, no one should be surprised that this old game is showing legs on the chart.



5 ▲6 — **Age of Empires II**
• Microsoft • Strategy
Stomping through the ages is still as fun as ever in this newest *Age of Empires* incarnation.



6 ▲7 — **RCT: Corkscrew Follies**
• Hasbro Interactive • Simulation
The official expansion pack for *RollerCoast Tycoon* continues to be a must-have for thrill seekers.



7 ▼4 — **Parker Brothers Classic Card Games**
• Hasbro Interactive • Lifestyle
In spite of the cutting-edge titles out there, people still enjoy a nice, simple game of Gin Rummy.



8 N — **Final Fantasy VIII**
• Square EA • RPG
Unlike, say, *Friday the 13th Part VIII*, *FF VIII* proves a series can still be worthwhile after seven sequels.



9 ▲15 — **Rainbow Six Gold Pack Bundle**
• Red Storm • Strategy
Virtual commandos still get a charge from this game. Terrorists make such easy targets, don't they?



10 ▼9 — **Deer Hunter 3**
• WizardWorks • Simulation
Unlike in the real world, it's deer-slaying season 365 days a year in *Deer Hunter*.



11 ▲12 — **Half-Life**
• Sierra • Shooter
Biggest surprise this month: No first-person shooter cracked the Top 10.

12 ▼11 — **Unreal Tournament**
• GT Interactive • Shooter
The free downloadable bonus pack from the developer was a nice gesture.

13 ▼5 — **Milton Bradley Classic Board Games**
• Hasbro Interactive • Lifestyle
Who wouldn't want to play *Connect Four* on the PC?

14 ▼10 — **Cabela's Big Game Hunter 3**
• HeadGames • Simulation
Forget *Quake*. Hunting games are still the best way to let out your animal tendencies.

15 N — **Nox**
• Electronic Arts • RPG
It looks like *Diablo*, it plays like *Diablo*, but it doesn't sell like *Diablo*.

16 ▼14 — **Millennium GamePak**
• Valuesoft • Various
With 50 games crammed into the box, there's no mistaking *GamePak*'s bang-for-the-buck factor.

17 ▲18 — **Hoyle Casino 2000**
• Sierra • Lifestyle
Featuring nine Vegas-style games, the only thing this virtual casino is missing is the cheap buffet.

18 N — **Family 3 Pack**
• Hasbro Interactive • Lifestyle
The world needs more games that feature Mr. Potato Head and Playskool.

19 ▼13 — **Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear**
• Red Storm • Strategy
The new *Urban Operations* expansion pack will give more punch to this game.

20 ▼8 — **Quake III: Arena**
• Activision • Shooter
Gamers are so fickle: *Quake III* was the best-selling FPS last month. Now it's a bottom-feeder.

CHART LEGEND

Position This Month / Position Last Month
9 ▲0
Movement

N New
R Reentry
▲ 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 Racing

1	—1	**Dirt Track Racing** • WizardWorks
2	▲3	**NASCAR 99** • Sierra
3	▲4	**NASCAR Racing 3** • Sierra
4	▲7	**Harley Davidson** • WizardWorks
5	N	**Need for Speed 3 Classic** • EA
6	▼2	**Need for Speed 3** • EA
7	▼5	**Driver** • GT Interactive
8	▼6	**Need for Speed** • EA
9	▼8	**Hot Wheels Stunt Driver** • Mattel
10	▲12	**Midtown Madness** • GT Interactive

Electronic Arts is getting a lot of mileage out of its *Need for Speed* series, including the original one.

TOP 10 Simulation

1	▲3	**Combat Flight Sim** • Microsoft
2	▼1	**Flight Sim 2000** • Microsoft
3	▲4	**F/A-18** • EA
4	▲5	**Mechwarrior 3** • Hasbro Interactive
5	▼2	**Flight Sim 2000 Pro** • Microsoft
6	▲9	**USAF** • EA
7	—7	**Fighter's Anthology** • EA
8	—10	**Falcon 4.0** • Hasbro Interactive
9	▲11	**Flight Sim Classic** • Microsoft
10	▼8	**Starfleet Command** • Interplay

In the words of an old airline slogan, gamers love to fly (and it shows).

TOP 10 Shooters

1	—1	**Centipede** • Hasbro Interactive
2	▲4	**Half-Life** • Sierra
3	—3	**Unreal Tournament** • GT Interactive
4	▼2	**Quake III: Arena** • Activision
5	▼5	**Half-Life Opp. Force** • Sierra
6	▼7	**Delta Force** • Novalogic
7	▼6	**Half-Life Adren. Pack** • Sierra
8	▲14	**Independence Day** • Fox
9	▲10	**Unreal** • GT Interactive
10	▼8	**Quake II** • Activision

Hmm...90 percent of this chart makes sense. Can anyone explain *Independence Day*'s strong showing?

QUOTES+QUIPS

GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE GAMES YOU PLAY

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

WHAT'S THE LONGEST AMOUNT OF TIME YOU'VE SPENT PLAYING A GAME IN ONE SITTING?

Phil DeLuca Producer – Red Storm Entertainment *(U.F.S. Vanguard)* "*BattleTech* on Genie for 36 hours straight, **not including bathroom and water breaks**."

Lawrence Holland President – Totally Games *(Star Trek: Bridge Commander)* "I one time spent 11 hours playing **X-Wing.** I know I worked on the game, but I still like playing that and getting into the cockpit to blow away dozens of Imperial TIE Fighters."



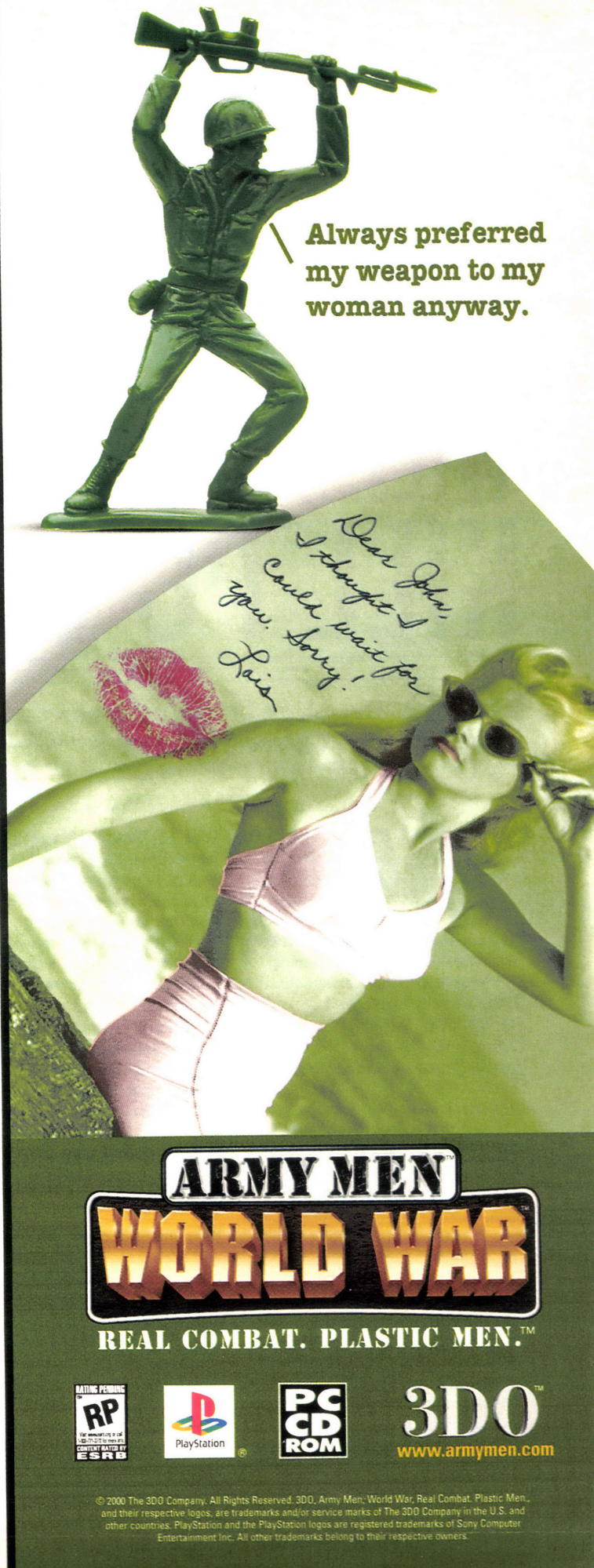
Ed Del Castillo President/ Co-Founder – Liquid Entertainment *(Battle Realms)* "One summer I literally spent a week straight playing a game called **Sundog: The Frozen Legacy** nonstop. The graphics weren't the hook so much as the gameplay. You're an interstellar trader fighting off pirates in space and muggers in the streets."

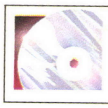
Andy Beaudoin Associate Producer – Electronic Arts *(Need for Speed: Motor City)* "The longest I ever played in one sitting was a 14-hour night of **Asheron's Call.** What started as a quick quest turned into hours of corpse recovery."

Chris Stewart Designer –Barking Dog *(Cataclysm)* "I lost 12 hours straight to **Half-Life.** Straight, no breaks! I thought I was coming to the end, and then they sent me to another frickin' universe."

Jason Ray Associate Producer – 3DO *(Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball)* "When I was in high school I once camped in front of my **Commodore 64** and played *Wastelands* for about 30 hours straight with nothing but a big box of Wheat Thins and a bottle of eyedrops at my side."







IT'S ON THE CD!
See video footage of the X-Box presentation on the *incite* CD-ROM!

WILL THE X-BOX KILL PC GAMING?

The impending release of Microsoft's new console system, the X-Box, is set to **shake up the PC gaming industry.** But will it also squeeze PC games out of an already crowded market? BY JOE VALLINA

When Microsoft Founder Bill Gates formally announced the X-Box console system at this year's **Game Developers Conference,** the entire PC gaming world gave a collective shudder. Gone was any mention of compatibility between PCs and the X-Box, and with it went the hope that PC games would be able to ride Microsoft's new horse into the next century. Instead, PC gamers are faced with the prospect of fewer and fewer game developers coding for the PC. And a platform without games is dead in the water. Remember the **Sega Saturn?**

But is the future really so dire as to think PC games will fade into the silicon sunset? Maybe not, according to some PC game developers. At id Software, maker of *Quake III: Arena* and a longtime proponent of the PC gaming platform, no immediate changes are expected. CEO **Todd Hollenshead** tells us, "The X-Box sounds great from a technical standpoint, but we wouldn't give up our bread-and-butter development platform [the PC] before even seeing a development kit, regardless of who was developing it." Hollenshead says id will take a wait-and-see position on the new platform. "If it lives up to all the hype, we might consider it as a good co-development platform, but it's too early to tell at this point."

Doug Zartman, spokesman for Bungie Software, maker of *Myth* and *Halo*, sums up Bungie's take on the whole thing: "No, we're not [dropping PC games]. Our goal is to increase the number of platforms we support, and adding the various consoles to that mix is an obvious next step for us. But specializing in any one platform would be contrary to everything that Bungie is."

> Is the **future really so dire** as to think PC games will fade into the silicon sunset? Maybe not.

Other major PC game developers are singing essentially the same tune. LucasArts spokesman **Tom Sarris** puts it this way: "It's a little premature to think that we'd change our development strategy so dramatically. Suffice it to say, whether we develop for the X-Box or not, it is highly unlikely that we'd abandon PC development. One of our core legacies is developing titles for the PC, and that's not likely to change in the future."

Still, many longtime PC-only developers are reconsidering the direction their future games will take. **Robert Atkins,** lead artist at Ritual Entertainment (maker of *SiN* and *Heavy Metal*), is one of those. "With advantages of the PC platform fading with the birth of the latest consoles, we are giving serious thought to our future as a PC-only development house," explains Atkins.

"It's getting harder and harder to compete," Atkins elaborates. "Consoles are very tempting, especially when it comes to the potential number of units that can be sold. It's a lot easier to port a hit console game to a PC, but it's next to impossible to get a PC hit

INSIDE THE X-BOX

Below is an artist's rendering of how we think the X-Box might be configured. However, it's unlikely that it will be X-shaped like the prototype.

1. 4X DVD drive **2.** 8GB hard drive **3.** A/V connectors **4.** 100MBps ethernet **5.** Custom nVidia 3D graphics processor **6.** 600MHz x86 processor **7.** 64MB RAM (unified memory architecture) **8.** 3D audio processor

ILLUSTRATION FOR INCITE BY **ARTSTAFF INC./RAINER LAUBACH**



ported to a console unless you completely remake the game."

Not only do console games sell many more copies than PC titles, but they also generate much more revenue. According to The NPD Group, the top-selling PC title in 1999 was **SimCity 3000,** which sold 700,000 copies and made $29 million. Compare that to the top-selling console game of that year, **Donkey Kong 64** for the Nintendo 64, which sold 1.7 million copies and pulled in approximately $92 million. The fear in the PC gaming community is that more and more PC game developers will decide those numbers just don't add up.

Some predict the PC market will become much more specialized and niche-oriented, focusing on hardware-intensive games such as flight simulators and strategy titles, while leaving sports and action offerings to the consoles.

Says **Brian Fargo,** CEO of Interplay *(Baldur's Gate, Messiah),* "What you're going to be left with on the PC are the role-playing games that require keyboards and real-time strategy games that require mice, and everything else except the *Deer Hunters* goes away."

While it doesn't seem prudent to pronounce the PC game platform DOA just yet, it will be interesting to watch how things play out after the X-Box makes its debut in 2001.

If, as some suggest, PC game developers switch over to the new platform in droves, the arrival of the X-Box could indeed spell the end of PC gaming. What's more likely, however, is something more akin to a slow evolution that could benefit gamers on all platforms. Only time will tell.



GIMME THREE STEPS I'm tellin' ya, son, it ain't no fun, starin' straight down a .44.

On the Warpath

The most complex and comprehensive online deathmatch gets even better with **TRIBES 2**

■ PUBLISHER Sierra ■ DEVELOPER Dynamix ■ GENRE Arcade first-person shooter ■ PLAYERS 1-64 ■ RELEASE DATE Q3 2000

INSIGHT

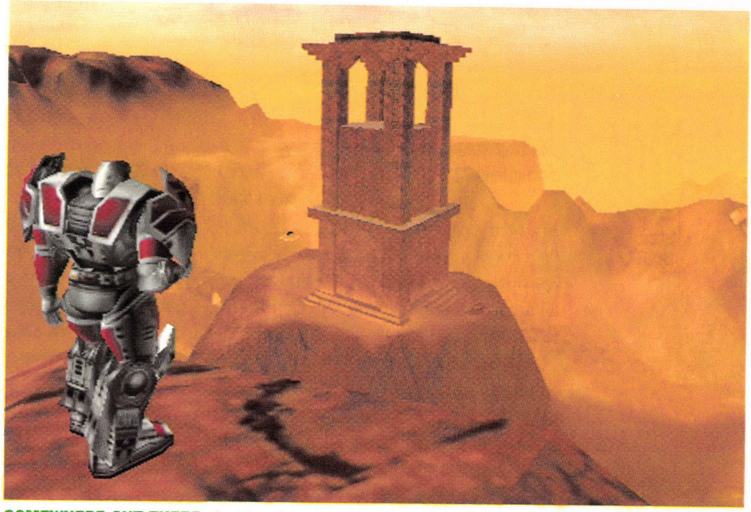
Q. Will I have to play nice and do what my team leader says?
A. If you want to win, you do. *Tribes 2* is tuned for teams.

Q. Will I be able to set individual turrets?
A. You betcha. You can even customize turret bases with a variety of gun types.

***Starsiege Tribes* was ahead of its time. It pioneered true team-oriented gaming, at the same time creating a rabid online-community following. *Tribes 2* will make it even easier for fans to get together, and gives them an amazing game to bond over in the process.**

By Joe Vallina

What really set *Tribes* apart was its almost cultlike following of die-hard fans. Seemingly overnight after *Tribes'* release, clans popped up all over the Net, and unlike other clans for games like *Quake* or *Unreal*, these guys were unusually serious. Players had to compete to earn spots on the most prestigious clans, and, what's more, some



SOMEWHERE OUT THERE In the distance, Rogthar could hear the siren song of his beloved. If only he had invested in the energy suit so his jetpack would last the journey.

IT'S ON THE CD!
Check out our exclusive *Tribes 2* video on the *incite* CD-ROM!



EASY RIDER Strap yourself on and get the hell out of Dodge.

players began to specialize in certain roles (snipers, pilots, heavy gunners). Teams formulated intricate strategies and observed a strict chain of command, usually set according to seniority and skill level.

Dynamix, the designer behind *Tribes 2,* wants to foster this community spirit. Hence, *Tribes 2* will include everything a gamer needs to start and maintain his own clan inside the game itself. According to writer Blake Hutchins, "In *Tribes,* when people create a clan, they use our online chat server to communicate. But they also need email, ICQ, and outside Web hosting for their clan's site.

"In *Tribes 2*, we will incorporate instant messaging, email, Web hosting, chat, and news pages. We've actually built a Web browser into the game," says Hutchins.

Dynamix Lead Programmer Mark Frohnmayer confirms that voice communication will now be built in. In the original *Tribes,* gamers who wanted to use real-time voice communication needed to get add-on programs like Roger Wilco (www.rogerwilco.com) or Battlefield Communicator (www.shadowfactor.com). These won't be needed now.

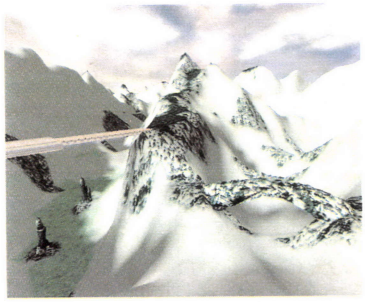
Tribes 2 will include everything a gamer needs to start and maintain his own clan.

One annoyance from the first game that the design team is addressing is the long line for accessing outfitting stations. In *Tribes* you had to wait for your teammates to pick their armor, weapons, and backpacks before you could get your own. In *Tribes 2* you'll use a new interface to prepick your setup. So when you do get to a station, your equipment will instantly download, drastically reducing your chances of getting fragged while you're at the equipment ATM.

The game will feature new and improved armor packages, as well as the best addition to your arsenal by far: the highly anticipated rocket launcher. This bad boy will home right in on flying vehicles and moving ground targets with deadly



ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE Pig boy here is just one of the new skins in *Tribes 2.*



BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED ICEBERG The new environments are huge.

accuracy. Dynamix is adding shields to the vehicles in *Tribes 2* in the hopes of evening the score.

Three new ground vehicles will make their debut appearance in *Tribes 2*: a single-person, unarmed ground scout; an assault vehicle outfitted with a passenger-operated turret; and a troop transport called The Bus which can carry up to six heavily armed passengers. The air units will be essentially the same as the ones in *Tribes*, although their skins have been completely remodeled in this version.

Tribes 2 will look dramatically better than *Tribes*. Art Director Craig Maitlen explains, "In *Tribes*, the biggest polygon count for a character model was around 450 to 500. In *Tribes 2* we're up to 1,500 to 1,600." The result of all this tech speak? Characters in the game look smoother, more realistic, and more animated than ever before. Rebuilding the game's engine from the ground up didn't hurt, either.

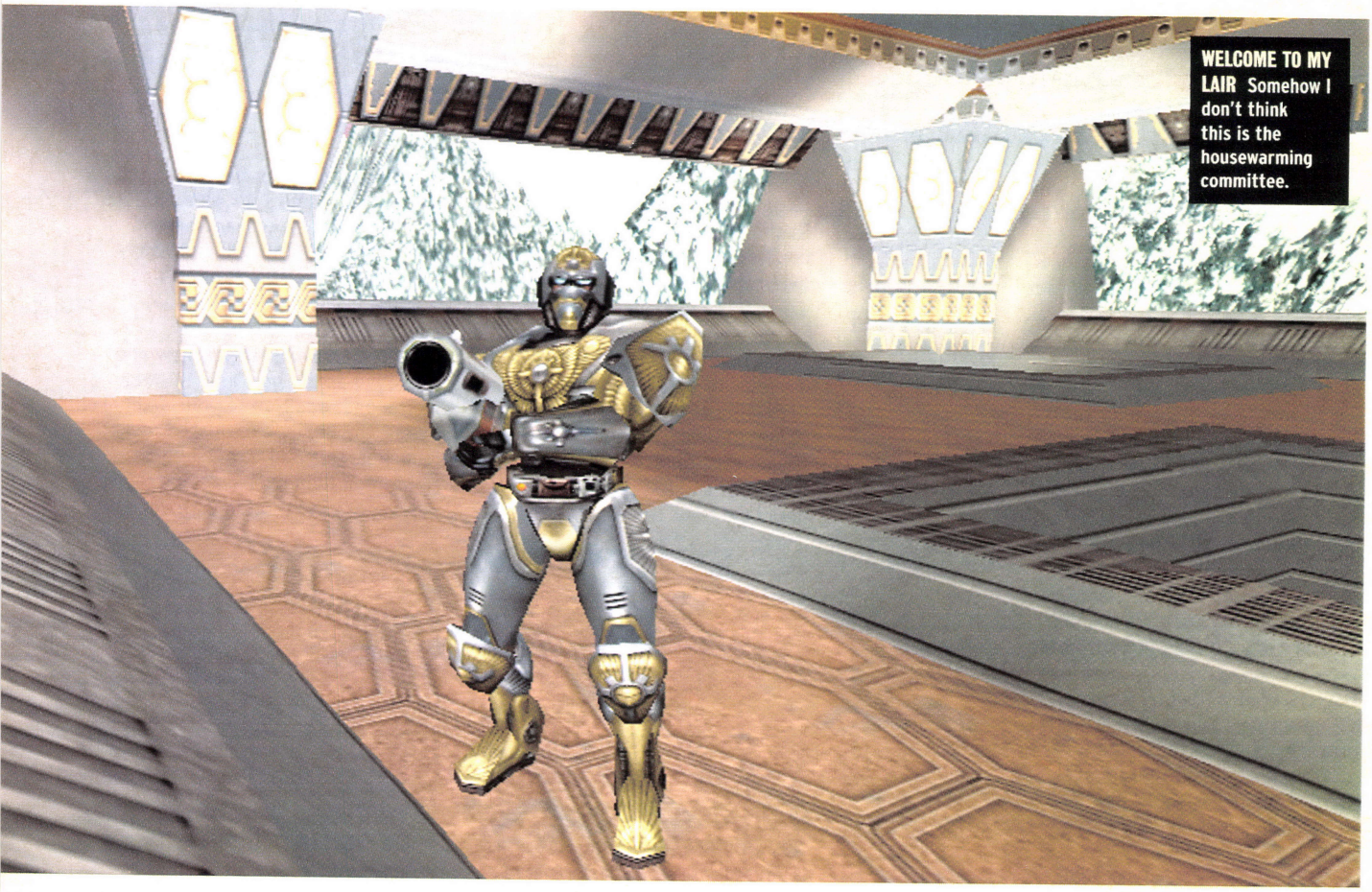
And characters aren't the only things in the game that have gotten bigger and better. *Tribes 2's* environments will include terrain types such as jungle worlds, deserts, postapocalyptic badlands, ice worlds, and lava worlds. How big will they be? Some of the individual forts (of which there can be several per level) are bigger than an entire *Quake III: Arena* map. Let's just say you won't have problems finding a little elbow room in *Tribes 2*.

All in all, Dynamix is committed to taking the *Tribes* community to the next level. We don't know about you, but we can't wait to sign up.

Some of the individual forts (of which there can be several per level) are bigger than an entire *Quake III: Arena* map.



TALK ABOUT A FLATTOP The jar-head look is popular among certain tribes. Be careful on these slopes, though. One wrong step and it's into the ravine you go.



WELCOME TO MY LAIR Somehow I don't think this is the housewarming committee.

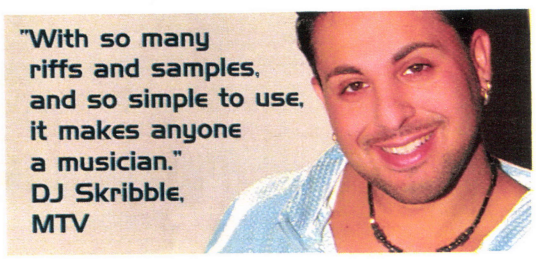


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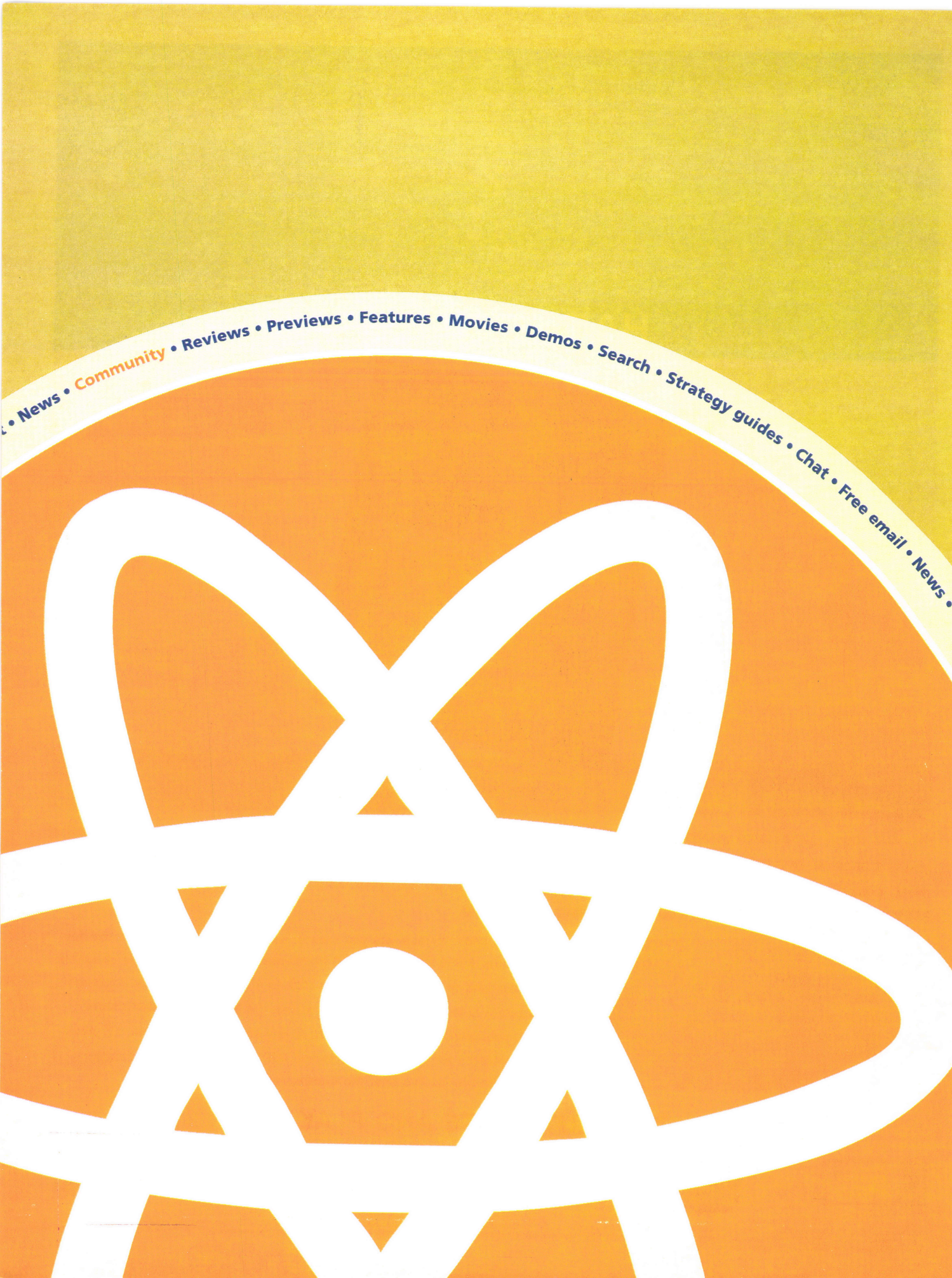
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There's No Place Like Homeworld

If you thought last year's *Homeworld* was something, **CATACLYSM** looks even better

■ PUBLISHER **Sierra Studios** ■ DEVELOPER **Barking Dog Studios** ■ GENRE **Real-time strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

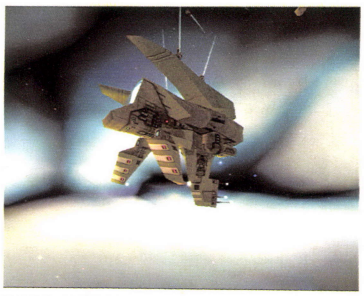
Q. Is *Homeworld: Cataclysm* an expansion pack of *Homeworld?*
A. No. Sierra and Barking Dog like to think of *Cataclysm* as the next episode in the *Homeworld* universe.
Q. Did Yes do the soundtrack for *Homeworld: Cataclysm?*
A. Nope.

After the success of last year's *Homeworld*, it would be remiss of Sierra not to give gamers more of what we loved the first time. Now, with the expected release of *Homeworld: Cataclysm* this summer, Sierra is taking gamers back to the *Homeworld* universe.

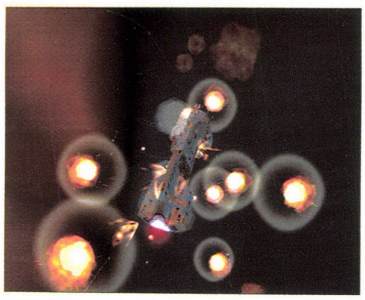
By William O'Neal

Taking place some 15 years after the end of the original *Homeworld*, Sierra and developer Barking Dog Studios' *Cataclysm* is not an expansion pack or a sequel, but rather the next episode in the *Homeworld* universe. In the spirit of a true space-combat story, you are the captain of a mining vessel some 15 years after the end of the last war. The galaxy's power dynamic has once again found itself in a state of flux, and you suddenly have to help save the galaxy from new and more deadly foes.

Barking Dog Studios has improved on the original game's foundation by including features such as a more elaborate waypoint system that simplifies tasks like patrols. You will also use waypoints to scout out new areas. This will be extremely important in *Cataclysm*, as the game will sport true, real-time, strategy-style fog-of-war – meaning you won't be able to see the parts of the map you haven't yet reconnoitered.



HOME, JEEVES A Swarmer heads home after a battle. His queen bee is waiting.



BANZAI! Swarmers can detonate themselves when in proximity to enemy ships.

In *Cataclysm* you'll command a Somtaaw mining vessel (Somtaaws are one of the game's new factions) through 17 single-player missions, and you'll have a plethora of new ships with which to bring peace to the galaxy. Nearly all of Cataclysm's ships are new. Of all the game's ships, two that stand out are Leeches, which have the ability to attach themselves to enemy vessels and drain them of their energy, and Mimics, which are capable of mimicking everything from other ships to asteroids. You will be able to do things such as create a pseudoasteroid belt of mimics and

■ I BET IT'S NOT AS DANGEROUS AS BEING A HONEY DIPPER (THE GUY WHO "DIPS" THE "HONEY" OUT OF YOUR SEPTIC TANK)

THE GALAXY'S MOST DANGEROUS MOVIE JOB?

What is the deal with deep-space mining occupations? Like *Cataclysm*, many sci-fi movies start out with a peaceful mining vessel just "doing its job" when all hell breaks loose. This is obviously a job to avoid in the future. But what about in the here and now?

GARBAGE MAN



I'm not sure why, but garbage men in movies like ***The Terminator*** have a serious tendency to get themselves in hot water. Movie garbage men have to deal with used syringes, gargantuan rats, psycho apartment dwellers, and – most frightening – Emilio Esteves' directorial tour de force, *Men at Work*.

METRO TRAIN OPERATOR



These guys have a penchant for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Case in point: Richard Schiff from ***Speed 2.*** As the train operator in the flick's closing moments, his role was decidedly short as well as inconsequential. Dennis Hopper riddled him with bullets for no apparent reason.

BARTENDER



In real life you rarely hear about bartenders getting popped. But for some reason Hollywood thinks these humble peddlers of *incite*'s drug of choice deserve to die in droves. Many an on-screen barkeep has met an untimely death in movies like ***Desperado*** and, most, recently in Kevin Smith's *Dogma*.

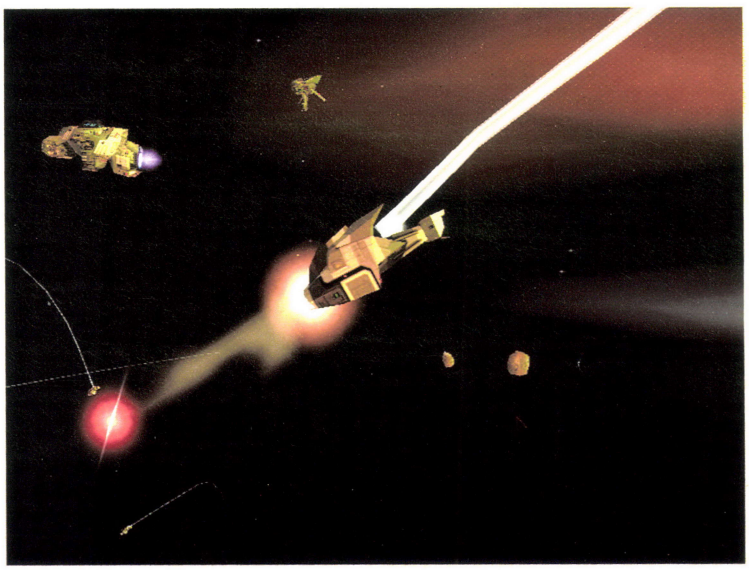
OH YEAH, RIGHT THERE! A worker deposits some "crystal" after a collecting run.

lure an enemy into an ambush. Other ships will also be able to "link" together, forming protective shields within which to place other ships.

While *Cataclysm* is a true strategy game, Barking Dog believes that gamers want more tactical gameplay than the tedious resource building that tends to dominate other strategy titles. But don't let the smooth taste fool you: *Cataclysm* will, in fact, require some resource management as well as collection of "crystals," which are the game's primary resource. But once you've set things in motion, a time-acceleration feature will speed up things such as building units and getting to where the action is.

If, after finishing *Homeworld,* you find yourself jonesing for more, then look to *Cataclysm* to sate your appetite for space combat.

Think of *Cataclysm* not as an expansion pack or a sequel, but rather as the next episode in the *Homeworld* universe.



CAN I GET IN ON THIS? A Stinger joins the fray. But are those seemingly innocent asteroids really asteroids, or a group of mimics lying in ambush?

The Great Escape

You might think you know strategy games, but **EARTH 2150** will blow you away

■ PUBLISHER **Mattel Interactive/SSI** ■ DEVELOPER **Topware** ■ GENRE **Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. What's special about the game?
A. It's one of the first to combine 3D terrain with RTS gameplay with a bunch of new strategic wrinkles for the genre.

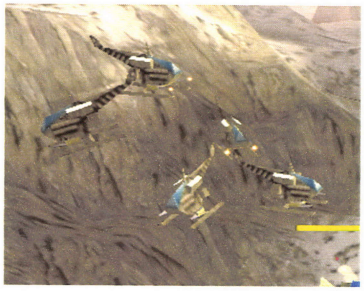
Q. What are you fighting for?
A. The remaining resources on earth, so you can build an escape ship.

Few animals have a more stunted sense of survival than humans. Even with Earth blasted out of its orbit and flying toward the sun, the quarrelsome hairless apes refuse to cooperate. Instead, they're fighting over the remaining resources in *Earth 2150*, SSI/Mindscape's latest 3D real-time strategy game.

By Di Luo



SURROUND AND DESTROY Monkey in the Middle never hurt so bad.



CHOPPER HOPPER I can almost hear "Ride of the Valkyries" in the background.

Released last year to critical acclaim in Germany, *Earth 2150* was one of the first real-time strategy games to incorporate 3D terrain and fully adjustable camera views to the traditional "build, research, fight" formula. Along with this innovation, *Earth 2150* boasts a host of features and strategic considerations never before seen in real-time strategy games.

In an attempt to bring more realism into the genre, the game's



makers created day-night cycles and weather changes. During nights or snowstorms, a unit's visual range drops and pathfinding becomes more difficult. All buildings and units have lights, however, and turning them on makes navigation in the dark easier. Of course, it would also make you an easy mark for enemies with their lights off, lurking in the shadows for an ambush.

Other features that enhance realism in the game include a supply system in which you must ship ammunition to your frontline units on a regular basis. As battles wage on, these supplies get used up, and it's possible for enemy supply planes to be shot down by your units, thus leaving your enemies helpless after the exhaustion of their initial supplies.

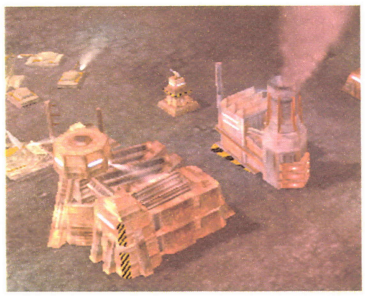
The 3D engine isn't there only for eye candy, either. Hills, mountains, and bodies of water can create natural defensive choke points. Here you can funnel the enemy into a killing zone overloaded with defensive turrets. However, the enemy can just as easily counter these tactics with air units that can fly over any terrain or hovercrafts that can "walk" on water without penalty.

Many weapons are also limited in their antiair capabilities. Rely too heavily on your legions of tanks and their heavy weapons and you might find yourself helpless against a couple of nasty tank-killing choppers. Certain factions even have the ability to dig tunnels, allowing them to travel underground out of the enemy's view.



HIGHWAY OF DEATH Surrounded and without air support, these bastards are dying more quickly than Saddam's Republican Guard. It really helps to have the high ground in *Earth 2150.*

Squander too much money and no matter how many battles you win, the sun will immolate you in the end.



LETTING OFF SOME STEAM Some base elements will stay from mission to mission.



STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT Two patrols stumble on each other and start shooting.

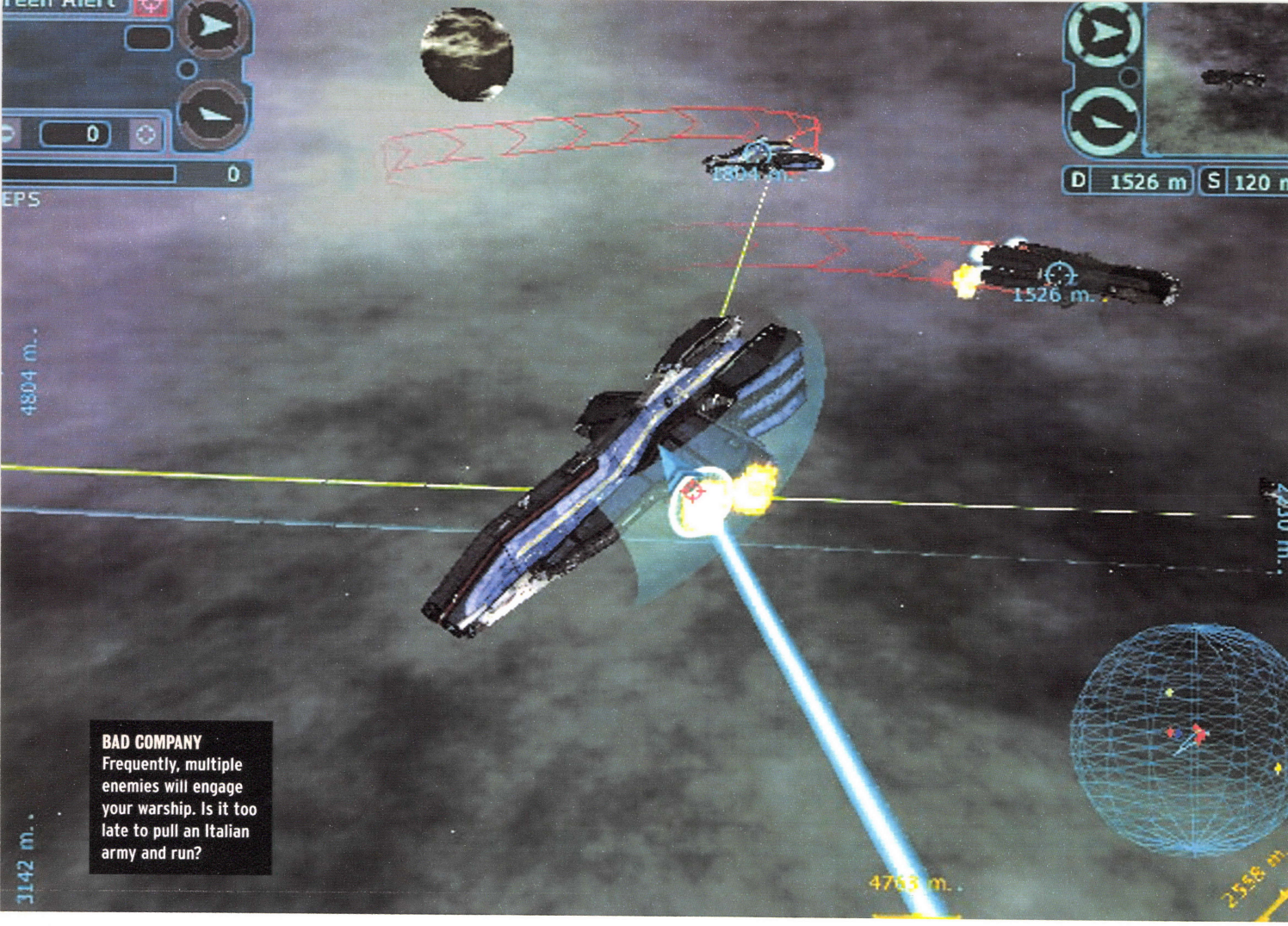


FALLOUT It looks like this would be a good time to break out those antiradiation suits, boys.

Like its host of new features, *Earth 2150's* single-player campaign game also contains many original elements. Rather than completing one disjointed mission after another in which you must research entire tech trees, you can carry over technology (as well as units) from mission to mission. Your home base is persistent. Here, you may do the majority of your research without having to purchase a research facility in every new mission, and you can even carry units and resources back and forth between the battlefield and the home base.

Rather than the usual "destroy 'em all" mentality of the genre, your ultimate goal in the campaign is to amass a huge amount of resources for a colony ship to evacuate humanity from the doomed planet. Squander too much money building cannon fodder for your tank rushes, and no matter how many battles you win, the sun will immolate you in the end.

For those who finally tire of the single-player campaigns, there are five different modes for multiplayer games, including the normal deathmatches and Capture the Flag for up to eight players. Add to these features a powerful map editor that will have amateur designers posting maps in no time, and *Earth 2150* will be a worthy challenger to the various 3D RTS games due out later this year. It will also put SSI/Mindscape on the map as a viable publisher for the genre.



BAD COMPANY Frequently, multiple enemies will engage your warship. Is it too late to pull an Italian army and run?

On 'Guard, Captain! It's Time for Battle

Ship happens in Red Storm's grandiose space combat game **U.F.S. VANGUARD**

■ PUBLISHER **Red Storm** ■ DEVELOPER **Red Storm** ■ GENRE **Simulation** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q3 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. What does U.F.S. stand for?
A. United Forces Starship. The United Forces are the good guys here.
Q. So, who are the bad guys?
A. The Hierarchy of Man. Be nice to them or they'll sterilize your planet with their arsenal of nuclear and biological weapons.

So, you wanna be a starship captain? Be careful what you wish for: Contrary to what's in the Captain Kirk handbook, the burden of command involves a lot more than just barking out a few orders and seducing female aliens.

By Gary Eng Walk

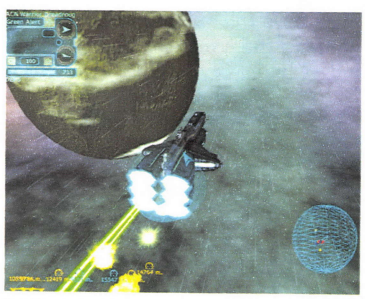
The main plot of *U.F.S. Vanguard* revolves around a series of massive battles pitting your United Forces navy against an evil faction called the Hierarchy of Man. Your job as captain is to meticulously select an optimum team of marines, engineers, scientists, and other crew members, and deploy them to collect materials or assist in rescues or diplomatic matters. To that end, each ship contains hundreds of people, each with their own name, rank, and dossier. One drawback: You're always playing from the point of view of the captain, so you won't see any scenes or gameplay on the planets to which you send your teams.

As you progress through the game, you'll need to replace crew members lost in battle and perform upgrades to the ship. The catch here is that you're only presented with weapon and system upgrades when you succeed in your missions, gain experience, and have good standing in the navy.

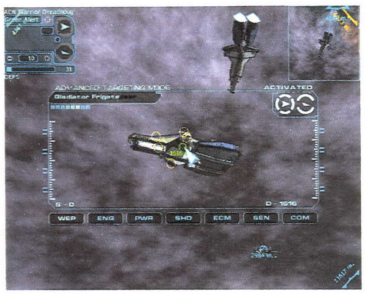
War Is Swell

Despite all of these diversions, the main attraction in *U.F.S. Vanguard* is still the majestic one-on-one battle sequences between two gargantuan space vessels. "No one has done a capital ship game that really captures the feeling of large-scale naval combat," observes Producer Phil DeLuca. "There's something about commanding [several] hundred tons of metal in combat."

DeLuca says designing the



BLASTOFF A few thousands pounds of thrust really get the juices flowing.



GOT TO CHOOSE **You can target and knock out individual systems on an enemy ship.**

The main attractions in *U.F.S. Vanguard* are still the majestic one-on-one battle sequences.

game's ship-to-ship combat system was the most challenging part of development, but it's also the feature that makes him the most proud. "Making the combat fun and enjoyable has been the most difficult. If we don't properly balance that, combat will always consist of repeating the same actions until the bad guys are dead. That's boring."

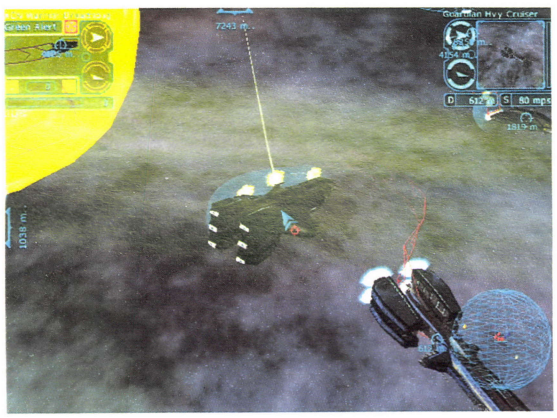
His solution is an intricate combat system in which you can target different kinds of weapons on different parts of an enemy ship. For example, you can order the crew to fire the disrupters to take out the enemy's shield and at the same time order them to focus the missiles at a different part of the ship. "It's really pretty neat to be able to assign lasers to one target, rail guns to another, and then switch off while each acts against its [chosen] target," DeLuca says.

A Starship Is Born

Currently, there are 14 battleships from which to choose, and each one sports a visually imposing, striking design. DeLuca cites a number of cinematic influences, including *Star Trek: The Wrath of Kahn, Battlestar Galactica,* and *Starship Troopers.* The development team also plans to provide the hull textures to the general public, enabling fans to design their own spaceships.

Players will have access to a vast arsenal of weapons. Some of them need to work together in order to get the best result. For instance, rail guns can blast through a ship's hull, but first you need to get past the shields. This is why you also need to fire your lasers to punch holes through the enemy's shields.

Though *U.F.S. Vanguard* sounds like a hardcore gaming experience, DeLuca assures that novices will also feel at home in the captain's chair: "Early on, it's very easy. Later the missions get much harder, always remaining a challenge that's hopefully equal to the player's progression through the learning curve." *U.F.S.Vanguard* is still not recommended for clueless space cadets who might be better off sticking with less complicated space games, though. May we suggest *Defender* and *Asteroids?*



HERE COMES THE SUN **Don't get too close to a star system's sun – even if you're wearing SPF 200 sunblock.**

OH CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN...

LOW COMMAND

Move over, Rodney Dangerfield: These **captains** can't get any respect either. Sometimes outranking everyone just isn't enough.

DARYL DRAGON



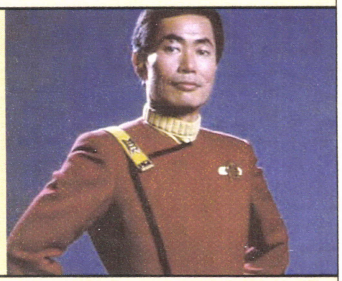
You probably know Dragon only as one-half of the '70s pop sensation Captain and Tennille. He may have had top billing, but everyone knows his wife, **Toni, wore the pants in the family**. Love had better not stop keeping them together, 'cause we all know in which direction those five gold album awards would go.

CAPTAIN STUBING



Everyone took old, reliable Captain Stubing (Gavin MacLeod) for granted on *The Love Boat.* He wasn't a chatterbox like Isaac, the bartender, or a wacky eccentric like Gopher. In retrospect, **he should've lived more on the wild side**, for example, taking Charo out for a night on the town. Or maybe below deck...

CAPTAIN SULU



After toiling away on the original *Star Trek* series in the shadow of Kirk, Sulu (George Takei) finally got command of his own ship in the lousy *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country.* **Sulu still might get some respect:** There's a major Internet campaign to base the next *Trek* TV series on him and his *U.S.S. Excelsior* crew.

CAP'N CRUNCH



Though all sugary cereals are an easy target for dentists and moms, the venerable Crunch man has been **the favorite poster boy** for all that is wrong in the land of breakfast meals. So what if his victuals have absolutely no nutritional value? We'd still rather see his mug on the kitchen table instead of boring Special K.

Fast Cars, Cheap 'Shine, Idjit Cops

Some brands guarantee a game's commercial success: *Star Wars, Tomb Raider,* **THE DUKES OF HAZZARD?**

■ PUBLISHER **Southpeak Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **Sinister Games** ■ GENRE **Racing** ■ PLAYERS **1-2** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q4 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. Can gamers play as Flash, Rosco P. Coltrane's dog?
A. Uh... no. Developer Sinister Games tried to get Flash for the game, but after he and Enos moved to L.A. to head the L.A.P.D.'s Rampart Division, he got in with the wrong crowd and is now serving time in Folsom State Prison.

Q. I heard that you won't be able to drive Daisy's Jeep, Dixie. Say it ain't so.
A. Sorry, kids. One of the missions will involve retrieving a stolen Dixie, but alas, you won't be driving America's favorite CJ5.

What is it about *The Dukes of Hazzard* that's so damn compelling? Could it be the fast cars? The cheap homemade liquor? Cousin Daisy and her cutoffs? Whatever the reason, we're surprised it took this long for such a lucrative license to meet its digital fate.

By William O'Neal

Already available for the PlayStation, *Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home* is set to hit a PC near you later this year. And this game will have just about what you'd expect: lots of racing, lots of shooting, and lots of crashing. Realizing that *The Dukes of Hazzard* is nothing without the show's original stars, Sinister made sure to get voiceovers from Tom Wopat (Luke Duke), James Best (Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane), Sonny Shroyer (Enos Strate), Ben Jones (Cooter Davenport), and Waylon Jennings (The Balladeer). Conspicuously absent is John Schneider, who couldn't be persuaded to reprise his role as Bo Duke. Hmmm. You'd think he could use the cash these days.

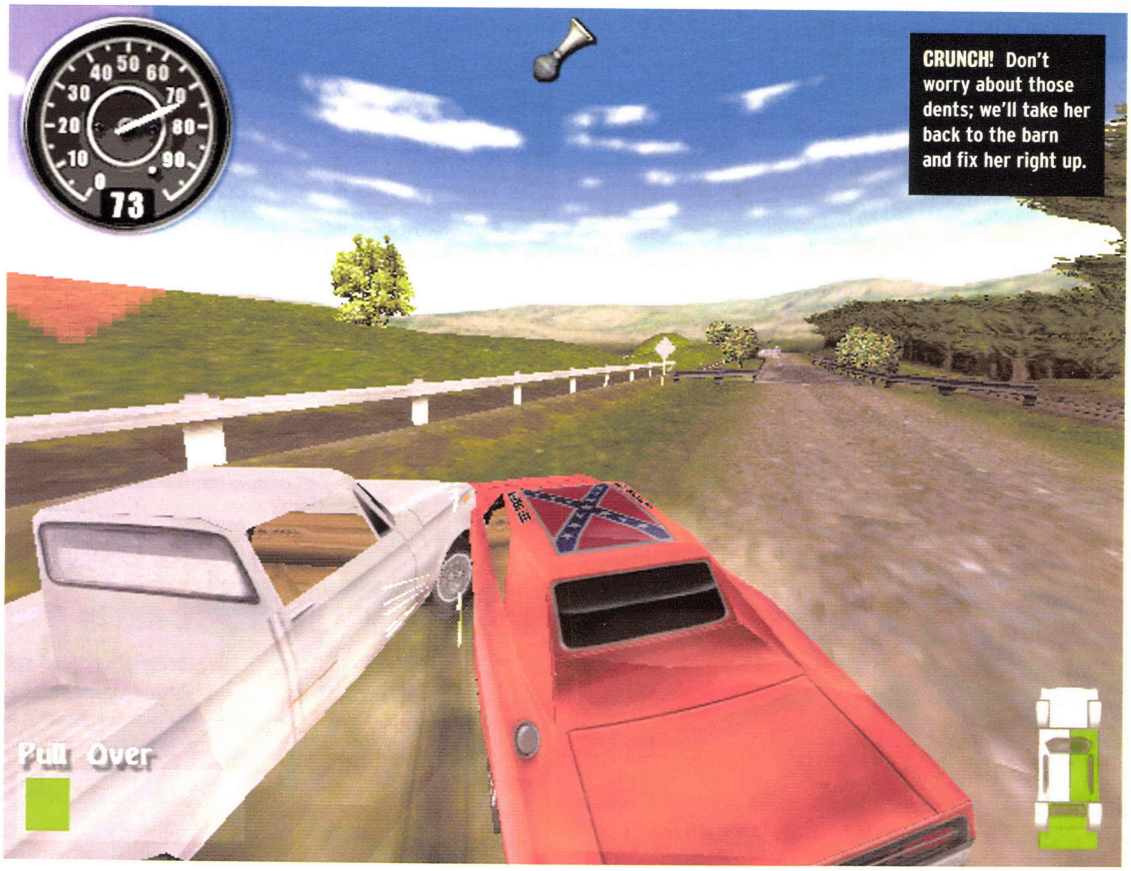
Playing as Bo or Luke (those scabs Coy and Vance couldn't weasel their way into this title), gamers will pilot the venerable General Lee and six other cars through some 27 missions. Expect such exciting mission objectives as saving the family farm, defending the vaunted Duke name, and rescuing cousin Daisy. Ah... cousin Daisy.

In keeping with everything Duke, the game will sport numerous chases between our heroes and that no-good snake, Jefferson Davis "Boss" Hogg, and the hapless



THIS AIN'T NO MADISON COUNTY **This here bridge is in Hazzard county.**

Rosco P. Coltrane. Anyone who's ever seen the show knows those two yokels Hogg and Rosco are no matches for Bo and Luke. With that in mind, *Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home* will also boast an entirely new and frighteningly capable foe in the form of Black Jack Perril, who's taken a liking to Hazzard's favorite waitress, Daisy.



CRUNCH! **Don't worry about those dents; we'll take her back to the barn and fix her right up.**



FOR MY DEAD HOMEYZ Boss died in '94 – you'll have to settle for an impersonator.

This game will have just about what you'd expect: lots of racing, lots of shooting, and lots of crashing.

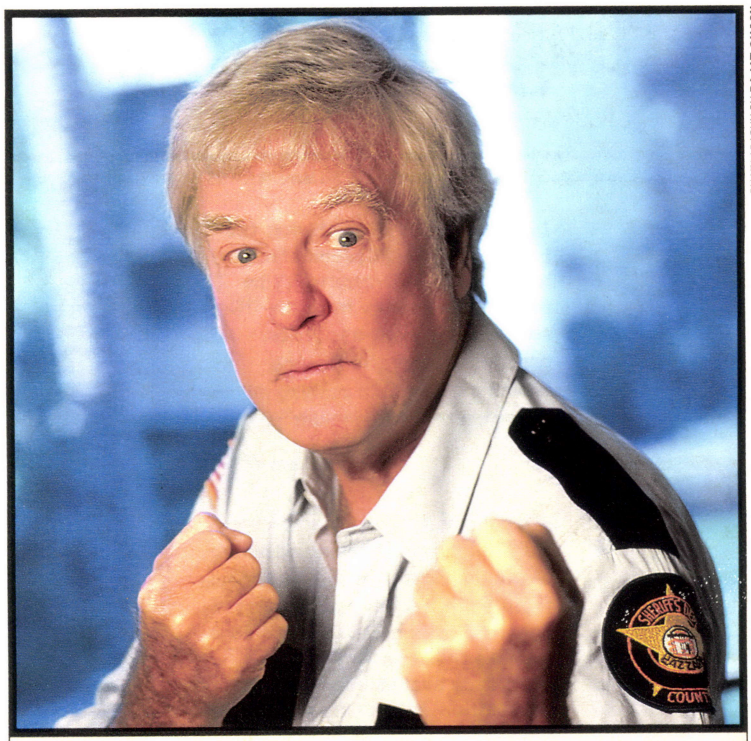
It just wouldn't be the Dukes if the game didn't involve jumping over inconspicuous ramps that just happen to be attached to the back of cars and semis, *ChiPs*-style. Gamers will jump obstacles like creeks, roadblocks, and big-ass trucks. That being said, collisions and accidents will cause damage to the cars, which will affect performance. And racers will then be required to repair their vehicles in a timely fashion if they don't want to lose time or get hauled in by Hazzard's hardly capable law-enforcement officers.

In the spirit of good old American competition, *Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home* will feature three multiplayer options, including Time Trial, Race, and Run the Jug, where players race to transport liquor without getting caught by the long arm of the law. And it will support two players on a split screen.

If you've been stifling urges to run out and buy an old Dodge Charger, *Racing for Home* hopes to give you all the creek-jumpin', moonshine-swillin', and car-chasin' fun you can handle.



WHERE'S ROSCO?! In *Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home*, you'll spend a good amount of time in the air. Yee-haw!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH

FROM SHERIFF TO GAME DESIGNER?

GOOD OL' BOY

James Best, also known as **Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane,** shoots the bull about computer gaming and doing voiceovers

So, you're a computer game connoisseur?
Oh, yes. *The Dukes of Hazzard* game should have been a script for the show – might have been better than what we had on the air....

How was it doing the voiceovers?
It was very easy for me. I had a good time. [Sinister Games was] more equipped than Warner Brothers. [*Laughs.*] They were serious about the games and so am I.

What type of games do you enjoy?
I'm very much into combat – man against man. I play *Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch* with my fans. I love it; it's like a grown-up hide-and-go-seek.

So gamers can go online and challenge you to a deathmatch?
Yes. You see, I'm an artist and I paint, and I'll have combat games, and the ones who win will get a print of my paintings. So there's an incentive to beat my tush.

When did you start playing games?
I started with *Pong. Tomb Raider* I like very much. I go way back to *Donkey Kong* and *Pac-Man.* I'm 73 years old now, and it keeps me vital, my mind stimulated, and is good for my coordination.

What did you think of your rendered self in the game?
[*Adopts Rosco's voice*] Khee hee hee! He's really aggressive in the game. I wish I could've been more like that on the show.

How many cop cars did you go through on the set of the show?
I know they went through over 300 police cars. We had two garages working at all times. We'd crash them on one side and crash them on the other, and if there was anything left, we'd jump them.

What about your plans for the future?
I've got a couple of ideas for a video game. I'm very creative that way. I don't know technically how to put it down, or how they go about shooting it, but I've been in the business long enough and played enough games to know. I talk to a lot of fans who play games, and I think I've got the hand on the pulse of what gamers would like to see, and I think I'm creative enough to come up with a couple of games that would be very entertaining and very exciting.

IT'S ON THE CD!
Play the *MTV Music Generator* demo on the *incite* CD-ROM!

Getting Digi With It

Forget about *Total Request Live*. Make your own damn music with the **MTV MUSIC GENERATOR**

■ PUBLISHER **Codemasters** ■ DEVELOPER **Jester Interactive** ■ GENRE **Music** ■ PLAYERS **1-4** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. I hate techno. Can I use the *MTV Music Generator* to make real music like rock 'n' roll?
A. You know it, Tasos. The riff library has thousands of sounds to choose from, so you'll be able to make everything from funk to heavy metal.

Q. I'm an .MP3 junkie. Can I export my songs to .MP3?
A. You sure can, my hyperactive raver friend. Export your songs to .MP3, pass out the E, and you and all your little techno buddies can groove until your parents wake up from their Valium-induced comas.

Don't worry: In spite of what the headline implies, Codemaster's *MTV Music Generator* won't be about taking songs from the '70s, adding some weak-ass lyrics, creating an exorbitant Hype Williams video, then cashing million-dollar checks "Willennium"-style.

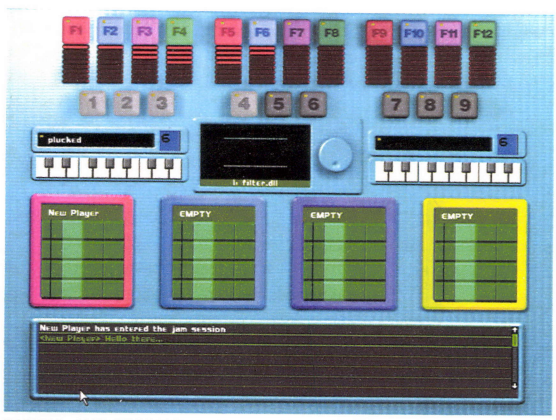
By William O'Neal

Codemasters' little game-cum-utility is about taking advantage of the technological and multimedia features that today's computers boast and giving people the means to make their own digital music.

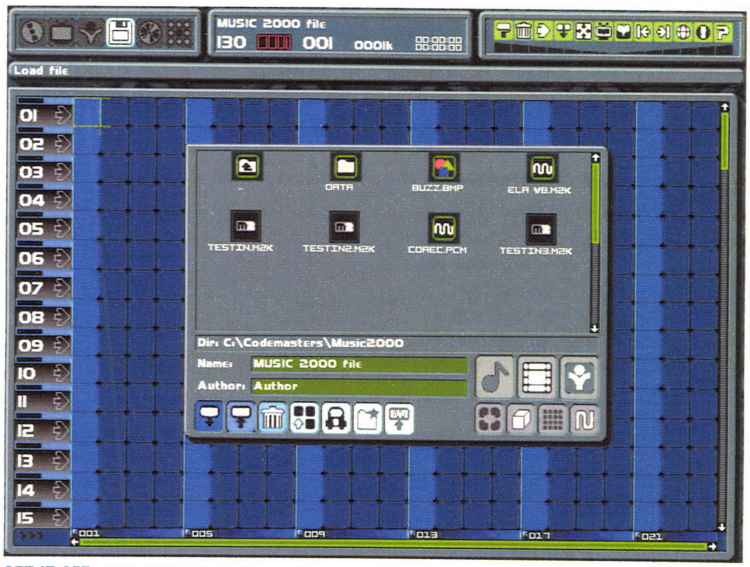
Already available for the PlayStation, it was only a matter of time before the *MTV Music Generator* made its way to the PC. It sports 3,000 riffs to choose from, so Codemasters hopes its offering will provide the key that unlocks the DJ Enki in all of us.

Expected to be in stores this summer, *MTV Music Generator* for the PC differs little from its PS cousin, and would-be musicians are going to love whiling away the hours making their own tracks. Now, with the PC version, players will enjoy some added features, including the ability to easily output songs to either .WAV or .MP3 format.

One of the things about the PS version of the game that annoyed the hell out us was seemingly slow load times. On the PC however, previewing tracks and riffs is significantly faster.



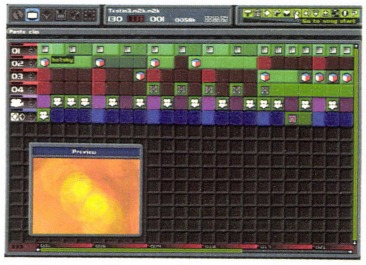
DIGITAL JAM SESSION In Jam mode, up to four composers over a LAN or the Internet can create music together.



SET IT OFF With *MTV Music Generator*, you will easily be able to load and save your epic musical creations. Look out, Grammys – here you come!

PC gamers can also expect a user interface that is much easier to navigate than the one on the PlayStation. The utility sports Windows-style drop-down menus, so selecting a track and dropping it into the mix should take only a couple of clicks. Furthermore, with *MTV Music Generator*, each song can potentially contain some 99 different channels. The thing is, though, few people are actually going to create songs that complex. What most of them will use are the game's available effects, such as reverb, vibrato, sample offset, and a variety of filters.

Similar to the PS version, the PC incarnation's riff library is fully customizable, and more experienced musicians will enjoy the ability to create their own riffs that they can then input into the software. And since the title is MIDI-compatible, those with the right equipment will be able to hook their musical instruments up directly to their computers and start making music. Taking advantage of yet another component of the PC, the *MTV Music Generator* will also be network-compatible. Up to four players can make music together in "virtual" jam sessions over a LAN or the Internet.



ROCK ON, MY BROTHER The *MTV Music Generator*'s interface is easy to use.

Seeing that multimedia is as much about sight as it is about sound, the *MTV Music Generator* also has a video feature that will enable players to create crazy-looking visual accompaniments to their audio masterpieces. Don't expect your video creations to win you any Moonmen at the next MTV Music Awards, but your buddies who like laser-light shows, Dave Chappelle movies, and brownies made with funny butter will love 'em.

William Congreve says, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast." With *MTV Music Generator*, it seems music will also waste many a man-hour.



IMPERIUM GALACTICA II
ALLIANCES

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Epic intergalactic action! Build and defend your empire on 80 different planets!



Use any means necessary! Gain universal supremacy with diplomacy and espionage!

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PC CD ROM

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Animated Violence

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BY STEVE KLETT

NOW HEAR THIS

IF YOU'RE A seasoned player, you probably feel the same way about PC game music as we do: It's about as welcome as the sound of jackhammers at 6 a.m. on Sunday. While the act of muting the soundtrack has become a standard ritual in gaming, you might want to think about kicking that habit and actually listening to it: What you hear may just surprise you. The quality of game music is increasing rapidly, and who knows? You might actually want to hear more even after you've finished playing the game.

Sweet-sounding game scores are nothing new – *Mask of Eternity* and *Grim Fandango* had tunes that rivaled an A-list movie epic – but they were few and far between. Once an afterthought, they've now become just as important to a game as its graphics and gameplay.

It's not just the gaming industry that's taking it more seriously: The



music world is starting to notice as well. Game soundtracks took a giant step toward gaining respect last year when they became eligible to be nominated for Grammy awards.

HARDCORE GAMES MEET HARDCORE ROCK

Leading this sonic renaissance are rock stars and even classical composers who see computer games as a new medium to display their talents. Hardcore rockers such as nine inch nails' Trent Reznor, ex-Anthrax lead guitarist and founder Daniel Spitz, and Fear Factory drummer Raymond Herrera have all stepped forward as avid gamers and jumped onto the game scene, hoping to improve the quality of music found in the games they like to play.

Game publishers, anxious to do whatever they can to make their games appeal to a wider, more mass-market audience, couldn't be happier. Big names such as David Bowie, Devo, and KISS have lent their names and music to games recently (*Omikron*, *I-82*, and *KISS: Psycho Circus*, respectively). Trent Reznor did the music for the original *Quake* in 1996. Following in Trent's footsteps, Rob Zombie and Sonic Mayhem contributed to *Quake II* and *III*, respectively. Cypress Hill provided the tunes for *Kingpin*. Fox Interactive's *Die Hard Trilogy 2* features a soundtrack by well-known electronica musician BT (see interview, page 52) and a theme song by rap artist Lil' Zane. Electronic Arts' list of artists for its *NBA Live* series alone reads like a Hall of Fame list for hip-hop, with artists such as Run DMC, Naughty

LEADING THE SONIC RENAISSANCE ARE ROCK STARS AND EVEN CLASSICAL COMPOSERS WHO SEE PC GAMES AS A NEW MEDIUM.

By Nature, funk legend George Clinton, and Rahzel contributing to *NBA Live 2000*'s soundtrack. Most recently, Mötley Crüe has signed on with Sierra to do the soundtrack for *Tribes 2* (see our exclusive interview with the band). Convinced yet?

CH-CH-CHANGES IN GAME SOUNDTRACKS

Not too long ago it was a lot harder to enlist music groups for a particular game. Even when a publisher was able to sign one up, original songs were unheard of. Bands typically recycled songs from their latest album, or even worse, handed down scrap that they didn't think was good enough to put on an album.

Though this practice still isn't extinct, more and more, artists are composing original music exclusively for a game. Mötley Crüe guitarist Mick Mars is writing new music for Sierra's *Tribes 2* soundtrack, none of which appears on the group's upcoming album, entitled *New Tattoo*.

The band Yes also comprises game music veterans, and they took the time to learn about *Homeworld* before getting the inspiration to compose a theme song for the sci-fi game. Though Fear Factory – which has done music for many console games – contributed some tracks from its albums to *Messiah* on the PC, the group also wrote and contributed an original song – entitled, wouldn't you know, *Messiah* – for the Interplay game. Fear Factory's game ambitions don't stop there: It's negotiating to write music for Infogrames' latest, *Alone in the Dark*, and also for Activision's *Dark Reign 2*. The band is even mulling over plans to develop its own game.

"I actually like writing music for games," says Fear Factory's Herrera. "I think it is a little easier [than writing for one of our albums], since you know exactly the type of track or tracks you need. I hear a lot of music nowadays that gets picked up for games, and I think a lot of stuff does not fit together. And because of the fact that I've been into both [games and music] for a long time, I know exactly what the game or games need."

Herrera's passion for video games goes back to the Atari 2600 and Intellivision days. Currently he enjoys playing mostly PlayStation and Dreamcast games, but he also says he spends some quality time with the cream of the first-person-shooter crop on the PC – *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament*, and *Kingpin*.

More and more, artists are composing original music exclusively for a game.

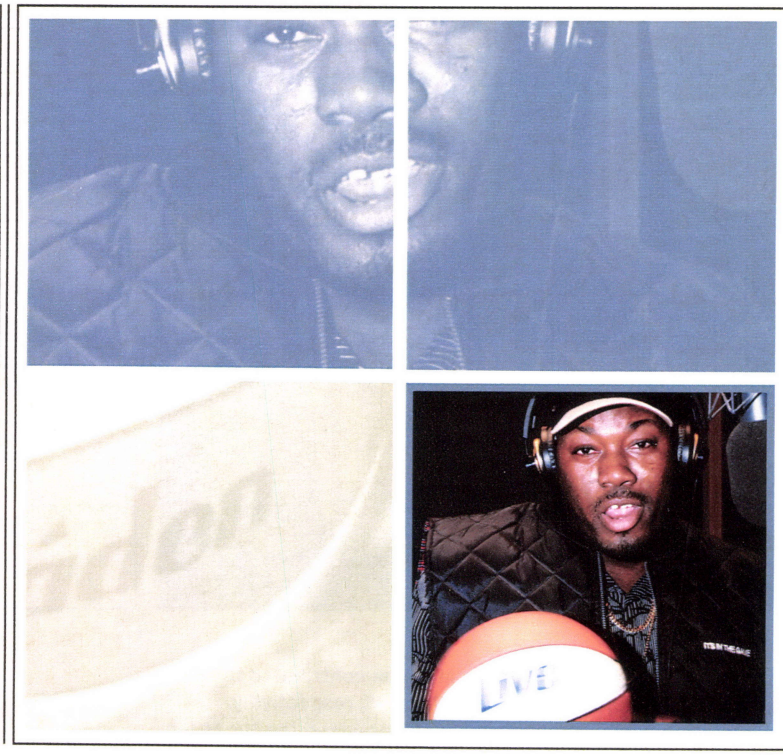
DIS-BANDED

Some rockers have even tried leaving the conventional music industry altogether in order to focus on games. Daniel Spitz abruptly left Anthrax about four years ago. After a bizarre stint in (of all things) fine watchmaking and repair, Spitz now concentrates on producing game music out of his new recording studio in New York.

"I don't do anything half-cocked. I'm building this studio for games and games only," says a charged-up Spitz. "It's going to be sick. That's all I've got to say. I don't plan on coming back to rock 'n' roll."

His love for games was born from his life on the road, when Spitz and other members of Anthrax would play all sorts of video games to pass the time. (Spitz enjoys driving games mostly.) However, while he was into the games themselves, much of the music didn't excite him, and he wanted to change that.

"I play a very heavy guitar. I basically invented my own sound,





<<< Rap star and *NBA Live* fanatic Rahzel gladly contributed material to *NBA Live 2001*.

and I felt it was something needed in this industry," says Spitz. "I decided it had to be done, and I built my own studio for the sole purpose of recording game music."

He plans to use his contacts with fellow rock musicians to the utmost for his new venture, too – so don't be shocked if you hear, say, Rush's Geddy Lee contributing a killer bass line, Spitz says. Anthrax is known for having broken the rules and forging its own style of music – it was among the first to fuse thrash metal and rap – and Spitz says he plans on breaking the rules when it comes to doing game music as well.





<<< Daniel Spitz, former guitarist for Anthrax, has started his own studio specifically for making game music.

AMONG THE LIVING

Though confident he's got the musical talent and connections to produce some killer game music, Spitz realizes it's a bit brash to think he knows everything there is to know. So he's undergone a partnership with an extremely successful game music composer, Kevin Manthei. Manthei has composed music for several PC games, including *Mask of Eternity*, *Civilization 2*, *Panzer General II*, and *Jagged Alliance 2*.

Manthei, meanwhile, is currently working on the musical

CRÜE'S CONTROL



WITH A NEW SONG BY MÖTLEY CRÜE AND AN ORIGINAL SCORE BY ITS GUITARIST, MICK MARS, *TRIBES 2* MIGHT BE THE MOST ROCKIN' GAME THIS YEAR. INTERVIEW BY PAUL SEMEL

Mick, how far along are you on the music for the game?
MICK MARS: I've been working on some stuff at home and gave [Sierra] a tape of about six minutes of stuff. But I play enough games to know that if you have a battle scene, I know how it should sound.

Are you other guys helping with the soundtrack music?
MICK: No. In fact, I actually have another drummer in mind. His name is Mike Malone; he's a guy I played with when I was a teenager.

What do you think of the music in most video games?
MICK: To me, all of it is pretty much the same, which is why I'm going to do something a little different, a little heavier, a little more out there.

Are there any plans to do a soundtrack album for the game?
MICK: No, I doubt it. The pieces I have are not complete songs; they're just riffs.

Nikki, are there any games you won't let your kids play?
NIKKI SIXX: The *South Park* game, which was just cussing constantly. My kids were sitting at the kitchen table: "Shit, poop, crap." It's not time for them to use that language. Maybe when they're teenagers, but not now.

***Tribes 2* features a song from your upcoming album. Are you writing a specific song for it?**
NIKKI: No, [Sierra] is going to chose a song from our album. We're letting them help us with the decision.

I assume you'll be touring this year as well.
NIKKI: Yeah, when the album comes out, we're going to tour with Megadeth and one other band on the Maximum Rock tour.

Nikki, do you have any plans to tour with your other band, 58?
NIKKI: Never. I'm not going to take away from Mötley Crüe. Tommy [Lee, the Crüe's ex-drummer] made the biggest mistake he could ever make. I don't think you have to quit a band to do a solo album.

What did you think of the album he made as Methods of Mayhem? Were you even able to listen to it objectively?
NIKKI: Yeah. [*To Mick*] What did you think of it?
MICK: Uh... [*Smiles at Nikki.*]
NIKKI: [*Smiles at Mick.*]
[*Silence.*]

Okay...well, this album is the first you've done without him. How has that changed things?
NIKKI: With no disrespect to Randy or Tommy, the drums are part of the vibe, but you listen to the guitars and vocals. Bass and drums are the least important part of the big picture. It's about the guitar, the song, the lyrics. And I think that's rock 'n' roll.

Mötley Crüe's new album will be out in June.

score for Shiny's upcoming game *Sacrifice* and Activision's forthcoming *Vampire The Masquerade: Redemption*. He is also active in the film and TV worlds, where his music credits include work on *Scream* and *Scream 2, The Faculty, Deep Impact, 54,* and *Air Force One*.

"I'm striving to give games a cinematic feel. I don't want to 'game up' my music," explains Manthei. "I want my music to say, 'Hey, this is film-score quality. This is cinematic.'"

NAILING A TUNE

Like Herrera and Spitz, nine inch nails' Trent Reznor got involved with the CD-ROM soundtrack scene because he was a gamer. Reznor may not have been the first name musician to contribute to a game, but he was certainly one of the first well-known rock artists to contribute to an A-list title – *Quake*. The marriage of *Quake*'s fast, brutal gameplay and nine inch nails-style atmospheric music was a huge hit among both *Quake* and nine inch nails fans.

Reznor was a fan of id Software's games, and wanted to do his part to give gamers a better listening experience. And, like many musicians, he thought most game music was not very good. "Of course, I'm probably paying more attention to it than the average player," says Reznor, "but it seems to me – and I don't know if this is really the case – but [game] music seems to be an afterthought. It's not up to the same level of scrutiny as the music from films."

NO PIE IN THE SKY

Veteran game-music composers won't dispute Reznor's observations. LucasArts' Peter McConnell, best known for his work on *Full Throttle, Grim Fandango,* and *Jedi Knight*, is quick to agree: "Game music in general was most definitely an afterthought as little as a few years ago, but now the quality needs to be there for an A-list title," he says. And, he adds, the recognition of that quality is rising.

"Our industry is growing tremendously, and we're heading toward the mainstream. A lot more people know our music now than used to." McConnell, who most recently produced the remixed techno *Star Wars* score for *Force Commander*, says he runs into a lot of strangers now that, while not hardcore gamers, know the music he produced for *Grim Fandango*. Not coincidentally, this was one of the examples of game music used to persuade the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) to make game music eligible for Grammy recognition this year.

Reznor wanted to do his part to give gamers a better listening experience.

THE VETERANS

With all of the flashy newcomers to the game music biz, it's easy to overlook the pioneers. In addition to Manthei and McConnell, the forefathers include Tommy Tallarico and Chance Thomas.

Tallarico has been involved with game sound and music for more than 150 PC and console games – including *Messiah, Wheel of Time, MDK,* and the *Unreal* mission pack. One of his current projects is *Unreal 2*. He also hosts a soon-to-be national TV show about gaming called *The Electric Playground*. (See the *incite* CD-ROM for interactive *Electric Playground* news.)

Thomas may be an even wider-recognized personality. According to a market survey quoted on his company's Web site, people from every zip code in America have an

DANCE | HARDER

YOU CAN ENJOY THE SOOTHING ELECTRONIC SOUNDS OF HIP-HOP ARTIST BT IN *DIE HARD TRILOGY 2*.

How would you describe your music if it were being said by the guy who does sound bites for a *Die Hard* movie? Y'know, the guy who says, "A roller coaster ride of chills, spills, and thrills."
Oh, my god. [*Laughs.*] I'd have to think about that one. The kind of music I make is really powerful, emotive, transcendental electronic music. It's not sterile at all. I'm into making things sound organic and warm.

Which of *Die Hard Trilogy 2*'s three games do you like the best?
The one where you're running down the hallways shooting things. That's more my kind of vibe. I'm not that big on shooting gallery kinds of things, and there's only one driving game that I really like: *Gran Turismo*. But then I'm a picky bastard.

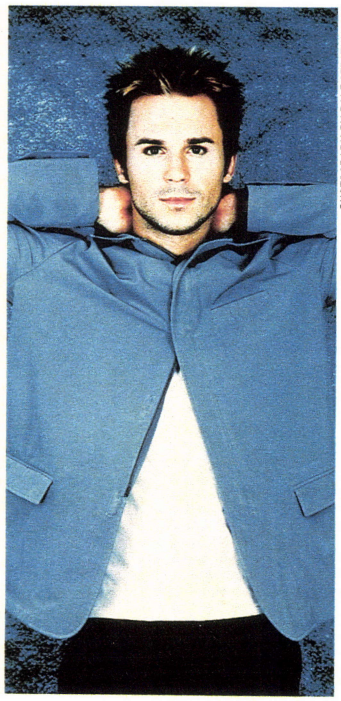
What other computer games do you play?
When I was 13 or 14 I was addicted to *Zork*. But when I play video games, I want to chill out; I'm not looking to blow people apart. *Doom* and *Quake* are cool, but they're a bit too much sometimes.

Are you planning to release the music you did for this game on a separate music-only CD?
We are talking about it. People think it would make a really good album, so we might do something with it.

Did any of the music you did for *Die Hard Trilogy 2* wind up, in some form, on your new album?
No. There may be a couple break beats in some tracks, but nothing directly was used. But then, that's the fun of doing things like this: You get to do things that you wouldn't do on an album.

–PS

BT's new album, *Movement in Still Life*, is out June 6. See www.incite.com for more info.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RALF STRATHMANN

example of his work in their home. Honored with Emmy, Telly, and Aurora awards, Thomas is among those working in game music who hope to perhaps win a Grammy for their efforts someday. If he does, he'll have himself and a few friends to thank.

AND THE GRAMMY GOES TO...

Thomas – with the help of Tallarico and McConnell, among others – spearheaded an effort to make game music eligible for Grammy nomination, which finally paid off this year. Although no games were nominated – currently there is no stand-alone category for game music, and thus it must compete with the work of such popular artists as Phil Collins, John Williams, and Celine Dion – the door was opened for game music to one day gain the same level of recognition as film soundtracks.

Game music may one day gain the same level of recognition as film soundtracks.

Thomas explains, "Currently we share three categories with music makers from film and television. That's three more categories than we had access to last year, or ever before in Grammy history." He likened the process of getting game music such recognition to that of getting a bill passed in congress. "It's got all the same lobbying, constituency building, politicking, backroom deal making, and eleventh-hour compromises," he says.

Game music's foot in the door with the Grammys will likely spur more publishers to release stand-alone game soundtracks in an effort to get their games more publicity, which may lead to a separate Grammy category for game music – eventually. As Tallarico quips, "If polka has its own category, game music should too."

Even though more game music soundtracks are being released as stand-alone albums, more game-industry members need to line the ranks of NARAS before you will likely see game music actually win. Thomas firmly believes that day is not far off. He boldly predicts that "a breakaway mainstream hit song" from a game is as inevitable as screaming girls at a Backstreet Boys concert. And, he says, "A brilliant game score will become so critically acclaimed that it will force the entire entertainment establishment – press included – to redefine their perception of game music. Consequently, this will also affect their packaging and presentation of game music to the public at large."

Thomas' prognostications may be far-fetched: It's going to take some time for the burgeoning medium to achieve full-blown respectability in the mainstream music business. However, game-music creators – and their legions of loyal fans – can at least be encouraged by the fact that the gaming audience is only going to get larger. Here's hoping that more and more of them turn the volume on their games up, not down.

EA ROCKS IT



SHE'S NOT TRASH
Garbage and Shirley Manson (left) helped out EA with a few tracks.

ELECTRONIC ARTS HAS BEEN SIGNING HOT BANDS FOR YEARS.

When it comes to signing hot musical talent, there's Tommy Motola, David Geffen...and Electronic Arts?! For game soundtracks, few companies know more than EA. Garbage, Run DMC, Naughty By Nature, Reel Big Fish, Joe Satriani, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Blues Traveler, among others, have appeared on EA's *NHL*, *NBA Live*, *FIFA*, and *NASCAR* soundtracks. And, according to Randy Eckhardt, director of music relations at EA, this trend won't stop anytime soon. In fact, signing name bands to work on game soundtracks is standard EA operating procedure.

"The expectation [for name talent] is definitely there now from consumers," says Eckhardt. "The pipeline and communication levels are opening up to work with these guys more, and they see the opportunity as a new creative canvas for themselves as well."

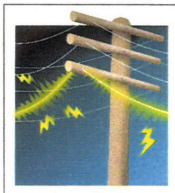
However, finding the right artists isn't as easy as you might think. For *NBA Live 2000*, Senior Composer/Producer Traz Damji and crew listened to more than 1,000 songs, traveled to countless record stores, evaluated many songs from record companies, and clicked their way through countless artist Web pages.

To meet the NBA's rigorous standards, each potential song must be scoured for sex, drug, and gang references and bad language. Many hip-hop/rap artists are known for having most or all of the above in their music, which further complicates the matter.

NBA Live 2000's theme song, "Shake the Floor," which Damji composed himself, is performed by Rahzel, self-proclaimed "Godfather of Noyze" and part of the band The Roots. Rahzel is a big fan of the *NBA Live* series and was only too happy to contribute, says Damji.

NBA Live fans can expect music from mainstream and up-and-coming artists on *NBA Live 2001* and other upcoming EA Sports games.

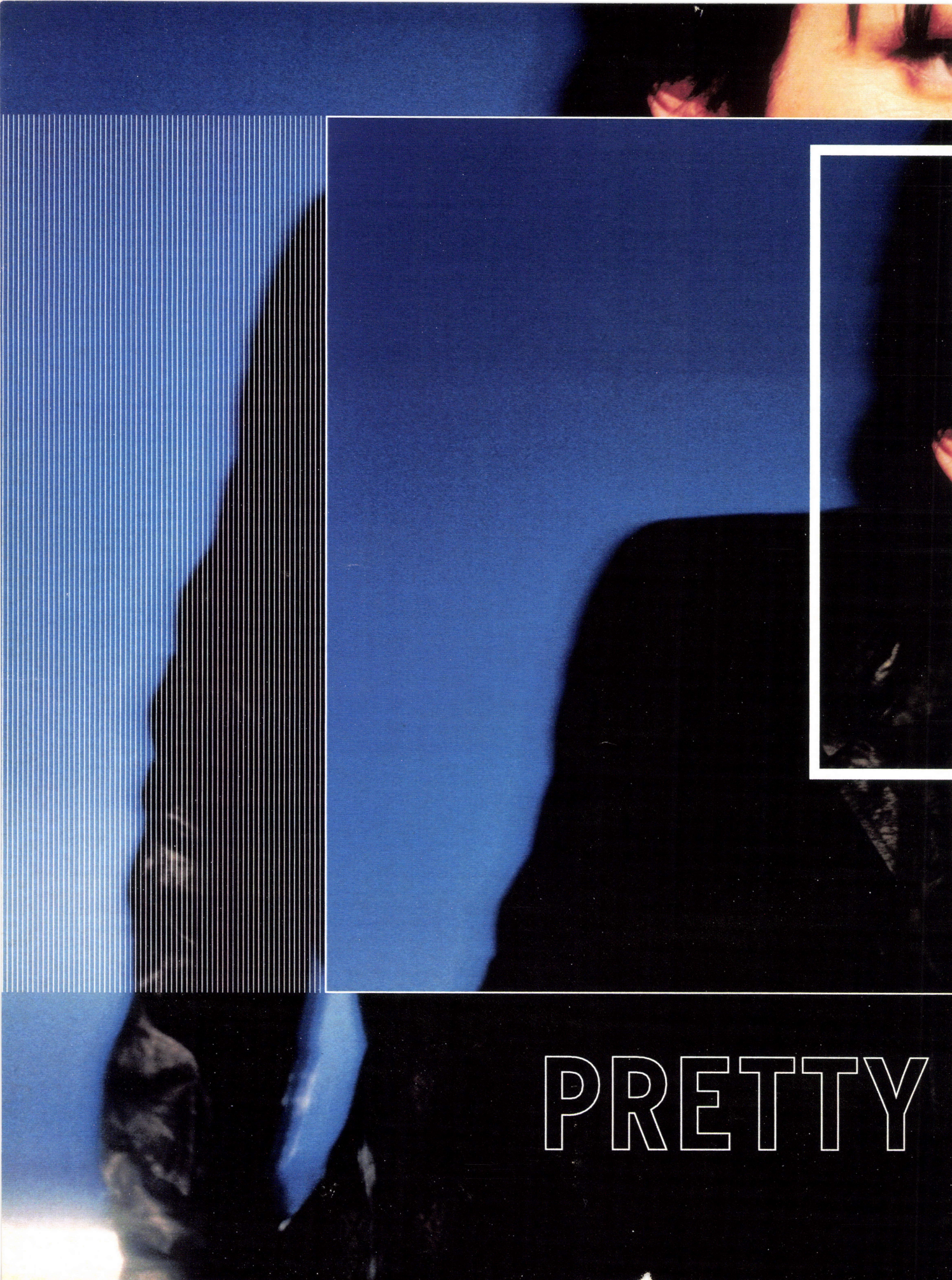
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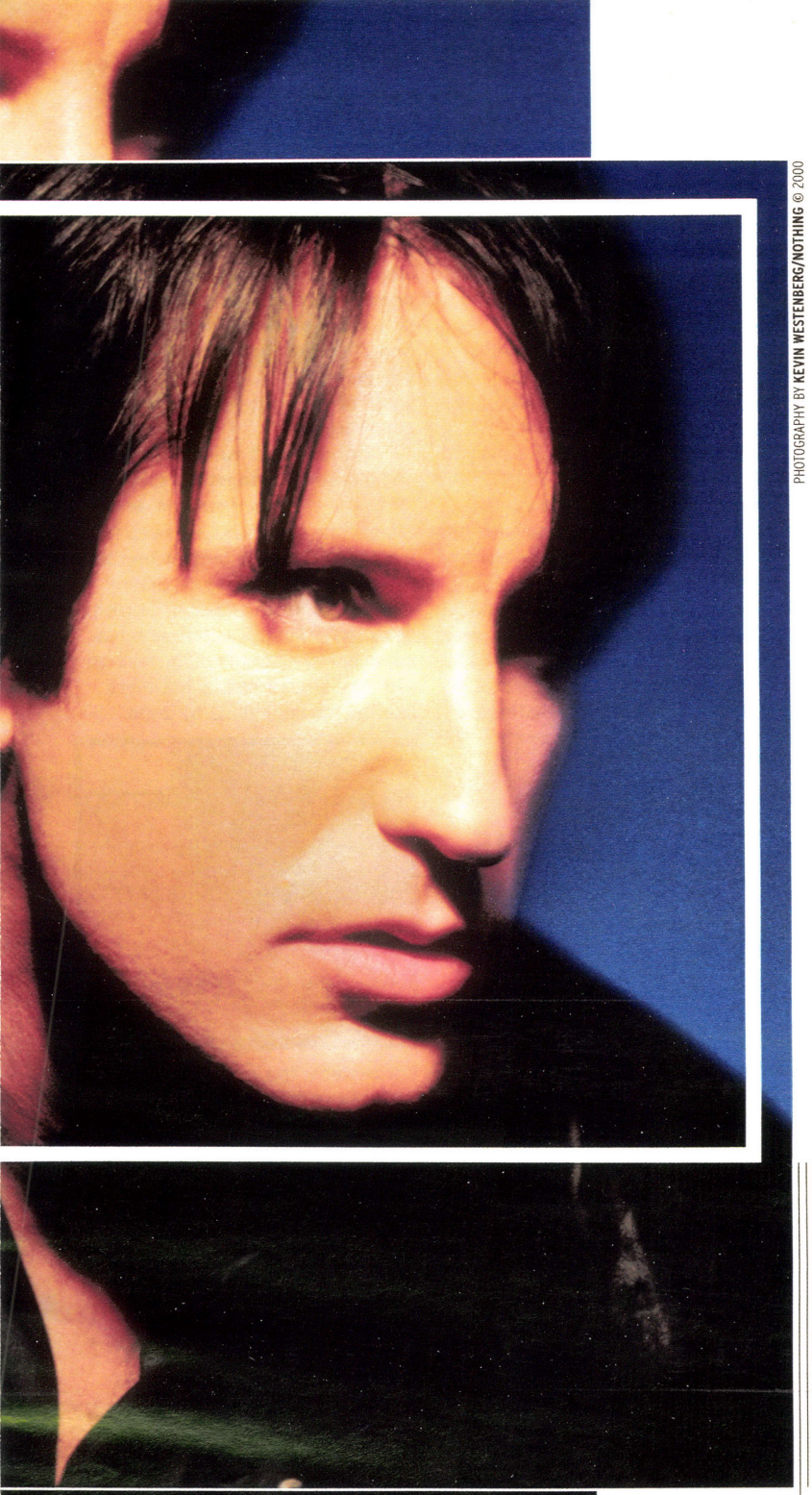


IT'S ONLINE!

incite.com has even more great information about music in computer games. Go to www.incite.com and check out:

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- **A comprehensive guide to MP3 players and PC sound hardware**
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PRETTY



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QUAKE MACHINE

TRENT REZNOR DID THE MUSIC FOR *QUAKE*. WILL HE DO IT AGAIN?

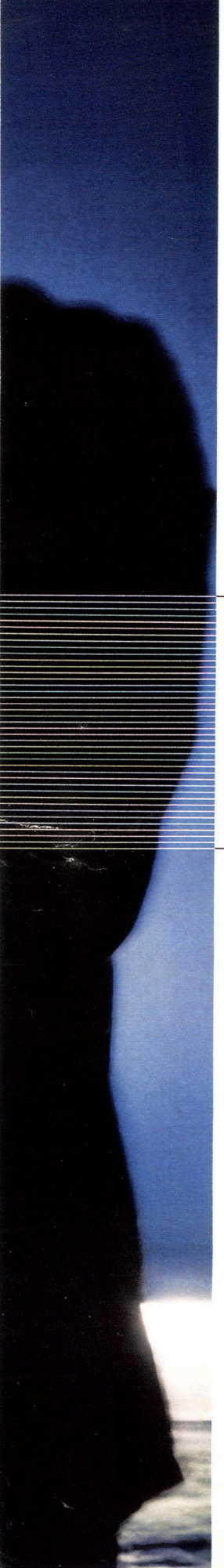
BY PAUL SEMEL

>>> **THE LYRICS** in a rock song can be tantalizingly mysterious. Consider "Somewhat Damaged," a track from nine inch nails' *the fragile*. One of its lines – "this machine is obsolete" – could be just another brutally honest statement of self-examination common to many of its songs.

Then again, it could just mean lead guitarist Trent Reznor needs a new 3D card. The idea that Reznor likes video games probably seems about as far-fetched as alien abduction, but it's true. Hell, even he has a hard time believing it himself. Then he reminds himself that he did both the music and sound effects for the original *Quake* back in 1996 – before it became trendy for rock bands to have their music in games. The more we think about it, "Somewhat Damaged" may just be about an outdated PC after all.

GAME ORIGINS

Reznor is relatively new to PC games: He's a die-hard Mac man. "I was never aware of what was going on in the PC world until someone showed me *Castle Wolfenstein 3D*," he admits. "I'd never gone near a PC; that's a bad word around the studio. We're all Mac people, since most of the music software is written for Mac. But when I saw *Wolfenstein* I went out and bought whatever it was at the time, 386,



486, and we got hooked. The sense of being immersed in the game really struck a chord with me. And when we were rehearsing for *the downward spiral* tour, *Doom* came out, and I was like, 'Oh, my god.' So now every six months a major [PC] upgrade goes on around here."

HOOKING UP WITH ID

Trent's love of *Doom* eventually led to him meeting the guys at id Software, which in turn led him to do the music and sound effects for the original *Quake*.

"I really did [the music for *Quake*] because I was into the game. It wasn't for the money, because I didn't make anything, really, and it wasn't because I wanted to appeal to some new demographic. When [creator] John Carmack said, 'Hey, one of the new weapons is a nail gun. What if the ammo packs had the nine inch nails logo on it?' I was like, 'Hell, yeah – that would be cool!'" recalls the edgy rocker, who had been looking for a diversion. "Musically," he says, "it was fun to work outside of nine inch nails and make some cool atmospheres." The fact that he was already addicted to the game made his decision to help Carmack out a lot easier.

Trent wrote new music for the game, though he's quick to point out the *Quake* tunes shouldn't be thought of as a lost nine inch nails album. "I remember when it came out," he says, "and it said, 'New nine inch nails music.' But I always thought that was an inappropriate way to look at it. For what it was, it's good, but it's not meant to be listened to on its own."

PRODUCTIVITY VIA DEATHMATCHES

Trent is such a fan of video games that when asked why there was a five-year gap between *the fragile* and it's predecessor, *the downward spiral,* he jokes that *Quake II* was to blame. But the truth, he says, is actually the opposite.

"What I've learned about creativity," he explains, leaning back into his easy chair, "is that it's not anything you can force. Sometimes you need to get your mind off of what you're working on. And video games are a healthy way of distracting your mind. I'll often reach a brick wall, where I just can't find the right line or the right melody. But what we've done here at the studio is create a bunch of distractions so you can step out of what you're doing and change your head space. You can play a video game, then you can come back, and often the problem has gone away."

For Trent, gaming isn't just a solitary love. Many of the other people who hang out with him at his studio are also gamers, some worse than him. "It's more just a hobby. Instead of talking what engines are in our cars, we talk about what graphics cards are in our PCs."

While recording *the fragile* in their studio, the band set up a LAN and discovered the world of online multiplayer deathmatches. "That," Reznor remembers, "was our downfall. I'd need some guitar parts, so I'd sit and just play over a loop for two hours, and then go away and come back with fresh ears. Of course, that buys you an hour to screw off, so we'd go upstairs and play *Weapons Factory,* our favorite mod for *Quake*. It's class-based play, where you have to work with a team, and your team isn't the guys sitting next to you. That's a pretty cool way to interact with people."

FUTURE PROJECTS

True Reznor followers may have noticed he hasn't done the music for any other video games.

"I've declined for a number of reasons," he says. "I was even asked to do *Quake II* and *III,* but the direction was to do music that would amp you up to play, and that doesn't interest me that much. Nor do I want to be alongside band X, Y, and Z. I mean, how many times did you play *Crazy Taxi* before you said, 'Whoa, stop, turn the damn Offspring off!'"

Reznor hasn't ruled out game collaborations altogether, though. "If I were to do any more in an interactive situation," he says, "it would have to be a project that had the same mood and atmosphere. What I was hoping to achieve with the *Quake* music was not so much some adrenaline-pumping, 'let's go kick ass' kind of music, but more like the music in films by John Carpenter – the tension and uneasiness – or David Lynch, the dissonance or sound as atmosphere enhancement. So if it was a game that had the same sensibility, I could be swayed to do it when I had the time. That's been another factor of why I haven't taken on others of these projects. I'd want to dedicate some time to it."

When Trent might find that time, though, is anyone's guess. He's currently playing games on nine inch nails' American tour, and then he'll head overseas, where he'll play games at some European festivals. And when he's not playing games, Trent will be working on the next nine inch nails album.

"I'm bringing a rig with me," he says, "though it takes [a lot] of discipline to write on the road. When you do have time off, you just want to sleep." His next album is still in the planning stages, but Reznor knows one thing for sure: "It won't be much like *the fragile.* It'll be a noisier album, less lush, more minimalistic – as of right now. I say things and then it changes when I sit

LICK AROUND DIVINE DEBRIS
TASTE THE WEALTH OF HATE IN ME
SHEDDING SKIN SUCCUMB DEFEAT
THIS MACHINE IS OBSOLETE

–"SOMEWHAT DAMAGED," *THE FRAGILE*



down and actually do it. But *the fragile* was about no restrictions, and I think what would be healthy for me right now would be to make an album with limitations.

"Like, every song has to be done in two days. And if it sucks, no one has to hear it. But I like tricking myself into thinking a different way. When I write, I write with the computer. It's my pen and paper but it's also my arranger, and my brain thinks the way it does. But the rig we're taking out to write on is a different way of approaching things. It's more mixer-oriented than sequencer-oriented, and will make me wrap my head around things in a different way. And it's a welcome change."

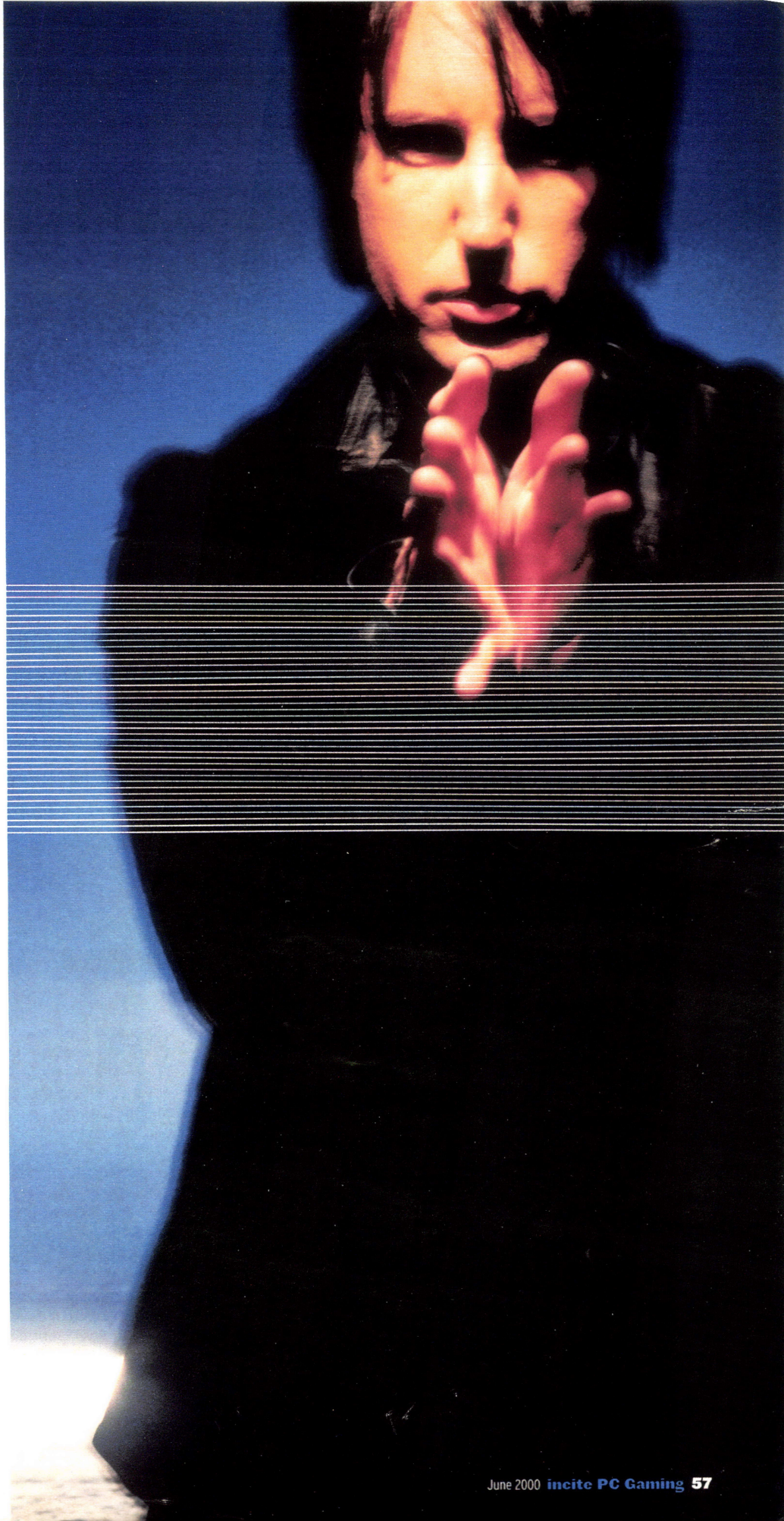
Besides the next album, Trent also has two side projects he's working on. "One is the band Tapeworm," he explains, "which is the guys in the live band and me working as a democracy. What's good about that is that all the weight isn't on my shoulders, and I can take a more casual approach towards it. Which is not to say it's not important, but I don't agonize over every minute detail. And it's a chance for other people to speak up.

"I've also been thinking about working with another vocalist, something where I would do the music, and they could take the lyrics in a different direction. And what I've been leaning towards is female, but with a more soulful approach. Someone like Sade, not the female counterpart of me."

He continues, "I'm into the idea of synthesis through throwing in disparate ideas. But I also need something to motivate me. The trouble with working by yourself is that all the pressure's on you to inspire yourself."

FANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE

Regardless of what Trent does next – a new nine inch nails album, a side project, or the music to a video game – he has established enough of a track record that he's assured people will like it. But those fans would be surprised to learn that a particular sequence of Reznor's tormented lyrics might not have been an anthem to pain, angst, and loss – it might just have meant it was time for him to upgrade that 3D card again.



Kiss your cassettes and CDs goodbye. **MP3s** are tomorrow's music standard



BY DARREN GLADSTONE

MP3

GETTING YOUR DIGITAL GROOVE ON

MP3s means digital music, pure and simple. CD-quality music coded, compressed, and stored in a file about 4MB in size. You can find MP3s in three ways: download royalty-free music off the Internet, use CD copying software, or just start playing a game – 'cause they're using MP3s as well.

So, how do games use MP3s?
A lot of games are now using MP3 file for their soundtracks instead of WAV or MIDI. *FIFA 2000, MTV Music Generator, Quake II* – you name it. And nestled deep within those game directories you're bound to find some musical gems.

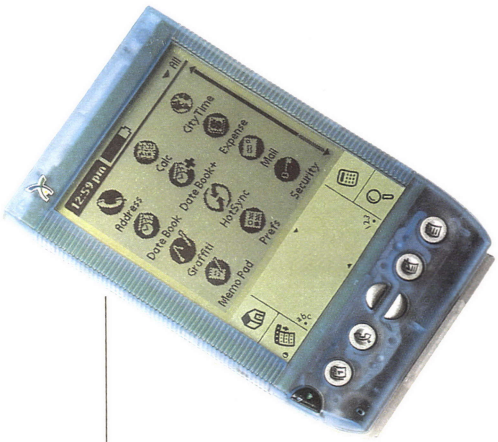
What if I want to do a little creative gaming?
Then check out *The Sims.* You can buy a stereo to start your own SimRave™, but did you know that you can load in your own musical selections? Go to your *Sims* directory and look for The Sims\Music\Stations. Pick a genre and load in shortcuts to some MP3s. So now, when you switch over the "Rock" station on your SimBoomBox™ you can rock out to PowerMan 5000, Billy Joel, or whatever the hell tickles your musical fancy.



If you prefer the all-in-one solution, check out **Creative Labs' Nomad JukeBox** (www.creative.com). This 6GB MP3 player is roughly the size of a portable CD player and can store a hearty number of MP3 tracks. Expected out by summer for about **$500,** this could very well serve as a portable unit and a component for your home system, with its RCA outjacks and remote control-enabled infrared port.



The MusicStore and **SoulMate** (www.memcorp.com) make an interesting combination that doesn't even require a computer. Drop a CD into the MusicStore and it will store the music as MP3s. It can house up to 100 CDs worth of MP3 files, so use it as a component in your rack system if you want, or plug it into the portable SoulMate to take an hour's worth of MP3s on the road. The set will cost around **$400.**



If you have a **Handspring Visor** (www.handspring.com), an MP3 cartridge will be available soon for about **$100** (the Visor goes for $150). But if you're using a Windows CE PDA, you've already got an MP3 player in your hand; just download some software at www.xaudio.com. And that's not all. Ericsson (www.ericsson.com) has a prototype MP3 player that attaches to the bottom of cell phones. Now *that's* mobile.



Diamond Multimedia's Rio 500 (www.diamondmm.com) comes with 64MB internal memory and uses a neat shuttle-jog dial for picking songs. A unique feature is a folder system that allows you to break out songs by genre... or whatever floats your boat. In short, it's well worth the **$250** price tag.

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Weasely lawyer disclaimer: Our contest is totally subjective. If you pick some sucky-ass music, rest assured you will not get squat except a heaping dose of derision.

COMPUTEC MEDIA



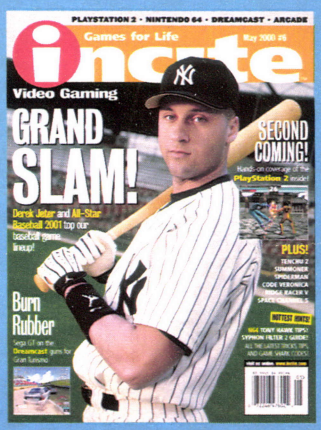
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incite

Space Invader

Is PowerMan 5000 going to take over the world? Stay tuned....

The guys in PowerMan 5000 look like they may have just come out of some '50s sci-fi comic book... and that's all a part of the master plan. Since their latest album, *Tonight the Stars Revolt!*, came out in September 1999, tracks like "When Worlds Collide" and "Nobody's Real" began to sneak their way up the charts with the energy of a Flash Gordon death ray.

Sure, PowerMan 5000 goes for the sci-fi angle with their music and presentation – their videos and music portray an almost campy view of the future – but just how plugged-in are they? When the band recently descended upon San Francisco, we had the chance to catch up with the leader of the pack, Spider One, to find out for ourselves.

It seems the band has an almost superhero vibe. Do you read comics?
I used to be into comics as a kid. The whole Marvel Comics thing: *The Defenders, The Fantastic Four,*

BY DARREN GLADSTONE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH
Shot at The Fillmore, San Francisco

"Y'know, **for a guy that likes to keep on yapping** about the future, I sure do like to keep things simple."

Spiderman, Powerman [hence the band's name]. Comics introduced me to this whole other world. Being seven years old, you have a different view of what the future is going to be like. That kind of sparked the need to create. And the superhero-team vibe is definitely a part of the recent album. But that's only part of it. There are so many elements on so many different levels that helped contribute to the feel of the band. The whole idea of [PowerMan 5000] is to create something that can go in any given direction. We've created something that allows us to totally switch it up. The next album could be something totally different – imagewise as well as musically.

Did science fiction also play a part in *Tonight the Stars Revolt?*
Yes, but it was more of just a starting point for this record. We were focused, going back to those classic '50s sci-fi movies. We looked at them artworkwise and for their nostalgic, almost naïve views of the future.

It wasn't just a musical inspiration?
No. It's more than just about the music, but about the creative process in general. For example,



ACTION ROCK Spider One (center) and PowerMan 5000 think they're the comic book version of a rock band.



I laid out the artwork for the album. I pretty much don't trust anybody when it comes to that stuff. [*Laughs.*] You end up with a more focused and cooler thing for people to experience, 'cause it's all coming from the same place. A lot of bands write amazing songs. Then they pass off the rest of the process to someone else.

Your band members' names are Spider One, Adam12, Dorian27, M33, Al3. What's with all the numbers?
Everyone gravitated towards their own numbers.... It's more of a vibe of the whole name of the band having a number at the end. And everyone's got a number, buddy. You do too.

Does that have anything to do with your view of the future?
Well, the '50s always had this naïve vision of everything being done for you. That is actually a frightening thought. There was a time in life that people could fix most things. If you had a broken toaster or something went wrong with your car, you could usually work out the mechanics of it. But that barrier between how things work and how to fix them is getting greater.

So, those who have the knowledge are the ones in control....
Exactly. So many common appliances have computer chips in them now. Knowing which button to press is one thing, but only a handful of people actually knows how to fix them. I don't like that we're so reliant on certain technologies just to get by. And without them, we'd be lost. As we go on, only a small part of the population will be in control of the knowledge. I guess the lesson is to learn as much as you can about what we're doing. Y'know, for a guy that likes to keep on yapping about the future, I sure do like to keep things simple.

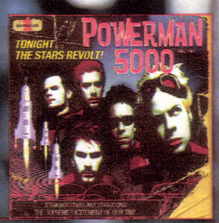
Do you use computers on the road?
Yep. I just got a new G3 Notebook ... and I love it. I'm using Photoshop, Quark....That's what I use working on the album art. And being able to watch DVDs on them is pretty neat. Just sit on my bunk and I can tune out the world. I think it'd be funny to bust it out on a plane and try to watch a porno... just to see the reactions of the people around me.

Do you like playing games too?
Yeah, I do, but it's actually kind of embarrassing 'cause it's so addictive. It's called *After Dark Games.* There's one part of it called "Mowing Maniacs," and I'm totally hooked. You control this guy on a lawn mower cutting the grass. You're chased by dogs and zombies and stuff... and that's what I'm talking about. Go back to the early Atari stuff and its simplicity. I want to be able to pick up the controller without a learning curve. That's the sort of stuff that I'm attracted to. I don't want to learn 40 different buttons for a game.

PowerMan 5000 is currently touring Europe with Pantera.

▲ PowerMan 5000: The Game

What does Spider One think would comprise the perfect PowerMan 5000 game? "I'd love to make some kinda crazy sci-fi game with giant robots. I like those '50s robot designs with giant claw hands and vacuum-cleaner-hose arms. I actually prefer that stuff to the Japanese [anime] high-tech robots and stuff. [PowerMan 5000] could save the day against the robots. Wait, it might be more interesting if the band were the robots destroying the world. Then, like in every '50s sci-fi movie, you've got to bust out the U.S. Army. Then the robots start shooting out those cheesy death rays, melting everything in sight."



PowerMan 5000 Facts

PowerMan 5000's music is a cross between **WHITE ZOMBIE** and **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE.** The band calls it "action rock." "Being in a band is as close as I could get to being an actual superhero," explains Spider One.

But is it any coincidence that Spider is Rob Zombie's younger brother? Apparently not, because PowerMan 5000 started out packing clubs in the New England area back in 1994. After they recorded an EP, the record industry came to Boston to court them, but they decided to hold out until they felt ready.

Tonight the Stars Revolt! is PowerMan 5000's first major breakthrough release, and after spending time touring with Kid Rock, they know they're ready for the masses. "For us it was an experiment to see how mainstream we could get," says Spider, "and it was cool touring [with Rock]. Now we'll just see where it goes from here."



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BATTER UP!

Pop starlet **Vitamin C** sure loves her virtual Yankees

BY PAUL SEMEL PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH

The crack of the bat, the roar of the crowd, the price of a hot dog – few things are like a baseball game. And nobody knows this better than Colleen Fitzpatrick, whom you know better as the pretty pop singer Vitamin C. (You might also recognize her as the former singer for alternative rockers Eve's Plum.) Although she doesn't do a spunky version of "Take Me out to the Ballgame" on her self-titled solo debut album, she very well might have, given how much she loves the sport. When she can't make it to see her beloved Yankees, Miss C makes it to the computer screen for a few innings of EA Sports' *Triple Play 2001.*

Which came first, your love of baseball or your love of baseball video games?
The real sport. As a kid I was a baseball fan, though for a while I kind of dropped it and got into hockey, oddly enough. But the thing about baseball that I like is that I find it to be a soothing sport and that it's a team sport – there's something very appealing about that. Chemistry is really important, and that's what's been really cool about the Yankees the last few years: their tremendous chemistry.

Do you play yourself?
I played as a kid, but I don't now. I used to be able to hit well, but I couldn't run fast or do anything else.

How often do you go to Yankees games?
There are season tickets floating around my family, it's like every six games that we get, and those are rotated around, so I get to see quite a few games. But I also will go get tickets in the bleachers. When I'm not traveling, I'll go, like, twice a month.

And what do you get to eat?
It depends. If I go with the family, I eat healthy because my stepmom will pack a lunch. But if I go by myself, I get a hot dog all the time.





MAKEUP: GREY/ZENOBIA; LOCATION: THE TIME HOTEL, N.Y.

Do you own all kinds of memorabilia?
I own a few hats. I have two of the official baseball caps. I frequently wear those, and I have one of the cheaper ones. I also have two wool caps with the Yankee emblems, a baseball signed by David Wells when he was on the team, and some shirts. But I only have Yankees stuff. Someone gave me a Dodgers pin once, but I threw it out.

So, how did you go from loving baseball to loving baseball video games?
I don't know where I first played *Triple Play*. I think I just played it with these guys I was recording with, and found I was better than them. [*Laughs.*] When you're in a recording studio, you have a lot of time on your hands.

Do you always play as the Yankees?
I try to, yes. But the thing is, if I'm playing with my nephews or something, I'll be the bigger person and let them be the Yankees.

But you don't really want to, do you?
No. [*Laughs.*]

Do you think the game is accurate? Do the players really play like themselves?
I think it's fairly accurate, and they're getting better all the time. But I've had scores that are ridiculous. Baseball scores don't usually go into double digits, and I've had some double-digit games, though that usually happens when I play with someone who doesn't play much.

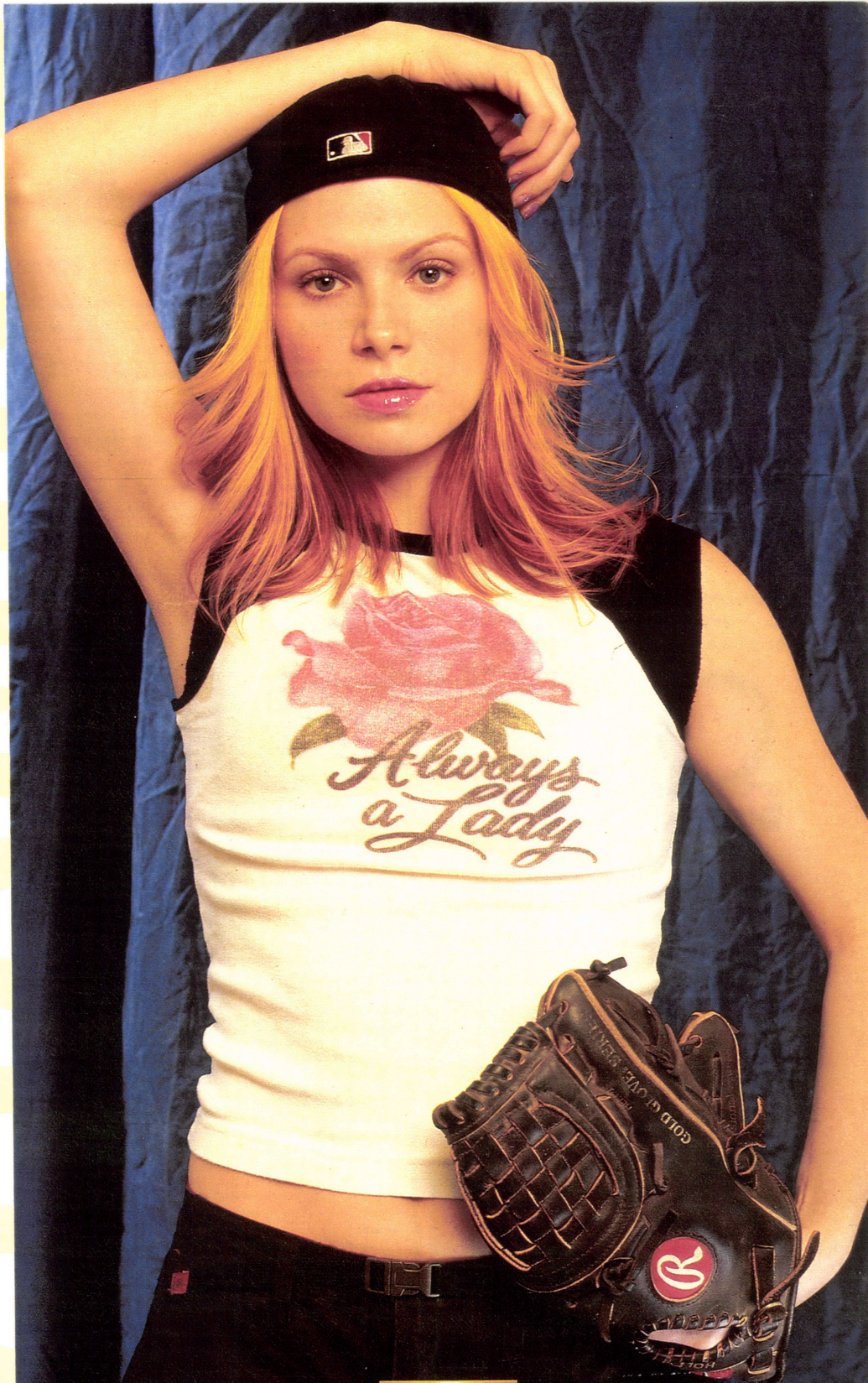
If you could play a game of *Triple Play* with anyone, who would you chose?
Well, I think it might be fun to play with an actual player, to play with someone like David Cone. But I would've also liked to have played with my grandfather, who died long before video games were popular. I think he would've gotten a real kick out of it.

Has a baseball player ever hit on you?
Yes, yes one has. [*Giggles.*]

Do you want to tell me about it?
No, I don't. [*Laughs.*] He struck out. [*Laughs.*]

Are you into any video games that don't involve hitting things with a stick?
I have an addiction to *SimCity*, which taps into the control-freak aspect of my personality. And I also play *Tetris*. That's a classic that I will never get tired of.

Vitamin C's self-titled debut CD is out now from Elektra Entertainment.





C Facts

Years as a baseball fan: 17
Years as a baseball video game fan: 2
Favorite team: New York Yankees
Favorite players: David Cone and David Wells
Number of baseball hats owned: 3 (all Yankees)

IT'S ON THE CD!
Watch Vitamin C's "Me, Myself and I" video on the *incite* CD-ROM!

Review Nuts & Bolts

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? | Here's the Rosetta stone of our game reviews

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

Sure, that supercool 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 PC gaming industry. Only the best can get one. When you see it, you know the game is good.

Tech Specs

This is the game's requirements in an at-a-glance boxout. Here we outline the minimum processor and memory needs, CPU compatibilities, audio and graphics support, and multiplayer options. Do all players need to have a copy of the game to play multiplayer? You'll find out here.

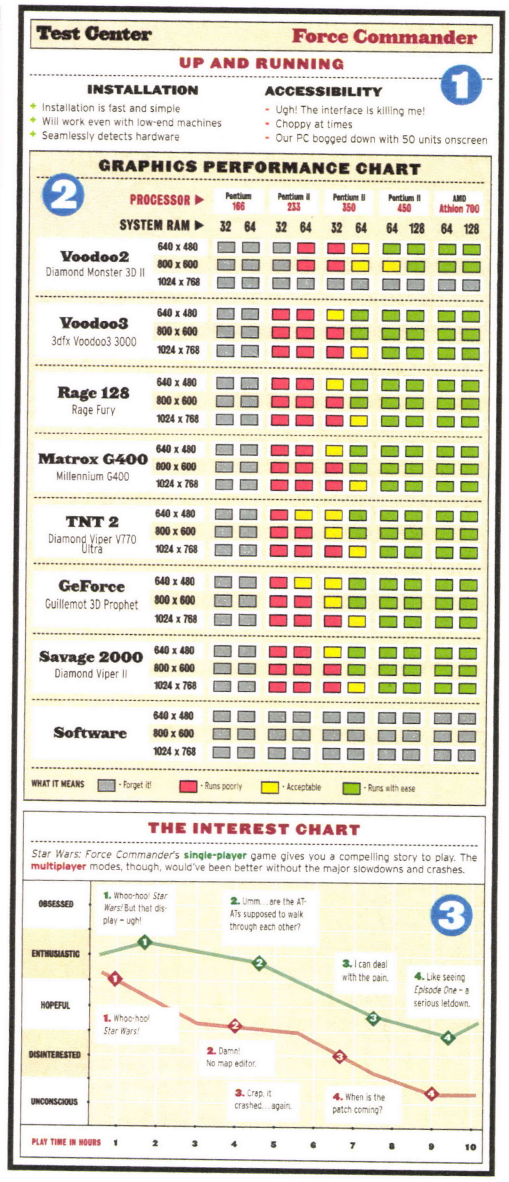
Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC 266MHz & 64MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 450MHz PII & 128MB
- MINIMUM INSTALL 625MB HD SPACE

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

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

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 4, Internet 4
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? Yes
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION 56K



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.

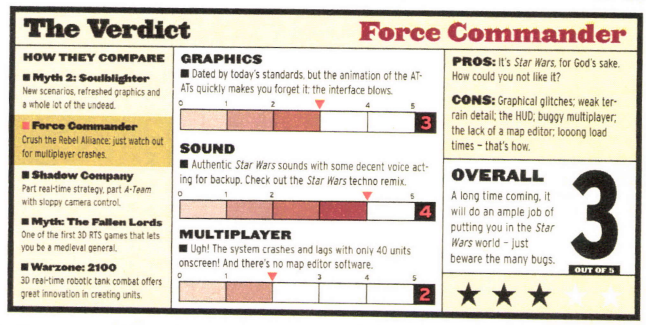
If your preferred-settings box is gray, you haven't got a chance in hell. If it's red, you'll likely be watching a slide show. If it's yellow, the game will run fast enough to be enjoyable, although you might see some jitters. If you're in the green, you're golden. The game will run as smooth as silk, 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 being reviewed stacks up against other similar games in the genre. We then score 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 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!



Live the game
Feel the pain



GRAPHICS BY rage 128 PRO

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Fallen From Grace

News flash: **MESSIAH** is finally on store shelves... Hell freezes over... Film at 11

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Interplay** ■ DEVELOPER **Shiny** ■ GENRE **Action/Adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$44.95**

GAME GLANCE

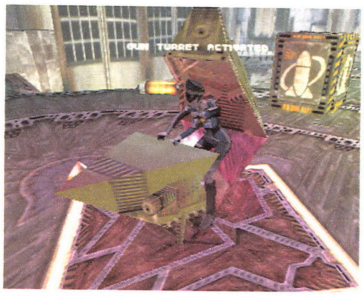
- 1 Chubby cherub
- 40+ Different people to possess
- 10+ Unique weapons
- 0 Divine intervention

It must be one of the signs of apocalypse: *Messiah* has come. After a grueling three years, Shiny has finally released one of the most hyped games in history. Was it worth the wait? Will it stand the test of time? More important, should we hide in bomb shelters and wait for all life to end?

By Darren Gladstone

When Shiny first revealed the premise of *Messiah* to the world in 1997, everyone was talking about it. Imagine the ability to enter anyone's body and take total control over what they do. Just jump, aim, and land squarely in the character's back. Soon, you're seeing the world through a fresh set of eyes. It was so freshly original, no one even thought of creating a game like it. And then began the waiting.

So here we are three years later, and no one has even attempted what Shiny started. So, how does *Messiah* shape up, considering its late arrival? It doesn't have the newest technology, and isn't sporting every bell and whistle, but it *is* done. And all jokes aside, it isn't exactly manna from heaven... but it'll do.



GUN MOUNTING This pistol-packin' mama is about to put a howitzer between her legs.



HELL'S ANGELS Here we see Bob having some words with "The Man Upstairs."



HOT PANTS Okay, so a flamethrower just torched your body. No problem: Just hop out and grab a newer model.



ARE YOU ON THE LIST? As if trying to get into a club in real life weren't hard enough, now you have to contend with virtual jackass bouncers to boot! Man, some days it just doesn't pay to turn on the PC.



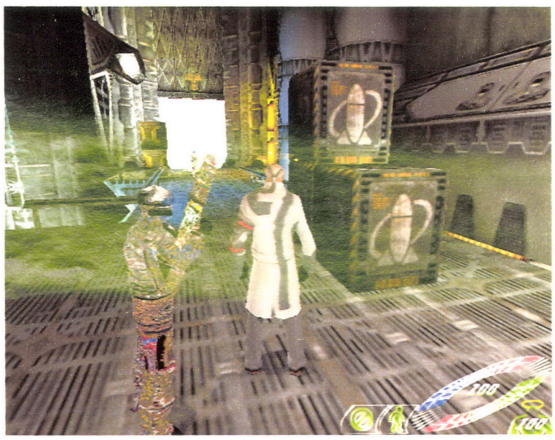
EARTHY ANGEL If you played a cherub like this in the game, you wouldn't need to occupy anybody else's body (nor could you).

Graphics Card Hell

You're 3 feet tall, on a mission from God... and you're wearing a diaper. As Bob, a pissed-off angel, you're out to lay down some biblical law; but before we get into the nitty gritty of this review, here's a warning: If you aren't playing this game on a Voodoo3 card, expect headaches. Many, many headaches.

When we first tried to get started on both TNT2 Ultra and GeFORCE 3D graphics cards, our efforts were quickly derailed by lockups and glitchy graphics. Downloading the newest patches and the latest drivers, we still met with the same results. At least we have a game lab to fall back on here at *incite PC Gaming* until the problem gets fixed. Unless you have your own home LAN or a stash of 3D cards, you may not meet with the same luck. That beef aside, we were off and running – playing the 3dfx-enabled version of *Messiah*. But even with the 3dfx card, though, we encountered countless random glitches where guns would look splotchy and people's appendages would fade in and out – we don't think this was part of the game.

Like a tribe of angry atheists, almost everyone in the game world is out to dwarf-toss you into the afterlife.



STOP BUGGING ME! No, this isn't a Borg cameo on the left – it's *Messiah* running in glide on a 3dfx graphics card.

One Bad-Ass Angel

In the first few seconds you're sent down to Earth to stop a mess Father Prime is creating. You don't have much more to go on than that, but upon crash-landing in a cop's body you'll find that you aren't quite as welcome as most heavenly spirits. In fact, like a tribe of angry atheists, almost everyone in the game world is out to dwarf-toss you into the afterlife.

While in your cherubic form you're pretty much a walking target, but you aren't totally defenseless. As we mentioned earlier, you have the ability to enter the body of any creature in

■ THIS IS MY BLOOD—AFTER A FRIDAY NIGHT

SECOND DRINKING

Shiny's game isn't the only messiah that's taken a while to get here. Here's Messiah Stout.



Made by the same people behind the equally good Genesis Ale,He'Brew, "The Chosen Beer" Messiah Stout is just as **worthy of your worship**, and will make anyone's taste buds cry out, "Praise the Lord."

Like any good stout, the Messiah has a deep, rich flavor, and a heft normally associated with a coffee drink. In fact, Messiah Stout actually has a bit of the smoky, slightly bitter flavor of a good cup of Joe, with strong hints of chocolate as well, for a taste that's kind of like a mocha-flavored espresso.

Regardless of how you welcome this Messiah into your life – with a meal or even as a meal – once you do, you won't be disappointed. You can witness the second coming for yourself at Shmaltz Brewing Co. (www.shmaltz.com).

Test Center — Messiah

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
- Works well only with Voodoo-based graphics cards; if you don't have one, you're in trouble

ACCESSIBILITY

+ Interface is easy to use
+ Difficulty ramps up nicely
+ Damn fun gameplay

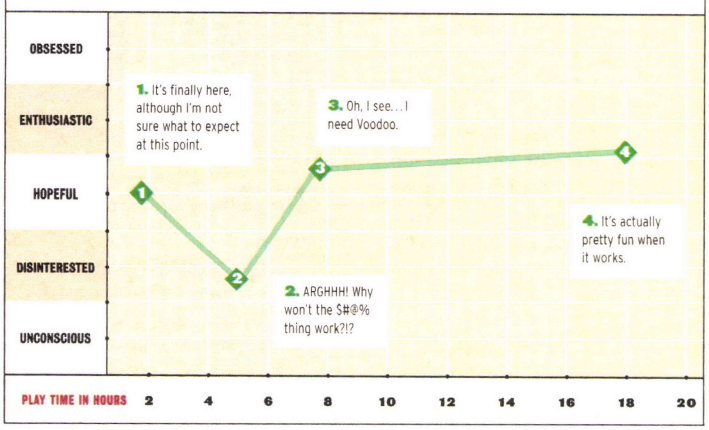
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		PROCESSOR ▶	Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
		SYSTEM RAM ▶	32	64	32	64	32	64	64	128	64	128
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 Rage Fury	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
TNT 2 Diamond Viper V770 Ultra	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
GeForce Guillemot 3D Prophet	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Savage 2000 Diamond Viper II	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Software	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											

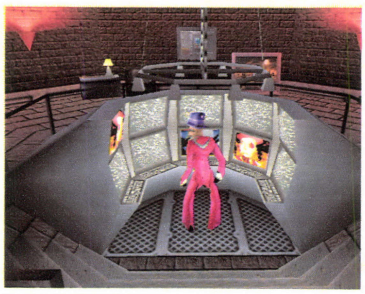
WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! · Runs poorly · Acceptable · Runs with ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Messiah's **single-player** gameplay is heavenly, as far as plot, storyline, and controls go. But all the bugs really took a toll on the overall fun-factor after a while.



One of the sneakier tactics is possessing rats to get into tight spaces.



I WANT MY MTV The Surround View 2K is great... for the two channels it picks up.

the game. If it has a soul, it's ripe for the picking – and you've got an interesting cast of more than 40 types of characters to control. Welders, vagrants, pimps, priests, police, scientists, prostitutes... well, let's just say that you have more personalities to choose from than Sybil.

Each of the people you possess gives you different abilities and access to other areas of the game. Probably one of the sneakier



SO, WHO IS THIS GUY? Does he look familiar? Turn the page to find out!



RODNEY KING! RODNEY KING! This cop hasn't taken a shining to Bob, who is now kicking the tyke like he stole something.

manifestations is possessing rats to get into tight spaces. But our favorite tactic was to merely possess somebody, walk into the line of fire, and upon death just hop into the next body.

Speaking of ways to die, you'll be able to grab an assortment of more than 10 weapons in the game. Among the more amusing ones: the rocket-propelled harpoon gun that turns your target into a shish kebab. Or, if you're feeling more like a weenie roast, the flamethrower will have the crowd rolling in the aisles. The animations for the deaths in and of themselves are funny as well. For example, a scientist falls into a radioactive room and drops to his hands and knees moaning, "Umm... I think I need a medic here."

The sound is also appropriate for the game. It is mostly low-key, but when the action picks up, a raging techno beat alerts you to trouble. Fear Factory fans listen closely, because the band provided a good deal of the soundtrack to go along with the game, and the game music is an added value here.

The game is fun, albeit buggy as hell.

The End Is Nigh

We've established that the game is fun, albeit buggy as hell. And the fact that we still like it so much despite the flaws should speak volumes. If *Messiah* had come out a year ago without the graphical bugs – hell, if it came out *today* without the graphical bugs – we would have little trouble giving it a five-star rating. It is still a blast to play, provided you have a graphics card that works with the game.

But the sad truth for little Bob and the folks over at Shiny is that time marched on far too long, and the game's graphics have begun to show their age. That is, if you can even see them on your system. If Interplay finishes the bug-wrangling process we'll have no problem recommending *Messiah*, but until that time, we sadly have to call it a false prophet.



ALRIGHT, EVERYBODY OUT A big palooka barreling down a hallway at you? Just hop out and watch the hijinks.



ILLUSTRATION BY **FRED HARPER**

■ IF YOU DO ME YOU'LL LIVE FOREVER

GOD NEEDS SEX?

So-called **messiahs get more tang** than John Glenn. Here are a couple of doozies.

DAVID KORESH —The self-proclaimed "Lamb of God" had the daunting task of impregnating all ovulating members of the Branch Davidians. Thanks, Viagra!

JIM JONES —Before he decided to kill all of his followers with some bad Kool-Aid, he got his swerve on more than Juvenile backstage at a Hot Boys concert.

NOT ON OUR LIST

Marshall "Do" Applewhite — Do and 38 members from his Heaven's Gate cult killed themselves in order to meet up with the Hale Bopp comet. Later, studies showed that Do had castrated himself. Not only was he a bad false messiah, he was an idiot too.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 64MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	350MHz PII & 96MB
■ MINIMUM INSTALL	500MB HD SPACE

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

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

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✓
■ A3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

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

The Verdict — Messiah

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **Heretic II**
One pissed-off elf has to use magic to save the world.

■ **Messiah**
Bob the angel has got to save the world... bugs and all.

■ **Omikron**
Saving the world one soul at a time is fun, but hanging with Bowie is better.

■ **Indy/Infernal Machine**
This man has made a living of saving the world... and this game is no exception.

■ **Tomb Raider: TLR**
Lara may have started the current wave, but sheesh, give her a facelift.

GRAPHICS

■ The animations are great, and the characters are rendered nicely... when you can see them, that is.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

SOUND

■ Kickin' soundtrack that dynamically picks up with the action, plus some corny but funny voice acting.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER

■ *Messiah* does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 — X

PROS: Excellent gameplay and almost heavenly fun; jumping into rats is quite a blast.

CONS: Ah, the graphics bugs – shall we count the ways? Even when you can see the graphics, they don't look so good.

OVERALL

This game is very late, but we're glad we waited. Granted, we would've waited longer for the graphics fix.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★



BY PAUL SEMEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BENJAMIN HOFFMAN

Cherub Rock

Actor **Dave Ruby always plays the cherubic guy,** so he was a natural choice to be our own personal *Messiah* cherub

Dave Ruby did not go to your high school. He doesn't work at the mall near your house, doesn't shop at your supermarket, and, despite pictures to the contrary, he's not the cherub in the new game *Messiah*. But you're right, you have seen Dave Ruby before, in commercials for Meow Mix and Coors Light, in the movie *Dead Man on Campus,* and, more recently, on the UPN show *Grown Ups*.

With his amiable personality and everyday looks, Dave looks more like someone you'd be buddies with than someone you'd watch on TV. And that, he says, is okay with him.

For the purpose of this piece, we've dressed you up like the cherub from the game *Messiah*. Please tell me this is the stupidest costume you've ever worn.
Actually, it's not. I've worn much worse. When I used to work in Baltimore at a bar, I worked as a bar back, but we also had to go up on stage and dance, and sometimes that resulted in me wearing my birthday suit. So wearing any clothing is terrific.

"We had to go up on stage and dance, which resulted in me **wearing my b-day suit.**"



So, you're comfortable with full-frontal nudity then?
No, absolutely not. See, it was two macho guys, and me in the middle, and we'd do this whole dance. The good-looking guys would rip off their shirts, then I would rip off my shirt, we'd turn our backs, I'd pull my pants down, and then the other guys would pull down their pants. But you couldn't see anything, because we'd be facing the wall.

In *Messiah*, you play as a cherub who has to enter people's bodies so he can do things. If you had this power, whose body would you enter and what would you do with it?
There are so many bodies I'd like to try – I'd especially like to get into Cindy Crawford's body [*laughs*] – but I would love to try being a point guard in the NBA for one big game.

Does being cherubic-looking help you with the ladies?
Absolutely. I'm very picky about who I date, which is probably not a good idea when you're five-foot-four and 196 [*laughs*], but through my personality and my being cherubic-looking, I'm able to get to know women and take it from there. Like, there's this woman on the lot where we film *Grown Ups* that I thought was beautiful, so I'd always go and talk to her. Well, today I went up to her and said, "Here's my number. Will you call me?" And she said, "Out of everyone I've met on this lot, you're one of the few people I would call."

Did you have some sort of master plan to do commercials and small parts in films before slipping into a nice, comfortable TV role?
No. I had been a TV major in college and was the sidekick on a sketch show on campus, so I knew that part of me wanted to act, though I was too afraid to admit it to anyone. But when I came out to Los Angeles, I got a stupid head shot made, and I sent it out to 200 agents. And you know how you always hear about people never hearing from agents? Well, I heard back from 15 of them, even though I had no credits. Before I knew it, I was getting auditions.

Of all the things you've done, what do you get recognized for the most?
For the past three years it was the Meow Mix commercials, but now it's definitely from the show. I was at The Cheesecake Factory the other day, and seven 15-year-olds came running up to me, screaming for autographs. I couldn't even believe myself. I wish I had it on videotape so I could show my friends.

Do people ever think that you're someone else?
All the time. One time, Ray Romano [from *Everybody Loves Raymond*] came up to me and said, "You were great on *King of Queens*." So I said, "Tha... no, I was never on *King of Queens*." "Yeah you were, you were so funny."



One of your co-stars on *Grown Ups* is Jaleel White, who used to play Urkel on *Family Matters*. How long did it take before you stopped calling him Urkel?
It was made clear to me, from day one, not to call him that for my own job security. [*Laughs.*]

Your other co-star, Marissa Ribisi, plays your wife. Has being married on the show had an effect on the way you approach relationships?
Definitely. Sometimes it seems like I'm married from 8 to 5. Marissa will be like, "Dave, we're going to lunch," and I'll be like, "Okay," and then sneak into Bumper Robinson's room to play video games. But she'll catch me. "Dave! We were going to lunch!" "I know, I just wanted to play one game...." And then she'll be mad at me for the rest of the day. "Sweetie..." "Get off!"

Lastly, do Marissa and Jaleel ever rub your belly for good luck?
No. But my friends, right before they roll the dice in Vegas, they'll give it a good rub. And once in a while, I'll give it a rub too.

Grown Ups airs Monday nights at 9 p.m. on UPN.

GROOMER: **MARY KLIMECK/VISAGES**; WARDROBE STYLIST: **DANA MARASCA/VISAGES**
PROP STYLIST: **HEATHYR LAWRENCE/VISAGES**; WINGS: **MOTHER PLUCKERS**

Go Lightly Forth

It's no crime to steal loot and pickpockets in **THIEF II: THE METAL AGE** - it's a necessity

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Eidos** ■ DEVELOPER **Looking Glass Studios** ■ GENRE **Action/Adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$49.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 15 Massive missions
- 1 Grumpy main character
- 0 Multiplayer options
- 100+ Hair-raising moments
- 1 Excellent single-player game

Thief II **manages that rare feat for a sequel: feeling fresh even though it's not that different from the original.**

Thief: The Dark Project **was a dark-horse hit for Eidos when it came out over a year ago, proving that first-person game addicts were ready for something different – a game that required stealth and strategic thinking.** ***Thief II*** **is a better game than its predecessor.**

By Steve Klett

Ahhh... the life of an "honest" thief: lurking in shadows; stabbing folks in the back (literally); picking noblemen's pockets; stealing from seminaries; and clubbing, killing, and outwitting the local constabulary. It's a good life, actually – provided you don't get your head lopped off by some "taffer," that is.

And these are just a few of the things you'll do in the shoes of that renegade professional pickpocket Garrett, whom we all got to know and love in *Thief: The Dark Project.* (If you didn't play the first game, no matter. With quips like, "Looks like I have something useful to learn from a seminary for a change," Garrett can be thought of as a grizzled, medieval Clint Eastwood.) Yes, Garrett's back, and he's a bit bored in *Thief II: The Metal Age,* and that boredom is going to land him in some hot water in a hurry.

You begin the game by picking up some odd jobs and doing some of your own prospecting – hey, thieves have to pay rent too, you know. One of the first missions has you scavenging for loot to satiate your landlord. Soon you find yourself embroiled in an intricate plot involving dueling factions, crooked cops, and lots of metal monstrosities.

As the name suggests, *Thief II*'s levels are full of all sorts of metal works – the worst of which are robotic concoctions brewed up by the Mechanists, a sect of "inventors" who have sniffed a few too many hazardous gases in the course of their work. Quickly you discover that none other than the local sheriff wants you dead, and you set off to discover why – while striving to keep your head attached to your shoulders.

Sneaky Bastard

Now, before you think you'll just run rampant through *Thief II*'s massive levels like some Rambo wannabe, remember this: You're a thief! Stealth and tact, not bravado, are your best friends. Fighting must be reserved for moments of utmost crisis (and there will be plenty of those, but usually only when you fail to listen to your best friends). In fact, many missions will require that you not even be seen by your quarry whilst pursuing your objectives. And others require that



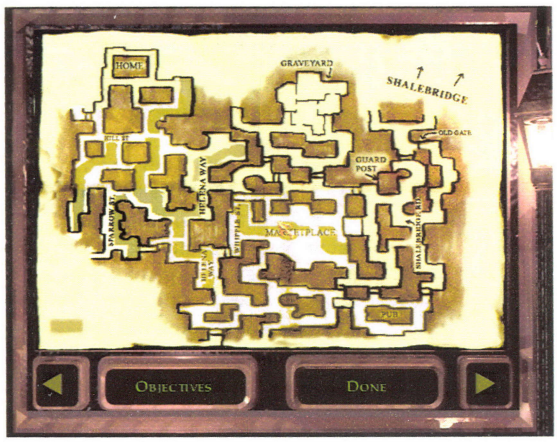
NICE VIEW We don't know what's going on here, but we kinda like it... in a sick, twisted sort of way. Looks like *Thief II* has more to offer than just stealing!



VISUAL ARTS Garrett takes a moment to brush up on his knowledge of the arts – there's a secret treasure here, he can just smell it!

you not kill anyone, or allow you to kill or knock out only a set number of guards or ordinary citizens.

Therefore, you must skulk in the shadows for minutes at a time, waiting for patrols of keystone cops to pass you by (we'll get to that keystone part later), before moving on. And, as you don't have armor or apparently much muscle on your side, you must sneak up behind your targets, bop them on the noggin, and drag their inert bodies off to where they won't be discovered by passers-by. Since you are skilled in archery, much of your "stealth work" can be completed with a few well-placed head shots from a distance. Hitting targets anywhere else just seems to piss them off, and the alarm is raised. And once you're spotted and pursued, you're in a world of hurt, as you're not very fleet of foot compared with your enemies: Running away is difficult at best.



TREASURE MAP With just this 7-Eleven map to work with, it's a wonder Garrett can get around.



BARK AT THE MOON Why do I feel furry, and what's with these nails and teeth?

Tools of the Trade

You still have the club, sword, bow, health potions, and various arrows (moss to deaden your footfalls, fire to blow things up, water to douse torches) from the first game. But you also have a few new toys to work with this time around. You can throw a scouting orb and get a fish-eye view of things without chance of harm, use an invisibility potion that will let you sneak unseen through dicey areas, light flares or a torch or two to illuminate your way, use a "softfall" potion that reduces the damage you take from dropping long distances, and shoot a rope arrow that clings to any surface when fired – so you to climb out of harm's way.

Other than these toys, all you have are your own brainpower and



EN GARDE! Tastes great! No, it's less filling! Tastes Great! No, it's less... Argghhh!

Test Center — Thief II: The Metal Age

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ No install glitches
- Very long install
- Can't minimize during install

ACCESSIBILITY

+ In-game tips provided
+ Three difficulty settings
- No training mode

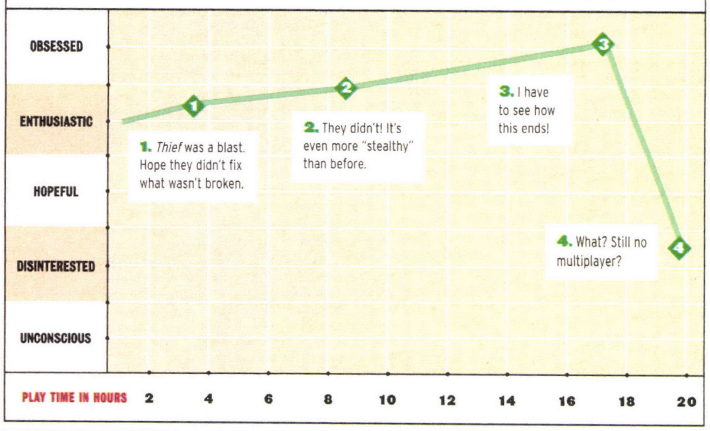
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
PROCESSOR ▶											
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	64	128	64	128
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 Rage Fury	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
TNT 2 Diamond Viper V770 Ultra	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
GeForce Guillemot 3D Prophet	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Savage 2000 Diamond Viper II	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Software	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										

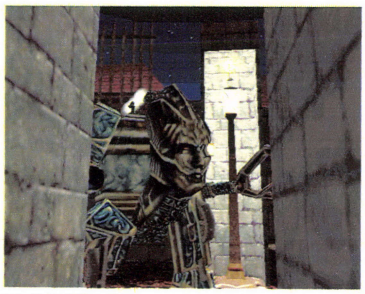
WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! — Runs poorly — Acceptable — Runs with ease

THE INTEREST CHART

The deeper I got into *Thief II*'s **single-player** game, the harder it was to stop playing. The story becomes more involved and intriguing as you play. Alas, there is no **multiplayer** mode.



***Thief II* is an incredibly dark game — dwarfing even the levels of inky blackness seen in *Wheel of Time*.**



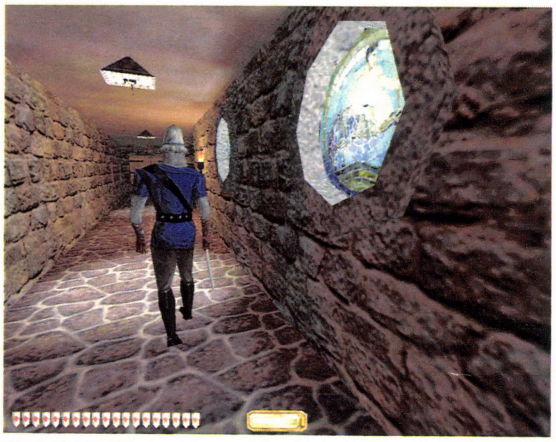
METAL MONSTER Hmmm... I didn't know this was a FASA game! Wait... it's not.

patience – you'll likely need more of the latter than the former. Forcing yourself to hide from, rather than take out, an enemy *mano-a-mano* is not what those hours of *Quake*, *Half-Life*, and *Unreal* have trained us for.

However, I found this a most welcome change of pace. *Thief II*'s levels are masterfully designed and incredibly atmospheric. Most missions have multiple paths to your objectives, so how you get there is entirely up to you. And there's just the right balance of open, lighted areas and dark hiding places. You'll want to explore every nook and cranny of each level just to see what's there – and there are tons of secrets to discover. This is no small accomplishment when you consider the fact that the "upgraded" game engine is technically inferior to nearly all of its competition – though it does look much better than the original *Thief*.

The More Things Change...

That said, thieves do their best work at night. As a result, *Thief II* is an incredibly dark game – dwarfing even the levels of inky blackness



TIME TO STRIKE Awed by the light pouring through the stained glass, Garrett pauses a moment before bludgeoning his victim.

seen in *Wheel of Time*. You'll likely want to play this one at night, when you have no screen glare whatsoever, or you'll go blind from squinting at the screen. This too is a small matter, as the darkness puts you in the mood of the game and is, after all, realistic.

The keystone cops are a bigger issue. They have a way of walking right by you when you're about a foot away at times, and spotting you when you're dozens of yards away and in the dark at others. They also have selective hearing in that they notice and investigate the barest whisper of a rustle caused by a hasty step, and then ignore the sound of a wrought-iron door slamming shut behind their backs. Still, while it's frustrating and a bit inconsistent, the computer-controlled characters are generally well suited to the task at hand.

One of my biggest gripes is that, incredibly, you still cannot carry over items you find in one mission to the next mission. (This was a big complaint about the original game.)



STATS "R" US Come on, your back-stabbing skills are pitiful. How do you ever expect to make the big leagues?

You can think of Garrett as a grizzled, medieval Clint Eastwood.



NEED A LIGHT? Larry didn't think it was funny when Curly put that firecracker in his cigar. He didn't need that nose anyway.

So, if you find a hidden cache of invisibility potions and you don't use them, they're gone from your inventory in the next mission. Sure, allowing this carryover would have complicated play-balancing quite a bit, but that's no excuse not to put it in. You should at least get cash for found items, as there's little motivation to seek them out.

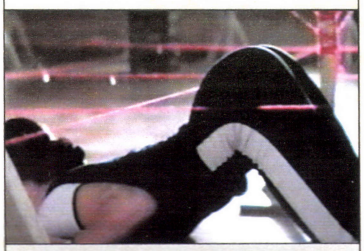
My second major gripe is that there is still no multiplayer. When *Thief* came out it was reasoned that the stealthy style of gameplay did not work with a multiplayer game. This was forgivable at the time, given *Thief*'s unique single-player game. To not have any sort of multiplayer support this time is a major bummer. I think it would have been a blast to square off against another team of thieves in a race to steal the most loot from a fortress while avoiding the guards and fighting with rival thieves. It also would have been fun to pit teams of guards against teams of thieves. We can only imagine....

Regardless, we still have one of the best, single-player gaming experiences to be found. *Thief II* manages that rare feat for a sequel: feeling fresh even though it's not that different from the original.

WHAT THEY LEFT OUT
THIEF WISH LIST

Can you believe these items were left out of *Thief II*?

- The ability to **steal an Oscar** – or better yet, all the Oscars, then give them back and get a ticket to the show.
- **Pamela Anderson Lee's** latest home video as a secret item you can find, steal, and then sell online for big bucks.
- A secret level in which Garrett must break into a women's dorm and steal three sets of matching underwear from **virginal babes** – guess we'll have to wait for *Panty Raider*.
- A **new game engine** that rivals *Quake III* and *Unreal*'s. (Hey, we had to be serious for a moment.)
- **Catherine Zeta-Jones** slithering under some lasers – the best part of *Entrapment*, if you ask us. (Okay, we were serious for two moments.)



BOTTOM'S UP! Oh... my... God. All we can say is that the Pause button *rocks!*

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	266MHz & 48MB
PREFERRED SPEC	400MHz PII & 128MB
MINIMUM INSTALL	250MB HD SPACE

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 — Thief II: The Metal Age

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Rainbow Six** – The only first-person shooter around that's more suspenseful.
- **Wheel of Time** – Excellent story, visuals, and what's most lacking in *Thief II*: multiplayer!
- **Thief II: The Metal Age** – Incredible atmosphere and fresh gameplay. Needs multiplayer fun.
- **System Shock 2** – Frightening, first-rate, single-player experience. Sleeper hit.
- **Unreal Tournament** – To hell with stealth – I want to kick some ass! This is where to do it.

GRAPHICS

Much prettier than the graphics in the original *Thief*, but still not up to that of other first-person shooters.

0 1 2 4 5 **3**

SOUND

Excellent use of 3D audio and ambience. The sound really draws you into the environments.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

MULTIPLAYER

Thief II does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 5 **X**

PROS: Excellent story, top-notch level design, cool main character; emphasizes brain power.

CONS: Quirky artificial intelligence; no multiplayer options; can't carry items over from mission to mission.

OVERALL

Thief II proves it's fun to use your brain in a first-person game. Stealth and skill win the day here.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★

Intelligent Life Form

Ask your nerdy neighbor, "How do you say, 'Play **STAR TREK: ARMADA**' in Klingon?"

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Activision** ■ DEVELOPER **Activision** ■ GENRE **Real-time strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$44.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 20 Episodes
- 35 Multiplayer maps
- 30+ Starships at your command
- 4 Races
- 1 Klingon joke

Okay, there are some people reading this who have Starfleet Academy bumper stickers on their cars and wear Spock ears while at home. You know who you are. Well, Sparky, prepare to hit the bridge in *Star Trek: Armada* – a 2D space combat game with a strange 3D feel. Engage.

By Darren Gladstone

Star Trek: Armada chooses to go the 2D route with some genuinely fun gameplay options. Although the game is played on a 2D map, it's as challenging as any 3D game. You've got moving asteroid fields so that you have to change tactics midbattle, nebulas with various effects on your ships, and Dilithium moons (the resource of the universe).

Diplomacy be damned: The focus of the game is more on battle tactics than resource harvesting, so you can concentrate your time on strategic combat. Each ship has a unique identity and has both shields and crew members. Keep those ships around, Captain, 'cause a seasoned crew can pack more of



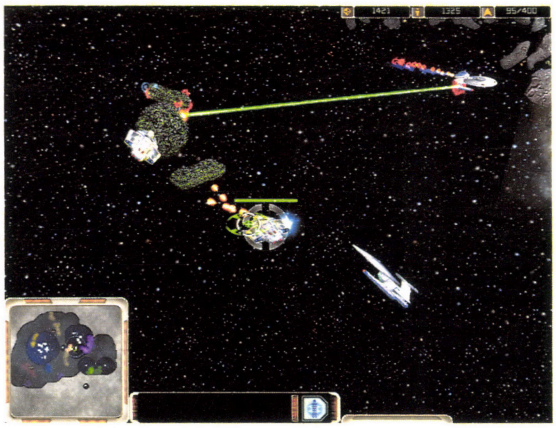
ONE LESS "D" The game might be played on a 2D surface but everything else is 3D.



DICE IN SPACE Ever been tempted to grab a couple cube ships and roll a seven?



SPACE ATTRACTIONS Locutus grabs on with his stasis beam and won't let go.



ASSIMILATE THIS The Borg may be working over one of your ships, but here comes the calvary.

a wallop than a ship full of green cadets. One very cool tactic in the game: Wear down an opponent's shields, then teleport soldiers in to hijack the ship.

Another interesting feature is the cinematic window. As you're playing the game, action sequences appear in it. Need to get to a battle quickly? Just hit the image and you're there. Use the Z key and watch the game unfold before you. Or you can just admire your victory as it's played out from all angles with the killer 3D engine (which you can also change in game with a simple right click).

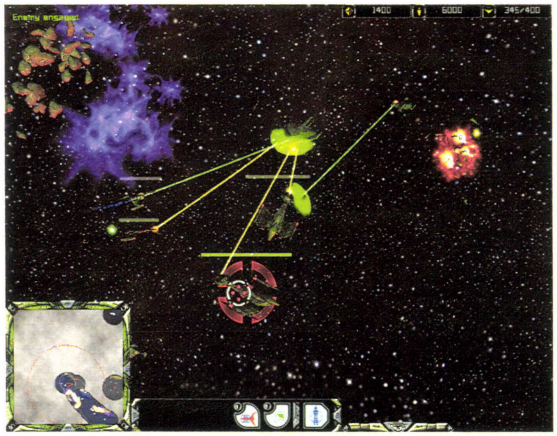
In the single-player campaign, you make your way through 20 "episodes" that let you assume roles of the four major races using voice acting from some of the actual show talents, such as Patrick Stewart. The Federation has its advanced shield technology and research, the Klingons have the biggest guns, the Romulans are better at stealth, and the Borg assimilate the opposition quicker than Microsoft gobbles up...well... everything. The missions will keep your attention as if you're glued to the boob tube watching an episode of the real show.

Gameplay only occasionally got choppy, and while the artificial intelligence isn't stellar, at least units don't bump around blindly. The pathfinding, however, could use some work.

Multiplayer lets you duke it out with up to eight players or CPU opponents on 28 maps. We experienced only minimal lag and found the customizable game options enough to keep us coming back for more.

We're going to chalk this game up to being a guilty pleasure. The artificial intelligence works adequately, and though the gameplay wears thin after a while, it's still damn fun to play. It would be nice to operate in three dimensions, but every once in a while we don't mind a great game being 2D.

The missions will keep your attention as if you're glued to the boob tube.



KLINGON JOKE ALERT What do you do when you've got a herd of Klingons on your ass? Wipe 'em out, of course.



■ WHEN GOOD GEEKS GO BAD

TO BOLDLY GO

Think you've got issues? Check out this motley crew.

Star Trek fans have been the brunt of so many jokes, but c'mon man, look at them. See for yourself in the film ***Trekkies,*** from Paramount Classics. This documentary will make you cringe. Here are a few highlights:

- See the inside of the **Star Base dental practice,** where cavities are teleported off-site.
- Witness the **harrowing debate** over who is the best starship captain.
- Question whether they should be called **Trekkers or Trekkies**.
- Meet **Barbara Adams,** juror in the Whitewater case. (No wonder Hillary got off.) She wears her Star Trek uniform in court.
- See if you can **legally change your name** to James T. Kirk.

Sheesh, we'd recommend buying this movie if only to make yourself feel better about your shortcomings. *Trekkies* is currently available in VHS and DVD formats. Go to www.trekdoc.com for more information and clips from the film. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll be ashamed to be human.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	450MHz PII & 128MB
MINIMUM INSTALL	600MB HD SPACE

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	56k

The Verdict

Star Trek: Armada

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Homeworld** This 3D real-time space strategy is just too fun to ignore.
- **StarCraft** Still considered the granddaddy of space-based RTS games.
- **Star Trek: Armada** Simple control interface and unit AI, but it's fun to get behind the controls.
- **Dark Reign** This game takes place on the ground, but it's still sci-fi RTS hijinks.
- **Starfleet Command** Umm, I think I need to go to Starfleet Academy just to understand this game.

GRAPHICS

■ Killer 3D engine does a great job of bringing the war home to geeks the world over.

0 1 2 3 5 **4**

SOUND

■ The mood music is good, and voice acting and plot are straight off the tube. Excellent job.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

MULTIPLAYER

■ With all the options, gameplay modes, maps, and the promise of a map editor en route, trekkies should love it.

0 1 2 3 5 **4**

PROS: Good concept; excellent design of both single player and multiplayer modes; cinematic window is a stroke of genius.

CONS: The map editor isn't included and we like 3D movement over 2D.

OVERALL

A fun game and guilty pleasure, to say the least. Even if you don't own Spock ears, buy this game.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★

Destroyer of Days

Yet another stagnant, regurgitated tale of **MIGHT AND MAGIC** is upon us

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **3DO** ■ DEVELOPER **New World Computing** ■ GENRE **RPG** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$44.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 100+ Gameplay hours to spend
- 100+ Spells and abilities to use
- 100+ Puzzles to solve
- 100+ Items to find
- 1 Pair of glasses to purchase

Games in the *Might and Magic* series have always seemed to vacuum away hours like an Oklahoma tornado sucks away trailer parks, and *Might and Magic VIII: Day of the Destroyer* is certainly no different.

By Dave Rees

That's the problem. Not only is this game as visually stunning as Keith Richard's face after a hard night of binge drinking, but it is also a weak regurgitation of *Might and Magic VII* in just about every way. What more could you not ask for?

At least the plot is original. In the land of Jadame, a mysterious man appears in a town called Ravenshore and suddenly whips up a nasty spell that brings total chaos to the once peaceful land. Elemental gateways to Earth, Air, Fire, and Water burst open, raining terror upon the continents across Jadame. Of course, it is now your destiny to put an end to it all. The question is, do you want to?

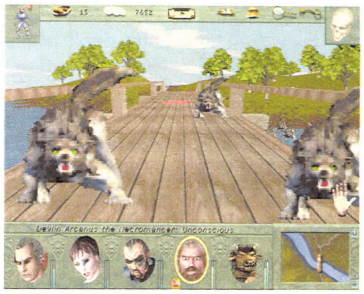
When it comes down to it, *Might and Magic VIII*'s underlying story quickly becomes buried beneath a mound of countless sojourns into the horrifically blocky wilderness, as you look for a few experience-point-providing battles and perhaps a treasure chest along the way. Soon enough, monotony really kicks into high gear as you fight the hordes of barely recognizable low-resolution sprite-based denizens, run back to town to heal, and repeat for endless hours until your vision becomes impaired. When you finally complete your first of many quests and make it off the Dagger Wound islands, you are introduced to more of the same, only on a much, much grander scale.

Ironically, this repetitious gameplay formula – which has remained the same since the *Might and Magic* franchise was born – is highly addictive and will more than satisfy fans of the series, although this doesn't even come close to excusing the lack of innovation here.

Role-playing gamers looking for a highly compelling experience have a lot of choices at the moment, and *Might and Magic VIII* is not the best of them. So, for the few fanatics who can't wait to play another predictable, dreary-looking yet strangely addictive *Might and Magic* PC game, here's your chance. Let's hope New World Computing will work up to its potential and do something great with this series in the future.



ENOUGH ALREADY! After fighting one blocky dude after another, you'll start to look like the first guy on the left in your party.



HERE, WOLFY Bet you had to read this to know what these creatures were.



ATTACK OF THE BLOCKY STUFF! What the hell am I fighting here?

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	166MHz & 32MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	200MHz PII & 64MB
■ MINIMUM INSTALL	375MB HD SPACE

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 — Might and Magic VIII

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **EverQuest**
The most addictive role-playing game, ever – if you have an online connection.

■ **Baldur's Gate**
The forgotten realms come back in glorious fashion.

■ **Planescape Torment**
Interplay returns us to the world of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

■ **Asheron's Call**
Microsoft's decent attempt at an *EverQuest* clone.

■ **Might and Magic VIII**
Not much has changed over the past two years. Good series, lousy sequel.

GRAPHICS
■ Am I fighting a pink and purple snake, or a massive piece of Fruit Stripe gum?

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — **1**

SOUND
■ If the sounds weren't all regurgitated from *Might and Magic III*, this rating would be higher.

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — **2**

MULTIPLAYER
■ *Might and Magic VIII* does not support multiplayer.

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — **X**

PROS: The addictive *Might and Magic* formula will surely keep some players' interest.

CONS: The monotonous *Might and Magic* formula will likely piss some players off.

OVERALL

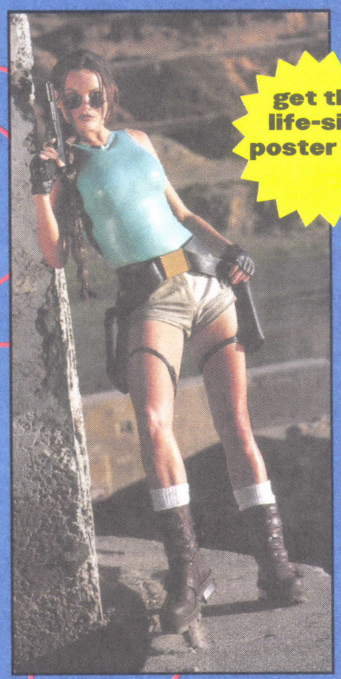
This series needs some serious cosmetic surgery and fresh ideas to compete with today's RPGs.

2 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

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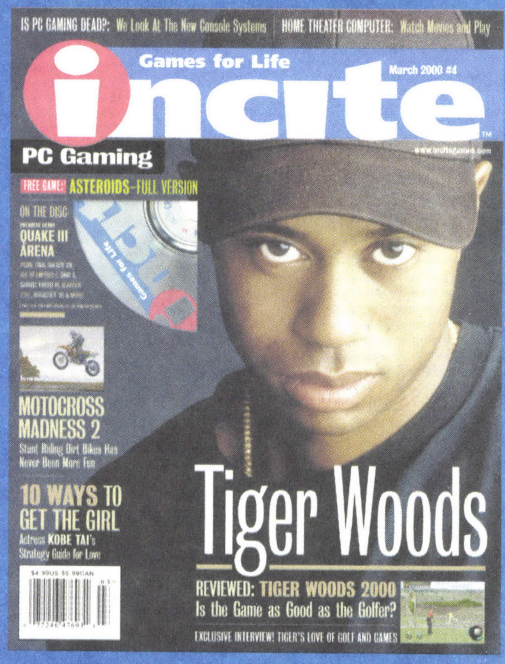
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Where's Willis?

Three wrongs do not make a right in **DIE HARD TRILOGY 2**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Fox Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **n-Space** ■ GENRE **Action/Adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$29.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 7 Types of guns
- 5 Kinds of explosives
- 3 Games in one
- 1 Dude named Klaus

The *Die Hard* game franchise should have taken the cue from the movies and passed away a long time ago.

By A.J. Schneier

Shouldn't Fox be banking on a more timely license for the distribution of current games? After all, the *Die Hard* franchise verily died in 1995 with the last movie, *Die Hard With a Vengeance.*

In any respect, John McClane makes his dubious return to your PC for a second helping of testosterone-laden three-for-one gaming in *Die Hard Trilogy 2.* As a tribute to the three movies in the series, there are three unique styles of play and three gameplay modes. *Die Hard Trilogy 2* cruelly attempts to pack lots of McClane madness onto your hard drive, but fails miserably.



TAKE IT PERSONALLY Stiff enemies and loose controls make for a phlegmatic gaming experience.

No Bruce, No Dice

The first major disappointment in *Die Hard Trilogy 2* is that Bruce Willis doesn't do the voice acting for McClane. More important than the absence of Willis, though, is the absence of fun in any of the three styles of play. Each style – be it Sharpshooting, Third-Person Action/Adventure, or Extreme Driving – can be accessed in three distinct gameplay modes. Practice mode gives you training levels in the three disciplines, Arcade mode allows you to try out different levels, and Movie mode combines the three styles into one almost coherent Vegas-based storyline. All the modes multiplied by all the styles equals nine opportunities for boredom.

Sharpshooting mode is a typical rail shooter in the vein of *Virtua Cop.* The action is Act Labs light gun-enabled, and it's the most entertaining of the three styles.

It's Three Divided by Zero

The action is slow and dull, and the graphics are reminiscent of a PlayStation game. Clumsy targeting and movement and slow, simplistic animations are also bothersome.

Extreme Driving is extremely inane. The goal is to bump into a baddie's car enough times to make it go boom, with nary a dent of damage to your nigh-indestructible chariot of doom.



DRIVING ADVENTURE Whew, just look at those beautiful backgrounds.



FLASHBACK Yeah, *Virtua Cop* is one pretty cool... oh, wait, it's still *Die Hard Trilogy 2!*

Fox is hyping the soundtrack for the title, and if you're a serious devotee of BT or Lil' Zane, maybe you should think about giving it a whirl. If you're a fan of John McClane, however, just say yippie-ki-no to *Die Hard Trilogy 2.*

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	300MHz PII & 32MB
MINIMUM INSTALL	32MB HD SPACE

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✗
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✓
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✓
A3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

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

The Verdict — Die Hard Trilogy 2

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Urban Chaos** — Third-person action in a fully interactive environment.
- **Die Hard Trilogy 2** — An attempt at the three-for-one deal gone horribly awry.
- **Virtua Cop** — This is the rail shooter that *Die Hard Trilogy 2* ripped off.
- **Carmageddon** — A car "destruction" game with some semblance of style.
- **Hardball** — Another game with the word "hard" in it. (Give us a break already.)

GRAPHICS

■ Boring, dated graphics, especially in the car game; good explosions, though.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **2**

SOUND

■ Crappy in-game music unless you like techno – BT and Lil' Zane ain't all that bad.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **2**

MULTIPLAYER

■ *Die Hard Trilogy 2* does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **X**

PROS: You get three (albeit weak) games in one; easy to learn.

CONS: Boring storyline; all three games lack depth; no compelling challenge; clunky control configuration; no multiplayer games; no Bruce Willis.

OVERALL

Shame on Fox for sullying John McClane's name in a game like this. Now *Die Hard* is truly dead.

1 OUT OF 5

★

There Is No Substitute

The only thing missing in **NFS: PORSCHE UNLEASHED** is Rebecca De Mornay splayed out in the passenger seat

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Electronic Arts** ■ GENRE **Racing** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$49.95**

GAME GLANCE

- 80+ Cars
- 9 Open-road courses
- 5 Closed tracks
- 700+ Upgradable car parts

I'd love a Porsche, but my wife doesn't think $800 a month on a three-year lease is a sound economic decision. What's a guy to do? Thanks to Electronic Arts, I've decided to put off selling my body and instead get my Porsche fix playing *Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed.*

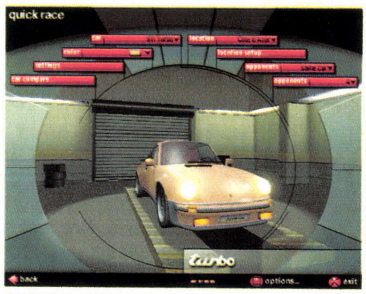
By William O'Neal



The only Porsche I've ever driven was my dad's '72 911. Sure, next to today's machines that may not sound like much, but that little hunk of German perfection could *move*. One time, after my parents returned from a vacation and found the car in the driveway with an empty gas tank and NWA's *Straight out of Compton* in the tape deck – well, let's just say my days as a Porsche driver were put on hold until I could afford to get my name on the pink slip.

Not many games have the ability to draw you in beyond their more basic gameplay elements. *Porsche Unleashed* does. Maybe it's just my love of Porsches, but I actually got emotional while playing the game.

Porsche Unleashed sports a gang of play modes, but the most interesting and newest ones are Evolution and Factory Driver. In Evolution you begin a career racing the very first production Porsche, the 356, and have to buy, sell, upgrade, and repair your cars as you race through the decades. In Factory Driver you enter the highly



CHOOSE YOUR POISON You begin a Quick Race by first choosing your ride.



MATCHBOX OR HOT WHEELS? It's almost like choosing between Mary Ann and Ginger. Were you a Matchbox or a Hot Wheels kid? Here my 914 battles it out for fourth place.



YOUR UNDERPOWERED 911 IS NO MATCH FOR ME! I'll be taking first place, thank you very much!

competitive world of the Porsche test driver trying to work your way through the ranks. To get promoted, you'll have to beat the challenges of the other drivers .

A four-point physics model gives each car a unique feel, and the detailed 3D cockpits have working gauges on the dashboard. Hell, the driver even shifts gears. But it's the single-player campaign mode, Evolution, that has me coming back for more. You begin your career in 1950 with $11,000 with which to buy your first 356 (the only car available at the time). You can blow your entire wad on a new car like I did, or you can take the frugal approach and buy something used. However, if you opt for a preowned model you'll have to pony up for repairs.

In Evolution the early races are beginner-level competitions, and as you progress through the years the competition gets tougher. At first I was disappointed at how easy the computer-controlled drivers in 1950 were to beat. A co-worker even

Not many games have the ability to draw you in beyond their more basic gameplay elements. *Porsche Unleashed* does.



NO SPEED LIMIT, TONS OF GLORY! Contrary to popular belief, there are speed limits in Europe. Good thing no one cares about 'em.

SAVE YOUR LETTERS — IT WAS THE BLACK GUY'S IDEA

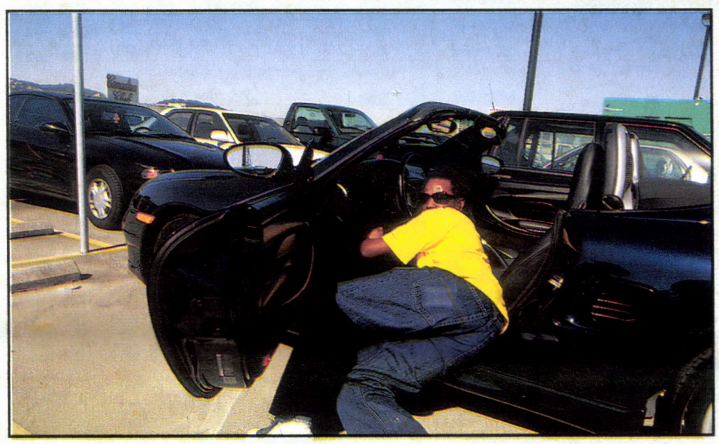
IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT GTA

Don't have the greenbacks to buy your very own Porsche Boxster? No problem: **Just steal your boss'.**

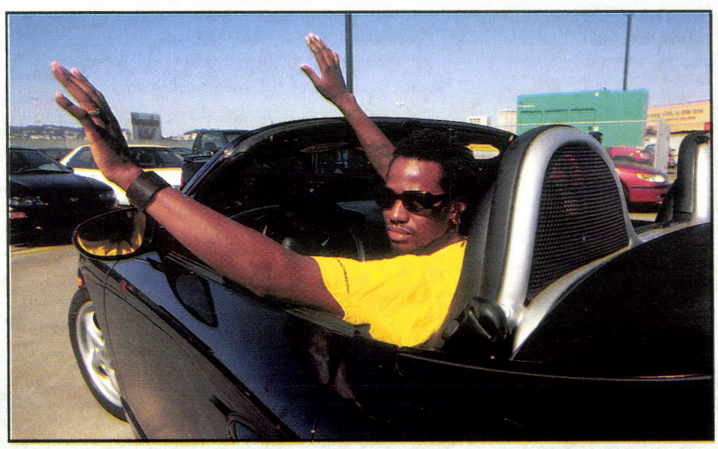
Screw getting a raise. That ain't never gonna happen and you know it. After I asked my boss for the umpteenth time, I finally got wise and decided to get even. Just 'cause he's the VP doesn't mean I don't deserve to experience some fine German engineering for real.



Better make this fast, before he gets out of his "big-time executive" meeting.



Hot-wiring is the only thing I remember from auto shop.



No, officer, I was just taking it to be detailed... I swear. FREE MUMIA!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH

Test Center — NFS: Porsche Unleashed

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ Works well with most controllers
- Difficulty with non-Voodoo graphics cards

ACCESSIBILITY

+ Easy-to-understand user interface
+ Difficulty ramps up nicely
+ Forgiving physics model

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	64	128	64	128
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	Rage Fury	640 x 480										
		800 x 600										
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Matrox G400	Millennium G400	640 x 480										
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TNT 2	Diamond Viper V770 Ultra	640 x 480										
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		800 x 600										
		1024 x 768										
Savage 2000	Diamond Viper II	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 — Runs with ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed's **single-player** campaign mode really pulls you in, and the quick race modes are challenging. The **multiplayer** races are likewise a hoot.



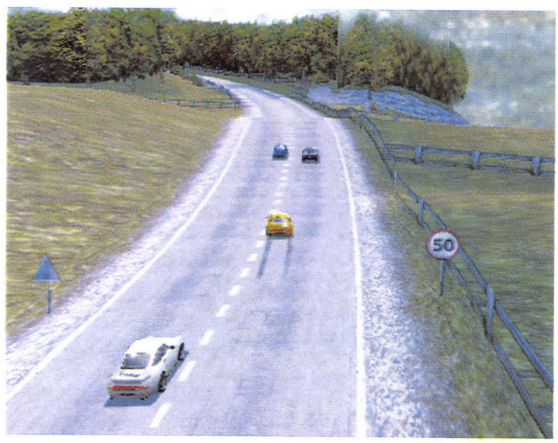
A four-point physics model gives each car a unique feel, and the detailed 3D cockpits have working gauges on the dashboard.

commented that it looked less like racing than going for a nice drive through the European countryside. As I later discovered, however, winning these early races was essential to earning the money I would later need to repair my cars, buy parts when needed, or buy new cars as they became available. And you will need that upgraded equipment because the later races are true tests of your driving skill.

Porsche Unleashed has a physics model that's good at walking the fence between accuracy and usability. The older-model cars are dramatically slower then the newer ones. They also drive like boats: In hard turns their rear ends swing like Mussolini in 1945. When I had enough cash to buy my first 911 in 1965, I jumped at the chance. And since I had plenty of cheddar left over, I hit the garage and spent about three Gs upgrading my ride with some of the 700 possible parts from the official



FISHTAIL ACTION This bathtub Porsche might be cute, but it's about as fast as the BYU women's volleyball team.



DON'T FALL BEHIND If you have the misfortune of falling behind in a race, you'll spend the rest of it playing catch-up, big-time.

Porsche catalog. But I found that to be a big mistake. The moment I hit the gas in my souped-up, custom-painted ride I started spinning like a dervish on crank. I guess that's why the game sports a practice mode where you can acclimate yourself to the car before racing it.

Having to upgrade and repair your car after each race creates that feeling of an investment that most games lack. After paying for my car and knowing that I would be responsible for repairing any damages I caused, I was loath to bump and grind with the other drivers. "Get off my bumper, man. I'm gonna have to replace that!"

For drivers who don't have the time to mount a 50-year career (in game time, of course), the game also has some simpler modes. In Quick Race, you can choose from a limited selection of the more than 80 available models. EA doesn't just give you all the cars in the beginning. You have to earn the right to drive some of the more exotic models. You then choose which cars you'll be racing against, how many opponents (up to eight) you'll be battling, and which of the game's nine open-road courses or five closed tracks you'll be racing on. *Porsche Unleashed* also sports a full-featured multiplayer mode.



FRICKIN' SUNDAY DRIVERS! When traffic is high, pile-ups will occur. Thankfully, they'll befall your competition as well. Looks like Friday traffic in San Francisco after a Giants game.



LOSER With eyes of steel I barreled down on the competition and... came in fourth.

While *Porsche Unleashed* is an awesome game, it has a few problems. The other drivers' artificial intelligence doesn't always seem all that intelligent. In Quick Race and both of the Knockout modes, the AI is extremely easy to beat, even with the difficulty settings set to expert.

Only during Evolution does the competition get really competitive, and then the AI seems to react only to you. The fast cars consistently gain distance on you while you pull away from the slower cars. In a sense, about halfway through the races I found myself all alone racing in this strange sort of AI bubble.

You can blow your entire wad on a new car like I did, or you can take the frugal approach and buy something used.



NO DANGER Colliding with this tanker truck won't cause a big explosion. Too bad.

But don't get me wrong: That doesn't mean I'm still not playing the hell out of the game.

If you're a Porsche enthusiast or just a car nut, *Porsche Unleashed* will have you waiting eagerly for that midlife crisis to kick in.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	300MHz PII & 64MB
MINIMUM INSTALL	150MB HD SPACE

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	56k

The Verdict — NFS: Porsche Unleashed

HOW THEY COMPARE

Porsche Unleashed
If you've ever dreamed of driving a Porsche, you'll love this game.

NFS: High Stakes
High Stakes added some serious technical and gameplay improvements.

NFS: Hot Pursuit
High-speed chases haven't been this much fun since *CHiPs*.

Driver
Any game that features Antonio Fargas deserves to get mentioned.

Test Drive 6
Could a franchise be more terrible? Oh yeah, I forgot about the Cubs.

GRAPHICS

■ With 2,000 polygons per car, *Porsche Unleashed* is a sweet-looking game. You can even inspect the interiors.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

SOUND

■ In addition to individual handling, each of the cars has its own unique sound.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

MULTIPLAYER

■ *Porsche Unleashed* is a full-fledged multiplayer game with support for Internet, LAN, and direct-connect play.

0 1 2 3 5 **4**

PROS: A truly addictive racing game with a career mode that makes it feel almost like an RPG for guys who like cars; great details; solid gameplay.

CONS: The game's AI isn't the best in the world.

OVERALL

A really fun game to play. Porsche fans and general car enthusiasts will absolutely love it.

5 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Gore for Gore's Sake

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE's 3D entrails are not for the faint of heart

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Activision** ■ DEVELOPER **Raven Software** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$49.95**

GAME GLANCE

- 1,370 Enemies killed
- 1 Million pints of blood spilled
- 67 Groin shots
- 17 Friendlies felled
- 777,340 Dollars earned

I can accept *Soldier of Fortune*'s unparalleled level of gore, as it's a game for adults and every effort is made to warn buyers and parents of the game's content. What's harder to accept is that extreme gore is the only substantial "fresh" content *Soldier of Fortune* brings to the first-person-shooter genre.

By Steve Klett



CALL ME PEG-LEG This game is definitely not for those with weak stomachs.

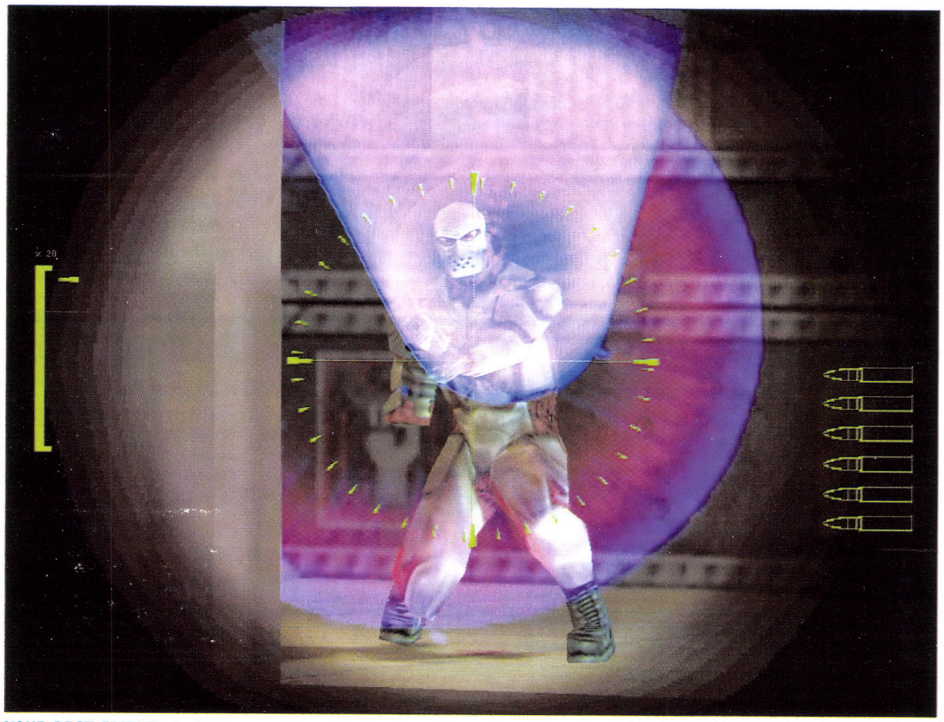


OPERATION Ha! And I didn't even touch the sides as I took out his heart!

There are two ways to categorize *Soldier of Fortune*. It's either the goriest first-person shooter ever made, or it's the toughest answer yet to the hottest question of the moment: "Who wants to be a millionaire?" Both are correct.

Like the name of the game suggests, you take on the role of one tough-as-nails professional gun for hire, John Mullins (modeled after a real-world professional soldier of the same name). As you blast your way through the game's 31 missions – all based in realistic locales and featuring possible real-world scenarios – you'll blow the arms, legs, and heads off your silicon targets. All of these appendages separate from their owners' bodies in showers of gore and arterial spray, leaving only jutting shards of bones protruding from bloody stumps. After a grenade or rocket, sometimes all that's left is a few hunks of torso and bits of shattered limbs – and there's blood everywhere, lots of it.

For the first time ever, there are actual 3D guts oozing from your victims' bodies. Keep shooting or cutting victims with your knife after they're dead, and you can actually open up their chest or abdomen and watch their insides leak out in full 3D glory. This, in fact, is *Soldier of Fortune*'s biggest contribution to the world of first-person shooters. Because other than this, and the licensed use of the *Soldier of Fortune* name, there's not much new to see or experience here.



YOUR BEST FRIEND As is the case in most shooters these days, the sniper rifle is your most powerful ally for most of the game. It's almost too powerful, in fact, and can be used as a crutch at times.

GHOUL Equals Gore

Doubtless, the gore factor will be cool enough to warrant *Soldier of Fortune*'s price of admission for many bloodthirsty action fans with itchy trigger fingers. To tell you the truth, though, I was a little sickened by it, and I'm a big fan of the genre. Seeing bad guy's bodies recoil with the impact of bullets and slump down in a pool of blood is good enough for me; I don't need to examine their intestines. This game is going to be the new poster child for the "video games are too violent" theory. And I'd have a hard time arguing against that claim in this case.

Regardless, this is where the "goriest first-person shooter ever made" part comes in – *Soldier of Fortune* wins this category, hands down. So consider yourself warned: This is not a game to let kids play unsupervised – if at all, despite the content-lock feature and various gore modes. It's not even a game to let your significant other watch you play if, like mine, she's squeamish about violence and blood. Heck, it

Overall, *Soldier of Fortune* plays like a cross between *SiN* (without the bugs) and *GoldenEye* on the N64 — with lots of extra blood and guts, of course.

may not even be a game you should play while your dog is in the room. (See sidebar next page.) However, it is the game to play if you genuinely crave an ultrarealistic bullet-spraying experience.

Soldier of Fortune achieves its gory "brilliance" via an optimized version of id's *Quake II* engine – to which developer Raven Software has added its own GHOUL rendering system. It's basically designed to give targets multiple hit points, create more realistic reactions to projectiles, and offer a much higher amount of detail than *Quake II*. And it works. Shoot someone in the family jewels (or their "nether region," as the game calls it) and they'll react appropriately.

Show Me the Money!

Where the "millionaire" part comes in is through the *Soldier of Fortune* angle. Through the course of the missions, you accumulate payments for your services, and either John Mullins is notorious for working cheap (meant in the nicest way, John, if you're reading this), or hired guns just don't make what you'd expect these days. All I know is that after gunning down some 1,400 bad guys and saving the world from potential nuclear holocaust, I was a mere $800,000 richer (that's a scant $571.50 per enemy killed). I didn't even get a million bucks for saving the frickin' world! Now I'm playing the game again on a tougher skill level to see if I can earn a raise.



RUN, JOHN, RUN Many of the more intricate game actions are handled automatically.

And that alone says something, I guess, about *Soldier of Fortune*. As bad as the over-the-top gore made me feel about my penchant for these games, I couldn't stop playing it – it's a guilty pleasure I wanted to indulge. And it's hard to



YES, I HAVE A LIGHT The weapons in *Soldier of Fortune* are largely standard, but they sure do the job.

Test Center — Soldier of Fortune

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ No hardware glitches
- Eats up a lot of hard-drive space

ACCESSIBILITY

+ Multiple difficulty modes
+ Controls are easy to configure
- Need a high-end system to run the game

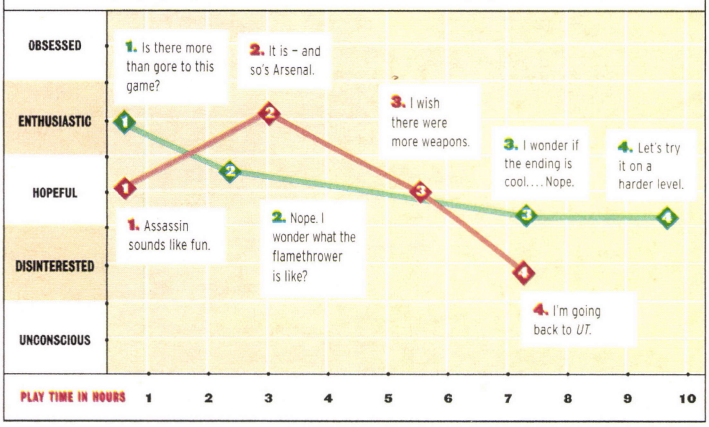
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		PROCESSOR ▶	Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
		SYSTEM RAM ▶	32	64	32	64	32	64	64	128	64	128
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	Rage Fury	640 x 480										
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Matrox G400	Millennium G400	640 x 480										
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		800 x 600										
		1024 x 768										

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

THE INTEREST CHART

While the gore is way over the top, the story mundane, and the characters cheesy, I had to finish the **single-player** game. The Assassin and Arsenal **multiplayer** variants were fun.



The odds are so overwhelming at times that it can get quite tense creeping down a hallway and peering around the corner.



TIME TO DIE Our friend here is about to paint the wall with his blood and guts.

put a finger on why. The story's nothing to brag about, the levels – although nicely detailed – are not highly interactive, and they're very linear. The enemy AI is on the level of *A-Team* opposition. And many of the more intricate moments for your character – say, when he has to blow up an item or find something – happen in scripted cut-scenes that you just sit back and watch.

Also, while you get to go to an inventory screen and outfit your character with various weapons and items, such as armor, grenades, night-vision goggles, and the like, this seems to be largely a gimmick. I chose the same basic loadout for almost every mission and never found myself wanting for something I failed to choose.

The game does offer waves upon waves of bad guys to take out with a variety of mundane, but extremely effective weapons, including a shotgun, a .44 pistol, an SMG, a sniper rifle (which is way too effective), a flame thrower – you get the point. The odds are so overwhelming at times that it can get quite tense creeping down a



SHOOTING GALLERY How long can you keep an enemy soldier on his feet after he's dead? You've got to challenge yourself.

hallway and peering around the corner, hoping you don't get your own head blown off in the process.

Hidden Assets

Soldier of Fortune does deserve kudos for letting you poke your head around a corner and take aim at unsuspecting targets, an ability previously reserved for more realistic action games such as *Rogue Spear*. You *have* to use this feature to survive in *Soldier of Fortune*, at least if you play on a difficulty level higher than Easy. Then there are also limited saves for each mission, the number of which varies according to the skill level you select. This is an excellent compromise for the age-old "to save or not to save whenever you want" question. There are just enough slots to satisfy most people, and those who don't want to save at all during a mission don't have to. More games should do this. The stats system is cool too: It tracks things like the number of head, throat, and "nether region" shots you pull off, as well as number of saves you use.



OVERKILL The environments aren't anything to write home to Mom about, but they don't suck, either.

This is going to be the poster child for the "video games are too violent" theory.

Multiplayer also has some nice new twists in addition to the standard options we're used to. For instance, in Assassin you must track down and kill a predetermined player, while someone else is hunting you, of course. And in Arsenal you must race to be the first to kill someone with each of the available weapons in your inventory.

Overall, *Soldier of Fortune* plays like a cross between *SiN* (without the bugs) and *GoldenEye* on the N64 – with lots of extra blood and guts, of course. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's just too bad the levels aren't more inventive or interactive (in this area it's a step backward) or that the gameplay doesn't urge you to do something other than kill, kill, kill! If it did, there would be more to talk about than gore, and I'd be able to give it a higher score – and justify the stress it put on my dog.



PEEK-A-BOO The ability to lean around corners and take aim at unsuspecting bad guys comes in extremely handy.

■ CALL THE SPCA

The DOG TEST

Is a **Game Too Violent** when it scares man's best friend?

My smooth fox terrier, Bailey, generally likes to sit at my feet while I'm working and playing games during the day. Until *Soldier of Fortune*, that is.

Halfway through the first mission I happened to look down and noticed Bailey's ears were down and he was shaking a bit – a dubious feat *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* never accomplished. I spoke a few hasty words of comfort and went back to the game. During mission two, I looked down again and Bailey was gone – escaped to the guest bedroom, where **I found him curled up in a ball and shaking like a leaf**. It seems the blood-curdling screams emanating from wave upon wave of enemy soldiers who found themselves without limbs was too much for the furry beast. I guess it's a testament to the fact that the violence is perhaps too realistic. What does your dog think?



■ **Be sensitive to your pet – play *Soldier of Fortune* with headphones!**

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 64MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	300MHz PII & 128MB
■ MINIMUM INSTALL	800MB HD SPACE

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	28.8k

The Verdict — Soldier of Fortune

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **Half-Life**
Still offers the best single-player experience in the genre.

■ **Unreal Tournament**
Excellent online performance and mix of game options.

■ **Quake 3: Arena**
Blazingly fast deathmatches that will give you vertigo.

■ **Soldier of Fortune**
Gore, gore and not much more. The gameplay is average.

■ **Kingpin: Life of Crime**
Previously the most violent shooter of all time; now an also-ran.

GRAPHICS
■ Quality, realistic environment textures. Average special effects and models.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **3**

SOUND
■ Excellent 3D audio; blood-curdling screams; forgettable but fitting soundtrack; dogs hate it.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **4**

MULTIPLAYER
■ The flamethrower is cool, as are the new game variants, but it's not up to *Quake III* or *Unreal Tournament* standards.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **3**

PROS: Gritty and realistic in an *A-Team* kind of way; mowing down thousands of bad guys is addictive.

CONS: Very linear; characters come off as cheesy; easy puzzles; not very interactive.

OVERALL
It's an average shooter, but the 3D guts will earn this game more attention than it otherwise deserves.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Disturbing the Force

Crush the Rebel Alliance scum or become one of them in **STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **LucasArts** ■ DEVELOPER **Ronin Entertainment** ■ GENRE **Real-Time Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-4** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$44.95**

GAME GLANCE

- 2 Warring factions
- 13 Different units per side
- 24 Single-player scenarios
- 35 Multiplayer maps
- 200 Jawa, Wampa, and Ewoks
- 1 Han Solo cameo appearances

Darth Vader once warned, "Don't be so proud of this technological terror you've constructed." He may have been partly right. Take, for example, *Star Wars: Force Commander*, a 3D real-time strategy game where the force would be kinda strong... if only it weren't for the buggy gameplay.

By Darren Gladstone

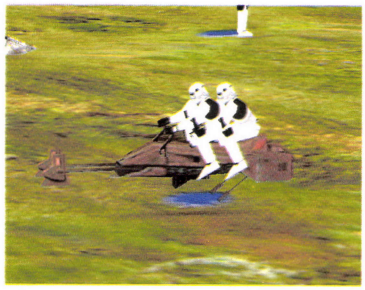
Being suckers for all things *Star Wars*, how can I not like the premise of this fully 3D real-time strategy game (RTS)? Direct troops, storm bunkers, and – if you're good enough – the chance to stomp Ewoks on principle. But, as the last chance to play a game in the "classic" *Star Wars* universe, is *Force Commander* a shameless effort to milk a franchise dry? Not exactly, but it is a shaky end.

Turf Wars

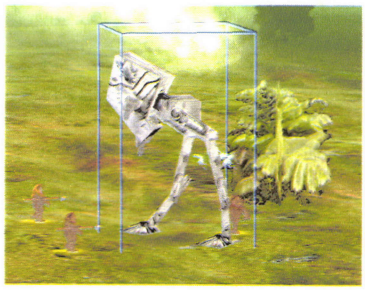
There are several ways to jump into the fray: a quick Skirmish mode, the full-blown campaign, and, of course, multiplayer.

Skirmish mode is down-and-dirty action, and multiplayer allows for any combination of four people to duke it out over a network, modem, or the MSN Gaming Zone. But the campaign plays the biggest role in *Force Commander*. In it, you are cast as Brenn Tantor, a stormtrooper stuck on patrol in the Tatooine desert. You start out trying to locate some delinquent droids. Sound familiar? Well, these types of loose tie-ins to the movies make you feel intrinsically linked to the *Star Wars* universe.

We don't want to spoil the story for you, but as you progress, you'll get to see the war from the perspective of both the Empire and the Rebel Alliance. The story and cinematics are good enough, the old *Star Wars* tunes are covered in a funky techno remix, but how does the *Star Wars* universe look and feel in 3D?



DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL They'll accept anyone in the new Imperial Navy.



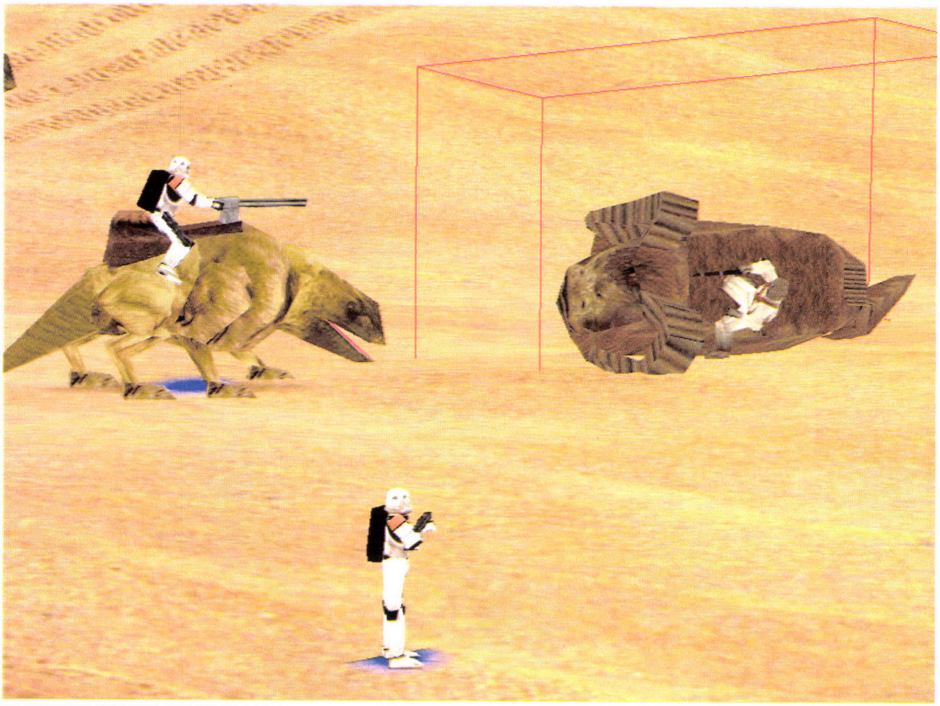
GETTING UNDERFOOT The toughest part of killing Ewoks? Scraping them off your feet.

R2 3D-Too

Three years ago a three-dimensional RTS game was unheard of. But since that time we've seen the likes of *Myth* and *Homeworld*, with more games on the way. So, how does *Force Commander* stack up in our book?

Once you start a mission, you know you are distinctly enmeshed in the Star Wars universe. You'll be greeted by everything you'd expect to see in the films. The big difference is that the folks at Industrial Light and Magic didn't give developer Ronin Entertainment any help – and it shows. Don't get us wrong: The environment looks nice, just not stunning. It is made up of simple texture-mapped terrain tiles that do an ample job of setting the *Star Wars* mood.

The raised terrain does, however, play a major part in the game. Larger, clunky units can't travel over steep inclines, while individual troopers can sneak into any crevice and rain down fire on an enemy encampment.

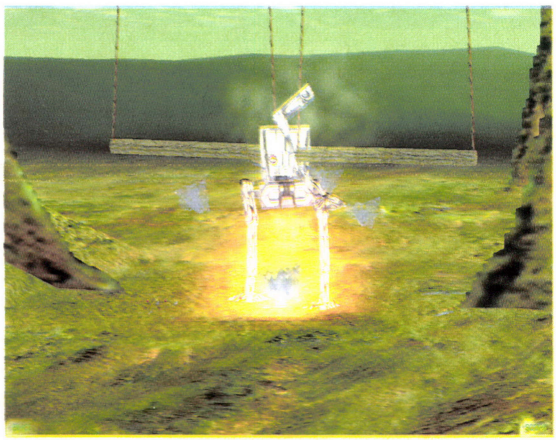


OPERATION DESERT STORMTROOPER Squad A vents its frustrations on some innocent Sand People. After losing that bet on Hoth, the troopers had to switch assignments with Squad B, who got to go to beautiful, cool Yavin IV.

DOUBLE PARKING It's hell trying to find any good parking in space these days.

Those hills and valleys also provide a point-of-view advantage. Fog of war clouds your vision, so you can't continually track units lurking just beyond a ridge. Guess they never heard of satellite maps a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. It makes taking every ridge a chore.

Once you fire up a mission, you know you're in the Star Wars universe.



EWOK AND ROLL Admittedly, we got a little cocky after stomping on some Ewoks. . . . and look what it got us.

You'd think it would be difficult handling the camera views throughout this hilly terrain. But by using the keyboard or mouse, it isn't too painful. You'll quickly learn to sweep, pan, or zoom close up on individual units.

When you get up close and personal, you can see that the graphics are somewhat dated, but the unit animations make it believable enough for you to overlook those little nitpicks.

Rally the Troops

Expect to see all the familiar units from the films: stormtroopers, AT-AT walkers, AT-STs, TIE Bombers, Y-Wings, air speeders, laser turrets, and the like. But since this game focuses entirely on the ground war, most of the 70 units had to be created specifically for the game. The Imperial war machine focuses more on hulking, lumbering units that trundle across the map.

The rebels, true to guerilla warfare tactics, move in quick hit-and-run surgical strikes. Since they need to preserve their troops, they have shields and support units such as medical droids and repair droids. One interesting addition is that some units on both sides have secondary fire options. AT-AT can fire a major laser burst, soldiers have stun settings, and so on.



SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS Thankfully, the Rebel Alliance paid its shield bill on time.

Unlike most RTS games, in which you're in a constant cycle of building structures, harvesting resources, and creating armies, in *Force Commander* you call in troops from

Test Center — Force Commander

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

- \+ Installation is fast and simple
- \+ Will work even with low-end machines
- \+ Seamlessly detects hardware

ACCESSIBILITY

- \- Ugh! The interface is killing me!
- \- Choppy at times
- \- Our PC bogged down with 50 units onscreen

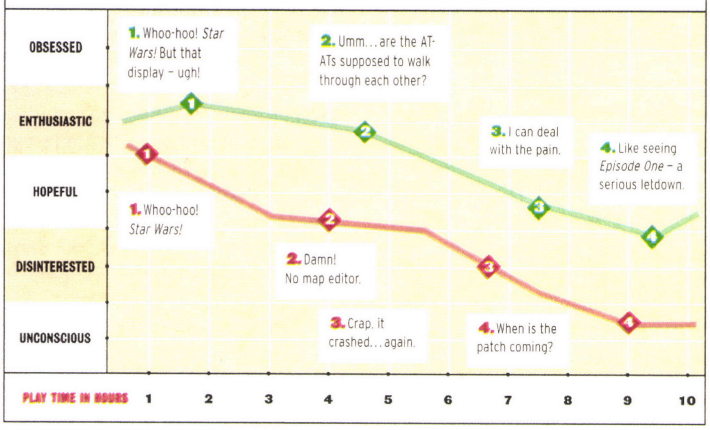
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	64	128	64	128
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 Rage Fury	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
TNT 2 Diamond Viper V770 Ultra	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
GeForce Guillemot 3D Prophet	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Savage 2000 Diamond Viper II	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 — Runs with ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Star Wars: Force Commander's **single-player** game gives you a compelling story to play. The **multiplayer** modes, though, would've been better without the major slowdowns and crashes.



Rather than collecting resources, you score points by beating back the enemy and capturing enemy structures.

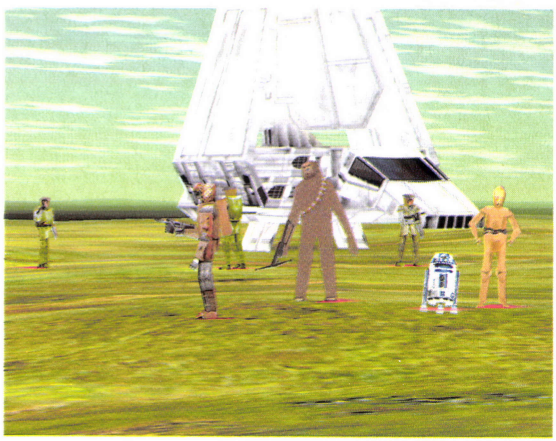
orbit one sortie at a time. And it is in your best interests to keep everyone alive. You *could* keep calling in new troops, but with each victory under their belt they acquire both experience and health, so it pays to have your troops survive and gain veteran status.

You use command points to acquire your new troops. Rather than collecting resources, you score command points by beating back the enemy, completing mission objectives, and capturing enemy structures.

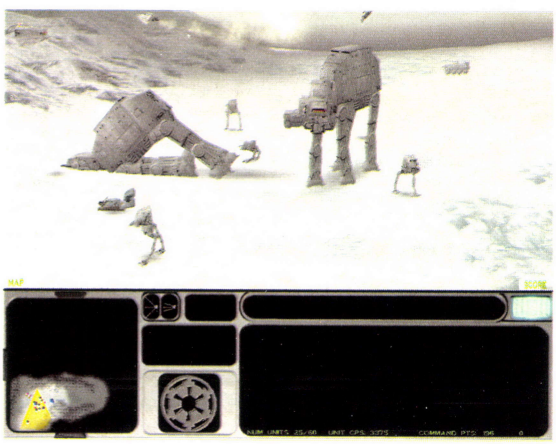
Commandeering installations is a huge part of the strategy here. You can send in soldiers to take over turrets, you can sneak inside AT-STs, carjack speeder bikes, and take over command centers. While this all may sound good, there is always a dark side to the game.

Tremors in the Force

The first issue you'll run into is the horrendous load times. Are we



THE USUAL SUSPECTS Here's a cameo shot of Chewie and the gang before they infiltrate the shield generator.



ALL TRIPPED UP Remember, kids, don't drink and operate heavy machinery. Note overly clunky and cheese-laden interface.

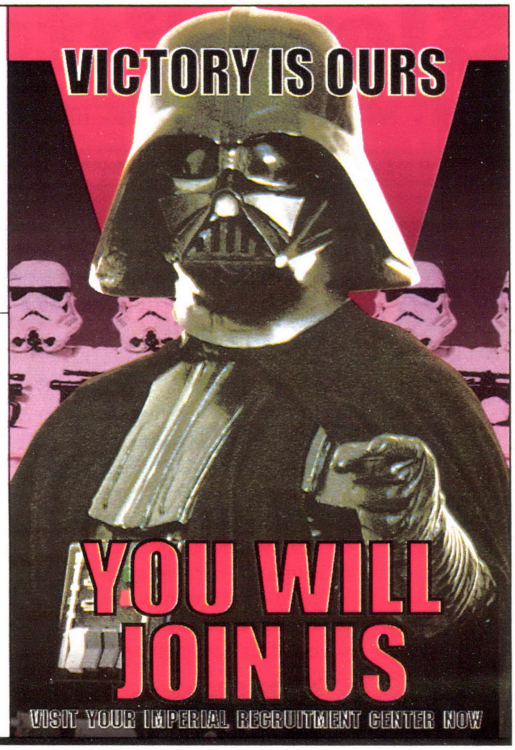
■ IN THE (IMPERIAL) NAVY/YOU CAN SET YOUR MIND AT EASE/IN THE (IMPERIAL) NAVY...

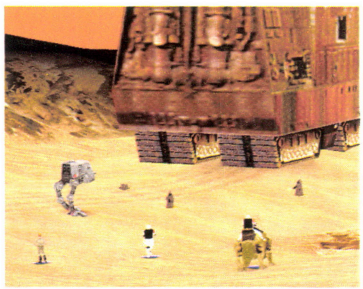
TOP 10 REJECTED IMPERIAL RECRUITMENT SLOGANS

Since there isn't a draft any more in the Galactic Empire, they're always trying to come up with **wacky incentives** to sign up cadets. Think these would work?

10. 'Cause Star Trek is for wusses
9. All-You-Can-Eat Ewoks: the other white meat
8. I want you... and that *is* a light saber in my pocket
7. Princess Leia slave girl outfits for all female recruits
6. Get free "Jedi on Board" windshield ornament for joining now
5. Sign up now and get 2.9% financing or $1500 cash back on select-model TIE fighters
4. Win a date with Gran Moff Tarkin
3. Tatooine is still safer than Detroit
2. Our way or the airlock
1. Chicks dig guys with big, black helmets

■ The poster on the right is one of the posters that LucasArts is running in their ad campaign for *Force Commander* ... on the left are slogans we would've liked to see used.





ILLEGAL ALIEN Word has it these Jawas have been dealing in illicit droid pornos.

getting the plans to the Death Star here? How about the large, sloppy interface that obscures half the screen? At least you can minimize it.

Next you'll have to contend with unit artificial intelligence issues. For example, we had a troop carrier stuck behind an AT-ST's legs, and the driver couldn't figure out how to hit reverse.

Then we encountered minor collision and clipping issues. It's nothing severe, but you can't help but notice when one of your hovertanks drives through another.

Our last beefs reside within multiplayer. First, where's the map editor? George is probably afraid someone will re-create battles from *Episode One* to wipe out Jar Jar's people. But more painful was system lockups in an office LAN

You'll run into bad load times. Are we getting the plans to the Death Star or something?

head-to-head match. The game is supposed to be able to support up to four players, but in our test the game locked and chugged to a standstill with only 50 units onscreen, occasionally crashing.

You do end up getting the full-blown *Star Wars* experience with a compelling story and ample controls. Plus, the single-player game is entertaining. We just wish the three-plus years in development had been enough to iron out all the bugs. *Star Wars* fanatics will still probably dig this, and I was tempted to give it four stars, but the flaws were just too strong. Use the patch, Luke. Use the patch.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	266MHz & 64MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	450MHz PII & 128MB
■ MINIMUM INSTALL	625MB HD SPACE

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

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

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✗
■ A3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 4, Internet 4	
■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	56K

The Verdict — Force Commander

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **Myth 2: Soulblighter**
New scenarios, refreshed graphics and a whole lot of the undead.

■ **Force Commander**
Crush the Rebel Alliance; just watch out for multiplayer crashes.

■ **Shadow Company**
Part real-time strategy, part *A-Team* with sloppy camera control.

■ **Myth: The Fallen Lords**
One of the first 3D RTS games that lets you be a medieval general.

■ **Warzone: 2100**
3D real-time robotic tank combat offers great innovation in creating units.

GRAPHICS

■ Dated by today's standards, but the animation of the AT-ATs quickly makes you forget it; the interface blows.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

SOUND

■ Authentic *Star Wars* sounds with some decent voice acting for backup. Check out the *Star Wars* techno remix.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER

■ Ugh! The system crashes and lags with only 40 units onscreen! And there's no map editor software.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 2

PROS: It's *Star Wars*, for God's sake. How could you not like it?

CONS: Graphical glitches; weak terrain detail; the HUD; buggy multiplayer; the lack of a map editor; looong load times – that's how.

OVERALL

A long time coming, it will do an ample job of putting you in the *Star Wars* world – just beware the many bugs.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★

Slow Pitch = Yawn

SAMMY SOSA SOFTBALL SLAM milks a few more pennies from the franchise

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **3DO** ■ DEVELOPER **3DO** ■ GENRE **Sports** ■ PLAYERS **1-2** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$29.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 6 Playing fields
- 1 Chicago Cubs slugger
- Tons of runs
- 0 Beer kegs

Slow-pitch softball is supposed to be a relaxed, casual alternative to baseball. So why is 3DO's new family-oriented softball game so... stressful?

By Gary Eng Walk

For starters, maybe it's the pressure of knowing you have to put up several dozen runs on the board in order to win. In a typical scrimmage, teams score more than Hugh Hefner, because defense hardly comes into play. Get used to final scores such as 43-28. And don't bet on improving, either: Skill seems to be irrelevant. Swinging at a pitch nowhere near the strike zone often results in towering homers, while a seemingly prodigious cut at a ball right over the plate could very well mean a soft grounder to the pitcher.

True, *Softball Slam* isn't supposed to be a realistic softball sim; it's aimed at the younger set. But the folks at 3DO still could have worked harder to give this shallow offering more depth. It's not as if they don't know any better: *Softball Slam*'s big brother, *High Heat Baseball*, is the best, most sophisticated baseball game on the market.

In a typical scrimmage, teams score more than Hugh Hefner, because defense hardly comes into play.



SOFTBALL SLAMMED Drink up, dude – even with a good buzz on, he shouldn't have any problems blasting one out of the park, thanks to the gigantic hitting zone.

■ GOING FOR GOLD IN SYDNEY

HARDCORE GIRLS

Don't mess with the **USA Softball Team.** They're the defending gold medalists. Here are four key players to watch:

#16 LISA FERNANDEZ



Pitcher The linchpin of the team can throw serious smoke: She tossed a one-hitter against Australia in '98.

#1 DR. DOT RICHARDSON

Second Base She hit the game-winning homer to clinch the gold in '96. She's also an orthopedic surgeon.



#22 SHEILA DOUTY



First Base The "Ace of First Base" is the team's best clutch hitter. She's the one you want at the plate.

#6 CRYSTL BUSTOS

Shortstop She's known as the Mark McGwire of softball. Why? She can blast 300-foot homers. Yow!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLSPORT

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	166MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	200MHz MMX & 64MB
MINIMUM INSTALL	60MB HD SPACE

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✔
Direct3D	✔
3dfx	✔
OpenGL	✘

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✔
A3D	✔

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 2, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	No
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict

Softball Slam

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **High Heat 2001** *Softball Slam*'s big brother is the best hardball game going.
- **Triple Play 2001** EA's baseball offering isn't as good as *High Heat*, but it does the job.
- **Microsoft Baseball** The newest baseball game on the market, it makes a decent first showing.
- **High Heat 2000** If you can still find it, this is a great game at a bargain price.
- **Softball Slam** All in all, this is one for the kids. Unrealistic gameplay hinders the fun.

GRAPHICS

■ They're not terrible, but the graphics in *Softball Slam* leave a lot to be desired; figures are too blocky.

0 1 2 ▼ 4 5 **3**

SOUND

■ The announcers will drive you out of your mind with their inane comments and incessant screaming.

0 1 ▼ 3 4 5 **2**

MULTIPLAYER

■ No LAN or Internet capabilities, but family members can play against each other on the same computer.

0 1 2 ▼ 4 5 **3**

PROS: *Field of Dreams*-esque rural diamond; male and female characters.

CONS: Haphazard gameplay; hyperactive in-game announcer; skinny girls slam homers like McGwire on Andro; strike zone the size of Kansas.

OVERALL

It might look fun, but real men play *High Heat Baseball 2001*. Leave *Softball Slam* to the kiddies.

2 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆



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.

NVIDIA

graphics

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More Cannon Fodder

Innovative online features validate **C&C TIBERIAN SUN: FIRESTORM**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Westwood Studios** ■ GENRE **Real-time strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$24.95**

GAME GLANCE
- 2 Minicampaigns
- 18 Single-player missions
- 15 New multiplayer maps

Although it's really just an add-on, *Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun: Firestorm* delivers more of the classic gameplay *C&C* fanatics tend to find so addictive – with a little extra oomph in the online multiplayer department.

By Steve Klett



WAR IS PRETTY For one brief moment, everyone stares at the pretty green light.

It's frustrating for a "critic." Westwood keeps churning out *C&C* games and expansion packs – in this case, *Firestorm* for C&C *Tiberian Sun* – that don't deviate much from the game they follow, but it's hard not to like them.

What you get: 18 new single-player missions divided, as usual, between NOD and GDI; a new storyline with 30 minutes of live action; and several new units. As is typical with Westwood add-ons for the *C&C* line, you can expect *Firestorm*'s level of challenge to be far above that of *Tiberian Sun.*

By far the biggest new feature for *C&C* fanatics is the new World Domination Tournament multiplayer feature. In this mode you battle as GDI or NOD for control of either the Northern or European continent, via Westwood Online, of course. It's a cool way to give your individual battles bigger meaning in the *C&C* online community and a good enough excuse to add *Firestorm* to your *C&C* library.

The Verdict

PROS: A solid combination of new units, maps, and online options; more challenging gameplay; great new multiplayer option really makes it worthwhile.

CONS: There's little that's new in the gameplay department.

OVERALL

Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun veterans will want it for the World Domination Tournament mode alone.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★

Got Croc?

Everyone's favorite crocodile is back to save the world... again... in **CROC 2**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Fox Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **Argonaut** ■ GENRE **Action/Adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1-2** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$20.00**

GAME GLANCE
- 40+ Levels
- 7 Bosses
- 0 Mullets

I immediately realized this game was not for me. "This," I thought, "is a perfect game for my five-year-old son."

By William O'Neal



AIN'T HE CUTE? You'll spend a good portion of *Croc 2* walking around talking to the cute creatures that inhabit the world.

The sequel to *Croc: Legend of the Gobbos, Croc 2* features our reptilian hero years after he's rescued the Gobbos from Baron Dante. This time his main goal is to find his parents, but Dante will show his ugly mug again, of course.

The game's levels are dispersed nonlinearly across four new Gobbo villages, or hubs. Gameplay consists mainly of finding keys to unlock the doors to new hubs and solving puzzles. Croc has a bevy of new moves, including the boost triple jump, the power flip, and the ability to throw things.

While the puzzles were a little too easy for a 30-year-old like me, my son found them to be sufficiently challenging, and he enjoyed the game. Two players can control the game at the same time via the OmniPlay feature.

Those who like the *Rayman* series will welcome *Croc 2*'s friendly feel, happy music, and cute characters. This is a fun, nonviolent game that's perfect for kids.

The Verdict

PROS: A great family game; if you have kids who are anywhere from five to 10 years old, they'll love it; inventive worlds.

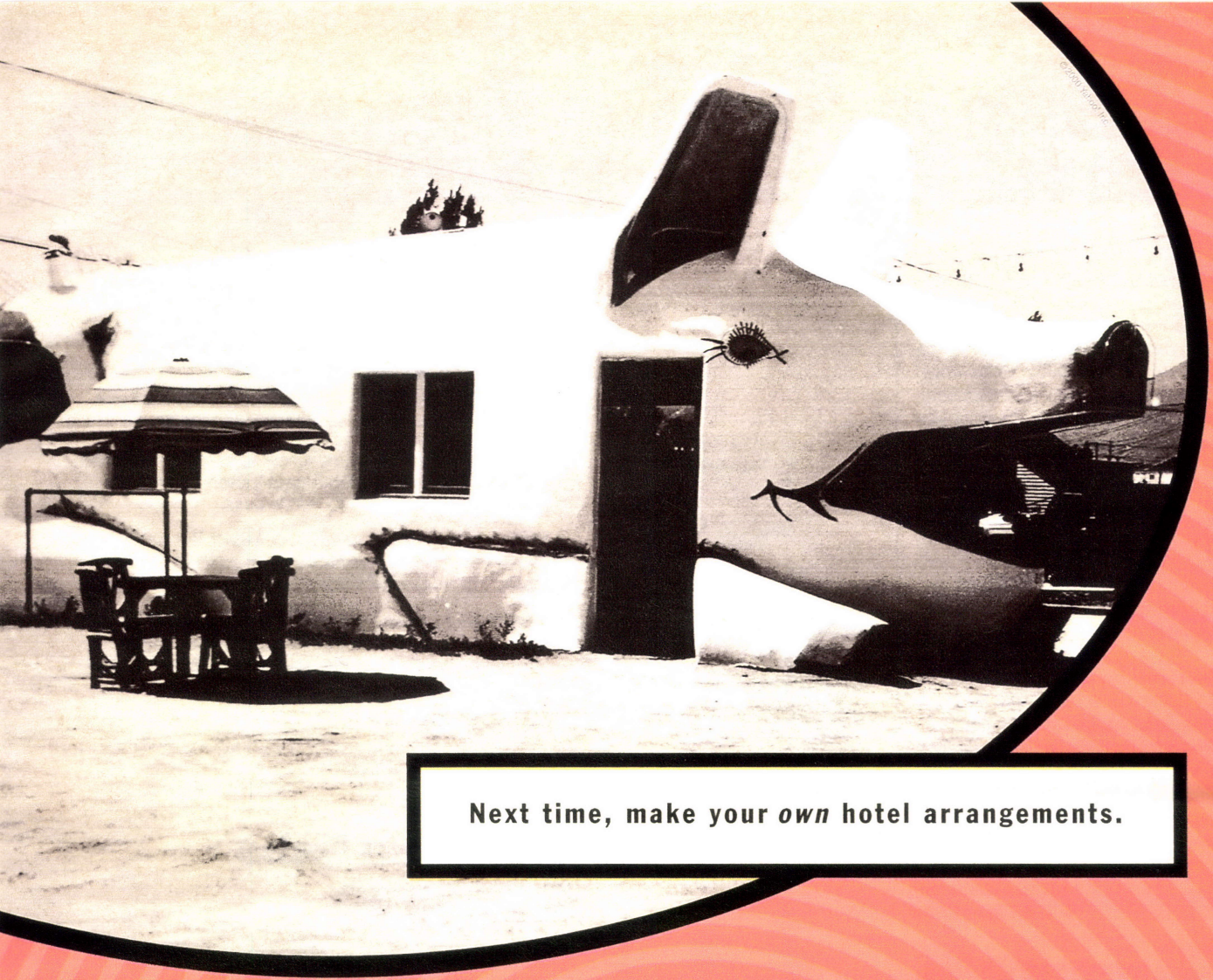
CONS: The puzzles are a little too simple; the pseudolanguage spoken by the game's characters is annoying.

OVERALL

A good game for kids, but grown-ups have better things to do. Aren't there some terrorists somewhere that need killing?

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★



Yahoo! Travel

Do You YAHOO!?

Poorly planned trips are never much of a vacation. Take control. Book your flight. Rent a car. Make hotel reservations in like, two minutes. Maybe three.

www.yahoo.com

The Wringer

Listen, pal, those crappy little tin-can speakers you got with your computer are no longer going to cut it. Period. If you're using your PC to listen to MP3s or watch DVDs while you work, you need some thumping bass, crisp sound, and at least three speakers surrounding you like a gang of thugs.

So here's the big question: Do you really need to spend a lot of bread to appreciate quality sound? Hell, yes! You want easy installation, quality sound, and volume that will disturb the peace, and that costs Benjamins.

The Playlist: AC/DC, Ozzy Osbourne, The Beatles, Outkast, Christina Aguilera, Goodie MoB, D'Angelo, and Dr. Dre. The goal: Kick out the bass and see how long it will take to piss off our annoying neighbor. Your results may vary depending on your music selection and volume, but here's what we came up with.

–Darren Gladstone and William O'Neal



HH Scott MM2000i

Looks like... It's part of a dentist's office intercom system. Plain putty white.

Sounds like... The NYC subway system – Solid bass and good mids, but sometimes it's too loud to think.

What you get: Two satellites, a rear speaker, a subwoofer, and a remote control. Additional X-Bass buttons provide – you guessed it – extra bass.

Angry-neighbor test: 12 minutes. It wasn't the game playing that pissed her off as much as it was the music. These speakers are awesome for playing music.

Verdict: Great speakers if your source has an equalizer, since the speakers don't have minute controls for things like bass and treble. They also sport RCA jacks for your home system.

www.hhscott.com $200

Creative Labs DTT2500

Looks like... Five high-tech doorstops with 2,000 dials.

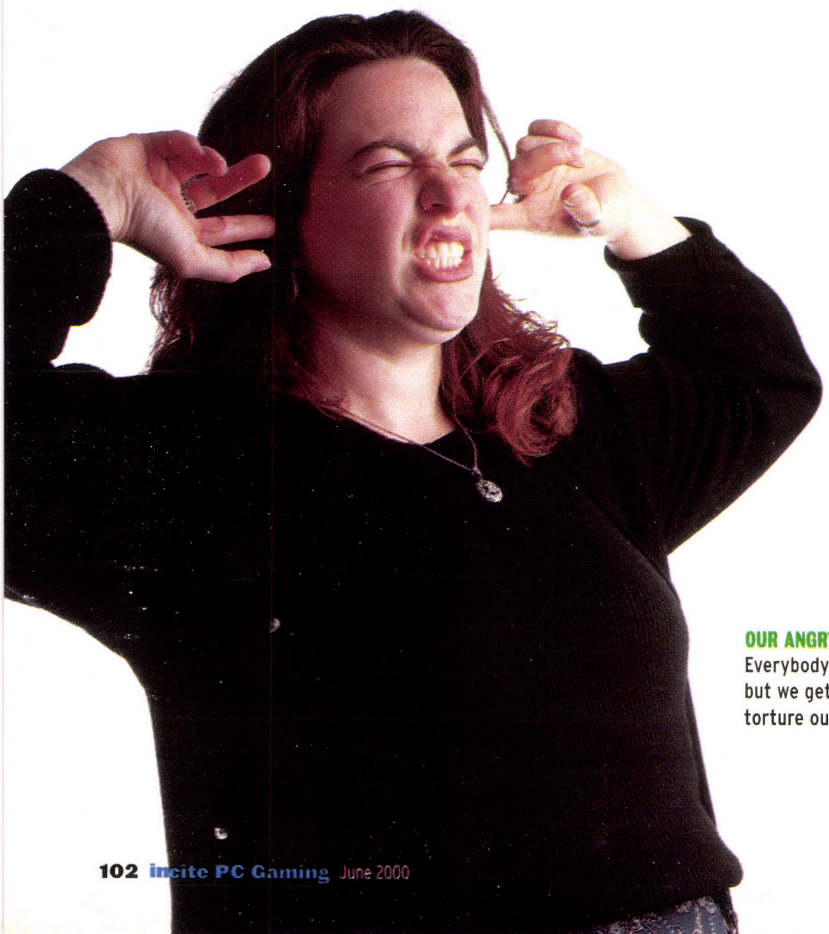
Sounds like... Your last girlfriend. After you go through the initial hassle of setting things up and fine-tuning, it starts to sound great. But after a while, the complicated controls get annoying.

What you get: Five tiny but powerful speakers, a Dolby Digital decoder, a subwoofer, and a mile or so of cable.

Angry-neighbor test: Five minutes. Well, technically, four minutes and 30 seconds for fine-tuning. But once we kicked in the sound, she came running over to bitch about the noise in less than a minute.

Verdict: The biggest problem with having so many buttons, dials, and options is that we're compelled to play with them all day. But the payoff is that they sound awesome once you have them in place.

www.creative.com $250



OUR ANGRY NEIGHBOR
Everybody's got one, but we get paid to torture ours.





THE WINNER

▲ Klipsch ProMedia v2-400

Looks like... A gang of little black armless midgets. But don't let the smooth taste fool you: These little suckers sport some serious bump.

Sounds like... Godzilla coming through town, "backing that ass up." These sweet-sounding, THX-certified speakers are easily the best-sounding multimedia speakers we've heard in a long time.

What you get: Four satellite speakers and a subwoofer.

Angry-neighbor test: 10 seconds. When speakers sound this good you want nothing more than to break 'em like a Vietnam P.O.W. With that in mind we cranked everything we got our hands on: music, games, movies, whatever. These woke our neighbor up from one of her Brad Pitt-induced dreams in record time, and she implored us to "turn that crap down." We knew we had found our winner.

Verdict: If you don't already have these, buy 'em! They're perfect for playing DVDs, games, and music.

www.klipsch.com **$250**

Yamaha YST-MS50 ▼

Looks like... A set of felt covered bookends.

Sounds like... Yoko Ono singing over The Beatles. It has loud, deep bass, but when you crank up the tunes, the satellite speakers crackle and you just want to stop the hurting as soon as possible.

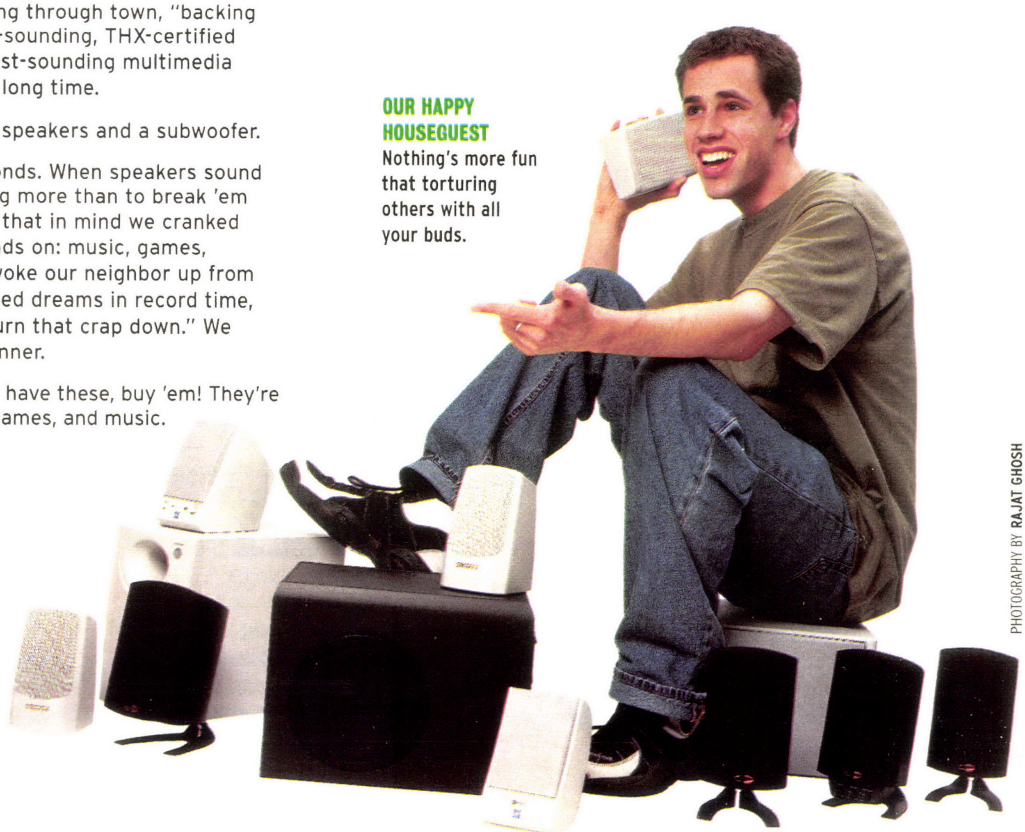
What you get: Two satellites and a subwoofer, and that's it.

Angry-neighbor test: Didn't even budge her. At about a third power, the distortion and crackling was so bad that we thought we were playing *Doom* with a set of $10 Radio Shack specials.

Verdict: These speakers are probably only a notch or two better than the ones that came with your hooptie computer. Our advice: Kick in some more money for a decent pair, you cheap bastard.

www.yamaha.com **$130**





OUR HAPPY HOUSEGUEST
Nothing's more fun that torturing others with all your buds.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RAJAT GHOSH**

HARDWARE

Sticky Fingers

TESTED | **Dual Analog Gamepad,** Guillemot, www.guillemot.com, $30

Trying to play your favorite game with a clunky controller is a whole lot like an Alannis Morrisette lyric – it's ironic, and you just want the hurting to stop. That is exactly why we're enjoying Guillemot's Dual Analog Gamepad. It gets right down to business, works damn well, and is comfortable to the touch.

Wait until you get your hands on this 10-button controller. The rubberized, textured surface of the Dual Analog pad is great. Good traction is always a key part of victory, and we're happy to report that our hands never slipped once. This guy arms you with a digital control as well as PlayStation-like dual analog controls, and is a nice step toward getting your game on.

Like many controllers these days, it can work via USB or gameport. The software interface is awesome. You can set up macros with up to 32 keys...we can't even string that many thoughts together!

There are, however, two downsides: It's a little on the beefy side, and it doesn't have force feedback.

You see, this controller isn't bad, its just not all it can be. It's like...rain on your wedding day...a free ride, but you're already there. Kill me now.

–Darren Gladstone

Rating ★★★★☆



HARD TO LET GO The no-slip grip will glue you to your PC long after you're done playing.

Shameless Plug

TESTED | **WingMan 4-Port USB Hub,** Logitech, www.logitech.com, $40



HOOKUPS It's a USB orgy of wires, plugs, and fun for the whole family with this hub.

Nothing says "sexy" like a USB hub...if you're a nerd. Okay, it may not be the coolest thing going, but USB hubs are quickly becoming a necessity for gamers these days.

Having a four-port USB hub may seem like overkill, but your two-USB port on the PC can quickly get filled. One USB mouse and one gamepad later, you're done. Sure, you can plug and unplug USB devices in a heartbeat, but sometimes you need a few things running at once. Or, at least, you shouldn't have to dig behind the computer to install them.

With the USB hub, you get four open slots to abuse and fill with your favorite gaming and entertainment devices. It can support all mice, keyboards, and low-voltage devices with no effort. Have a couple power-hungry USB devices? Then plug in the bundled AC adapter. Worried about driver issues and installation? Don't be. You open the box, and all you've got is a couple of wires, the hub, and cardboard. Windows 98 does all the installing for you.

So, it boils down to this: There are a bunch of other hubs like this one on the market, all selling for roughly the same price. Granted, it's hard to go wrong when it comes to getting a USB hub, but if we were putting *our* hard-earned money down, we would go for the Logitech model.

–Darren Gladstone

Rating ★★★★☆

Surf Board

TESTED | **Internet Keyboard Pro,** www.microsoft.com, $55

If the Natural Keyboard Pro didn't turn you on with the glowing review we gave it back in the January 2000 issue, here's another option for you: Microsoft's Internet Keyboard Pro.

Ergonomics be damned! If you like the "normal" flat keyboard, then this is right up your alley. It's your traditional keyboard layout with two very big exceptions: a series of control buttons along the top of the unit and two USB ports on the keyboard.

You know, this whole "Internet" thing is so happening now, why not make a keyboard to exploit it? No longer do you need to deal with those mundane things like double-clicking on screen. With link buttons lining the Internet Keyboard Pro, you can now do everything from navigate the Web to open email programs. There's even a series of multimedia controls for listening to CDs as you pretend to work.

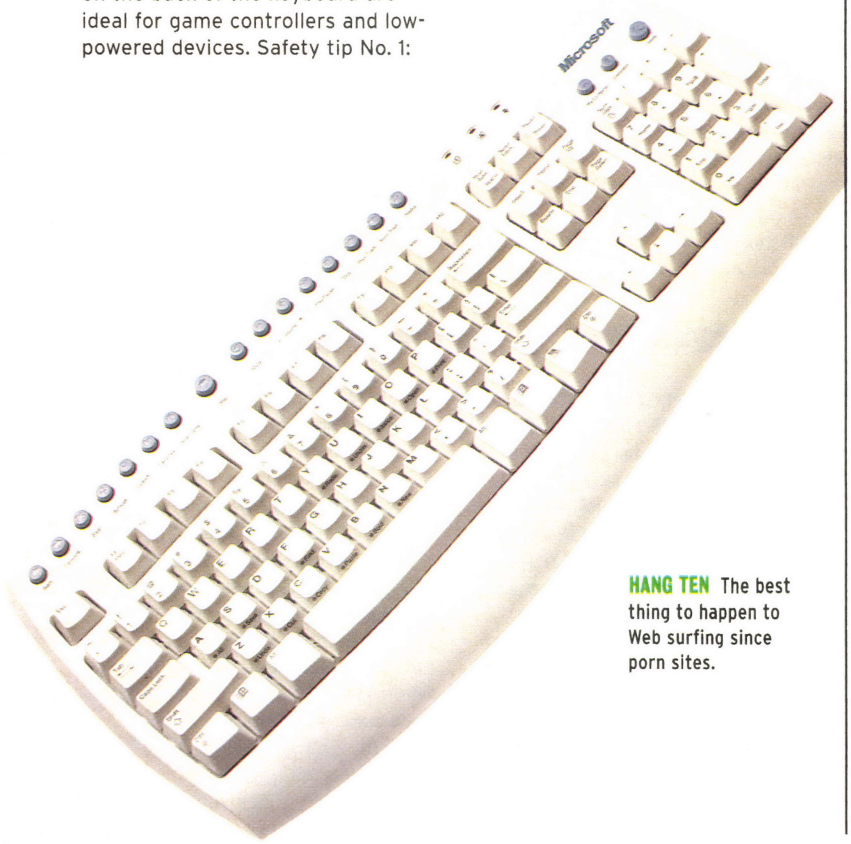
The two unpowered USB ports on the back of the keyboard are ideal for game controllers and low-powered devices. Safety tip No. 1: Plug in the USB and the PS/2 plugs for this keyboard. Many motherboards still have issues with recognizing USB keyboards.

The feel of the keyboard is actually quite nice, and here's a bit of good news for gamers: You can disable those annoying Windows Start buttons on the keyboard during gameplay. That means no accidental lockups by hitting it! We've been fragged more than once after we accidentally dumped our screen back to Windows by hitting that dastardly key. It's about time somebody made a way to easily disable it.

Whether you're using it for the ultimate fragging machine or the ultimate surfing rig, the Internet Keyboard Pro is certainly a welcome addition to anyone's PC.

–Darren Gladstone

Rating ★★★★☆



HANG TEN The best thing to happen to Web surfing since porn sites.

RADIO-FREE PC Does this mean we have to start carrying our notebook PCs like boomboxes?



On the Air

TESTED | **DSB-R100 USB PC Radio**
D-Link Systems,
www.dlink.com, $40

We've spent most of this issue telling you about how music and games are becoming closely intertwined, so why not just listen to the radio on your PC? Oh, sure, you can do things the "old fashioned" way with a Walkman or even listen to Internet radio, but what about your local stations? With an open USB port and the USB PC Radio, you're going to be in the groove.

It's a neat idea: Plug this in wherever you are and you get an amplified FM signal that comes out of your PC speakers. Probably the coolest part is that you can tune in and record songs off the radio in .MP3 format. It receives FM signals a little better than your standard-issue radio.

Installation is a breeze, and the software controls are so simple that your technophobic mom could change stations without batting an eye. Even the .MP3 conversion software works well enough for a decent recording.

For now, though, we'll stick with a $10 FM tuner. Well, either that or attach it to a notebook and tote it around in the streets as a supergeeky high-tech boombox.

–Darren Gladstone

Rating ★★★☆☆

Gearheads

WE ANSWER YOUR TECH QUESTIONS | BY DI LUO AND DARREN GLADSTONE

The Big Question of the Month

This Old Computer

Q. After seeing the costs of having someone else build a computer for me, I've been inspired to make my own computer. The catch: My experience doesn't go beyond using AOL and installing demos. So, I've got a couple of questions. If I want a dual processor, do I need two motherboards? And if I have cooling for the case and hard drive, is cooling for the CPU needed?

A. First, we'd like to applaud you for your decision to go under the hood and build your own hot-rod PC. But we're also obliged to throw out a word of caution. Building a PC is simple – if you know what you're doing. Pick up some how-to books or go to www.pcmech.com for an excellent walk-through for building a computer.

As for your specific questions, dual processors do require a special motherboard, but not two of them. Still, who can't use an extra motherboard laying around the house? Regarding your chilling question about CPU cooling: All CPUs must be attached to fans or heat sinks. These things get so hot that they will burn out without direct cooling. Hell, you can fry an egg on a hot CPU even with the fan attached. Temperatures can reach 80 degrees Celsius.

Additional coolants for the hard drive and case are supposed to help performance, but the most important part for cooling is still the CPU. Most hard drives and cases don't have any fans (except the power supply) because they are generally not needed. The additions take a lot more work and, of course, more money.

You'll save a few hundred dollars building your own machine. But you won't have the warranties offered by big companies like Dell or Gateway. If anything goes wrong, you'll have to figure it out yourself without tech support and maybe even pay for replacement parts out of your own pocket. If you're going to go high-end for a fast, dual-CPU system, paying a little bit more for the warranty from a big company might not be a bad idea, and a first-time builder should probably start with something less costly to experiment and tweak.

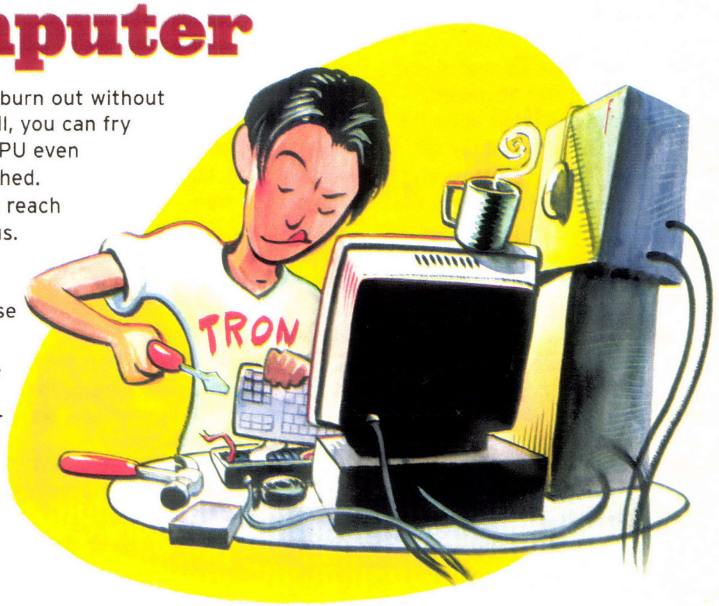


ILLUSTRATION BY FRED HARPER

Cover Your ASCII

Q. If I build my own computer, how much do you think it would be to get it insured? Who would I insure a PC?

A. We've seen computers covered in home offices under separate insurance policies, and you very well could get coverage for your computer. This question, however, is best left to an insurance professional.

Now, we aren't recommending these sites, but after a quick search on the Web we found Tech Insurance (www.techinsurance.com), PC Insure (www.pcwinsure.com) and Coverage Link (www.coveragelink.com). These could be good places to start looking for help. You can also try the good old Yellow Pages.

Would Windows 98 be able to utilize additional RAM on my 600MHz machine?

Ramming Speed

Q. On my Pentium 233MHz with Windows 95, I had 32MB RAM. I upgraded to 96MB, but several people have told me that Windows 95 can utilize only 64MB, and more memory than that just slows it down. Now I have a Pentium III/600MHz with 256MB PC100 SDRAM and Windows 98. I know I'll someday be a slowpoke again. Would Windows 98 be able to utilize additional RAM on this machine?

A. We think the guy who told you that Windows 95 couldn't use more than 64MB of RAM was either an OS2 salesman or high at the time. (Attention, OS2 salesmen: We are, in fact, kidding.) Windows 95 had no problems with more RAM, and any operating system would benefit from it. What limited the amount of RAM on some older systems such as 233MHz machines was the motherboard, which had only the capacity to support a small amount of RAM. (Some were as low as 64MB.) With your new system this shouldn't be a problem at all; 256MB is more than sufficient for some time – and is fully utilized. When the 600MHz machine finally becomes "obsolete," you can probably up the RAM to 512MB or so, depending on your motherboard. Check the machine's specs to make sure.



A four-letter word worth repeating.

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GDI Power

Rule all you survey with our *Tiberian Sun: Firestorm* tips

In *Tiberian Sun: Firestorm* you'll face a new and sinister enemy even more evil than Kane himself. With that in mind we expect plenty of you will be crying for all the help you can get. That's where we come in. This is the first of a three-part strategy. (Parts two and three will be available on www.incite.com).

GDI

Limpet Drones are invaluable in combat, as they allow you to enter enemy territory virtually undetected. Place one in the ground where enemy vehicles are likely to drive over it, and when they do it'll attach itself to the vehicle and go along for the ride. They're especially worthwhile for harvesters.

The mobile **EMP,** which sports light armor and is pretty fast, works much like the stationary **EMP cannon.** When you notice a formation of hostile units, send the mobile cannon there and activate it. Once activated, enemy vehicles won't be able to move or shoot. While they're immobile, send your units in to finish 'em off. The mobile EMP also forces subterranean units to the surface.

Use **mobile war factories** to build units at the front line. Waiting for slow vehicles and troops to join the fight is no way to win a battle. Unfortunately, the mobile war factory has only light armor, so be sure to provide ample escort units.

With its long range, the **juggernaut** has the ability to take out enemy targets that your other units have yet to reach. Similar to the NOD artillery, the juggernaut has to be set up before it is ready to shoot. There are a few drawbacks, however: Its rate of fire is quite low, it has extremely light armor, and it is generally unsuitable for use in close combat.

Use stationary EMP cannons to bring all subterranean NOD units to the surface, where they can be easily dealt with.

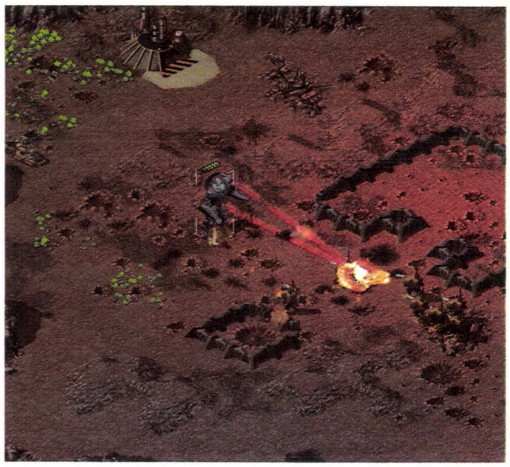
NOD

The NOD **Reaper** is both slow and lacking in armor – not a good combination. Instead, the **cyborg,** with its web sprayer, has the ability to make life hell for hostile infantry. Be sure to use the cyborg's rockets to take out enemy vehicles.

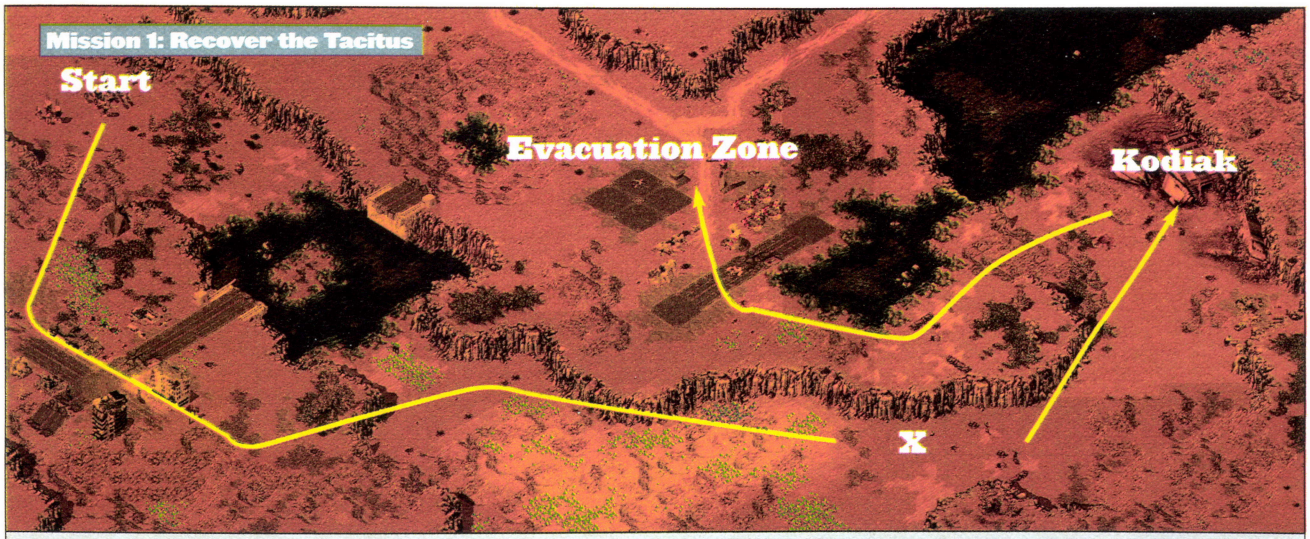
Like the GDI, the NOD also boast a **mobile war factory.** Too bad the NOD couldn't improve on the GDI's weak armor technology, though. In other words, it should travel only with escorts.

NOD **Limpet Drones** work just like GDI ones. Just set the Limpet Drone down on a frequently used road and wait until an enemy vehicle drives over it. The Drone will stick to the vehicle and transfer data about the surrounding environment back to your radar.

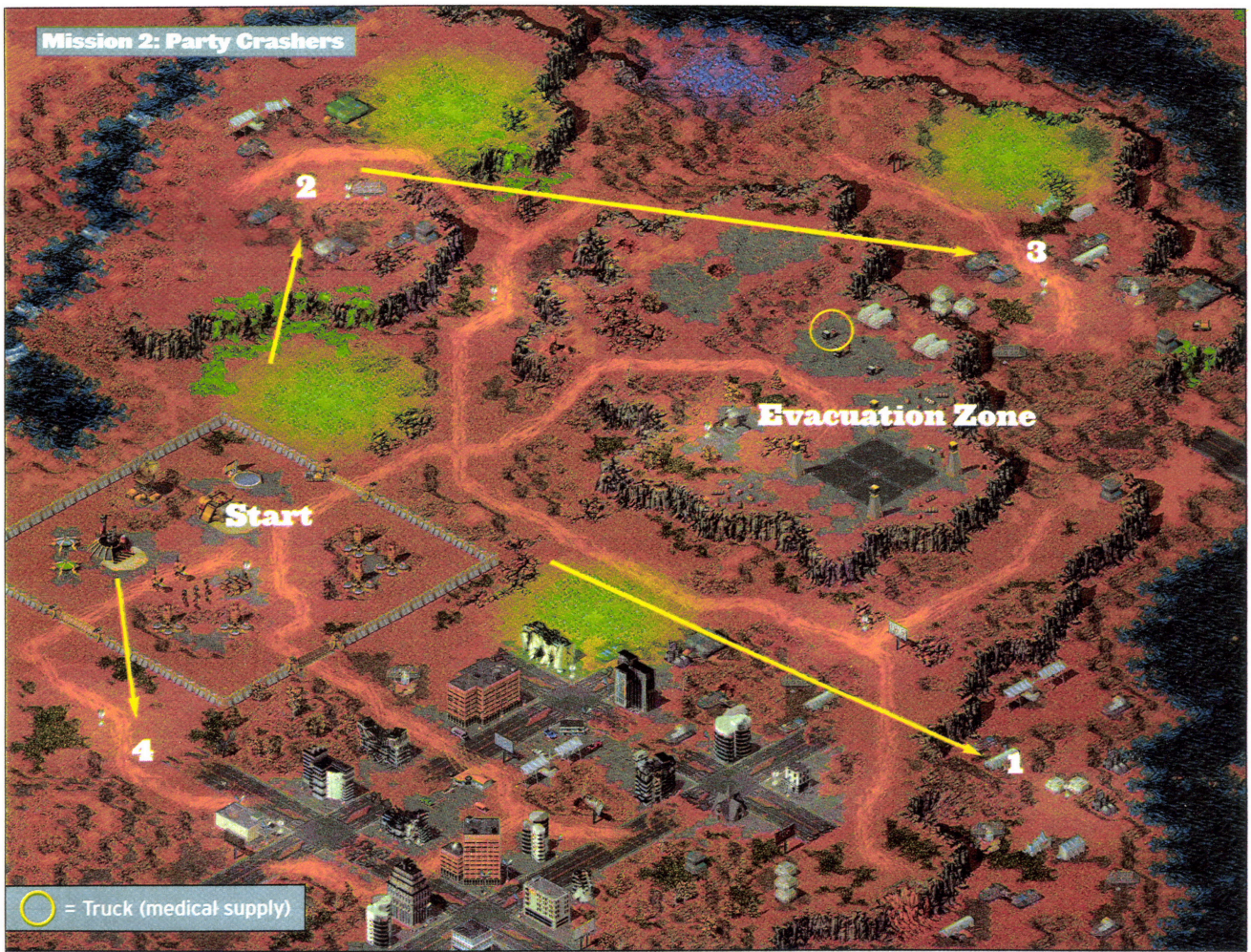
Use **mobile stealth generators** to render your units invisible. Carry the mobile stealth generator with your units on every attack. Be wary, though: The range of the mobile unit is far less than the range of the stationary one.



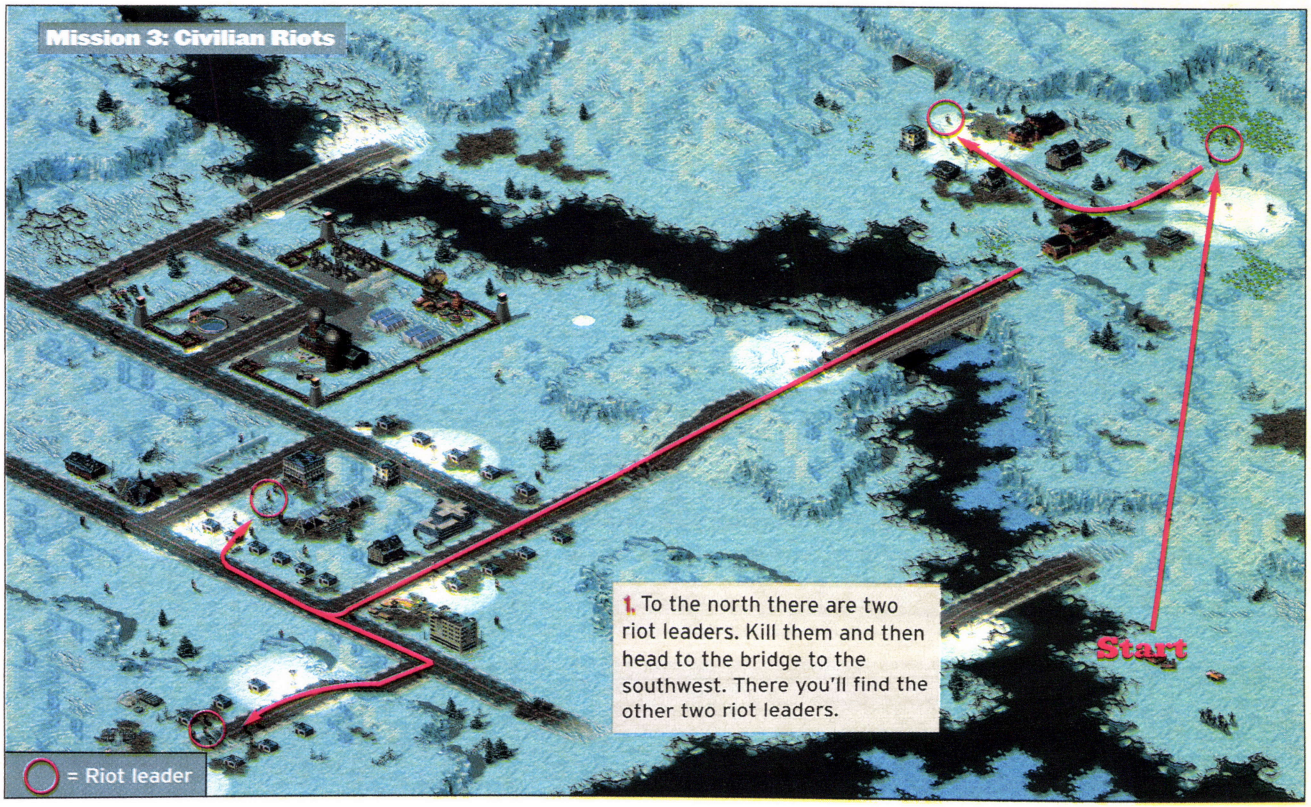
The Defender In the last GDI mission in *Firestorm,* you meet up with NOD's secret weapon.

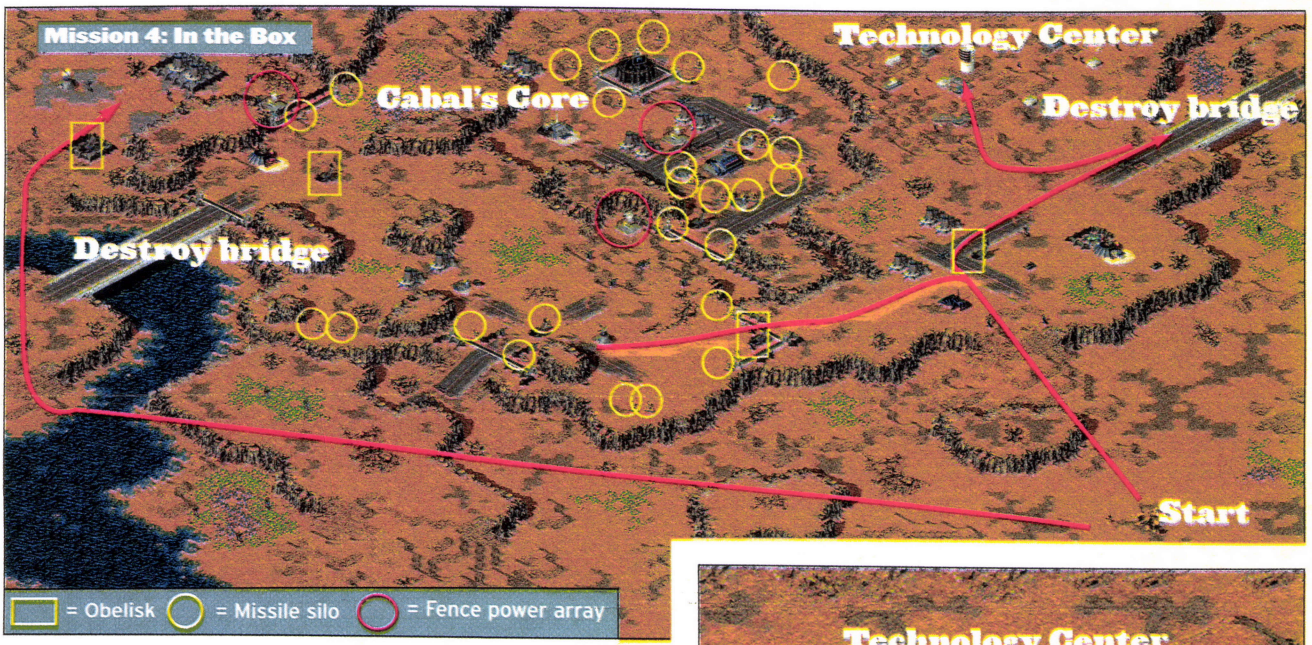


1. Cross the road and the big tiberium field to get to the crashed Kodiak. Repair the ship with your engineers.
2. Leave some units behind (X): The NOD will build a construction yard and some barracks here. As soon as these buildings are completed, destroy them.
3. Kill the remaining hostiles/drive the truck to the evac zone.

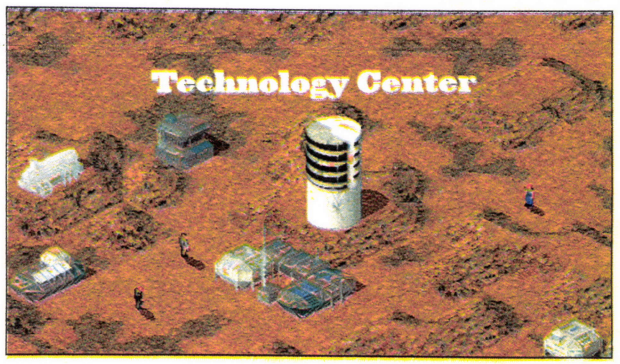


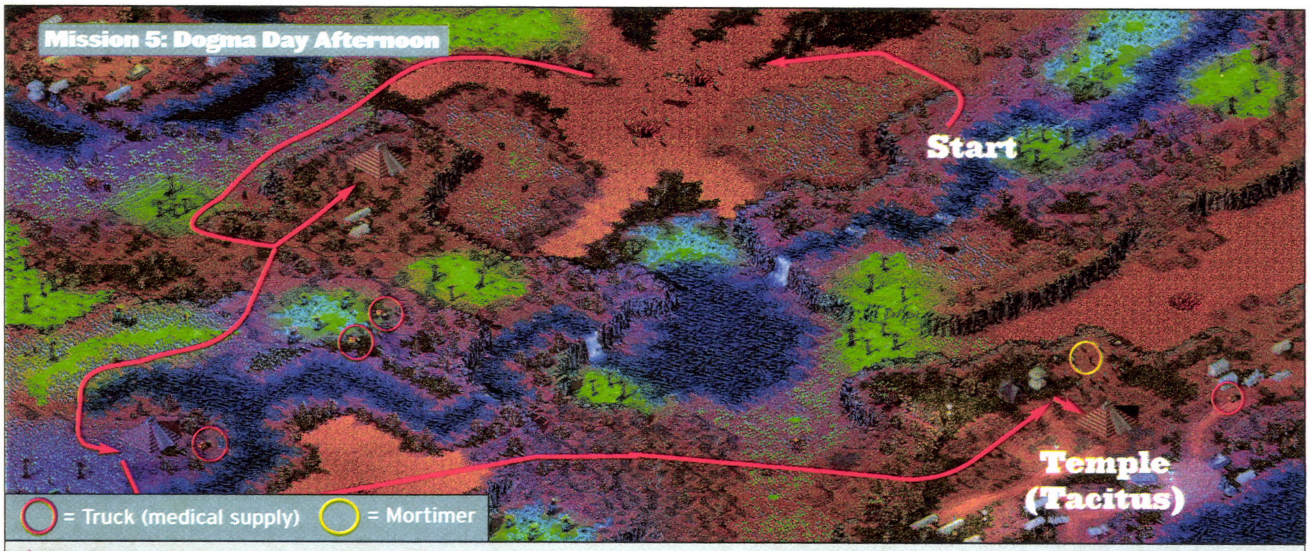
1. Protect the civilians from the Tiberian life forms and escort them to the evacuation zone. A transport unit will pick them up.
2. During the mission, indigenous life forms will attack your base, so be sure to deploy some units inside the base.



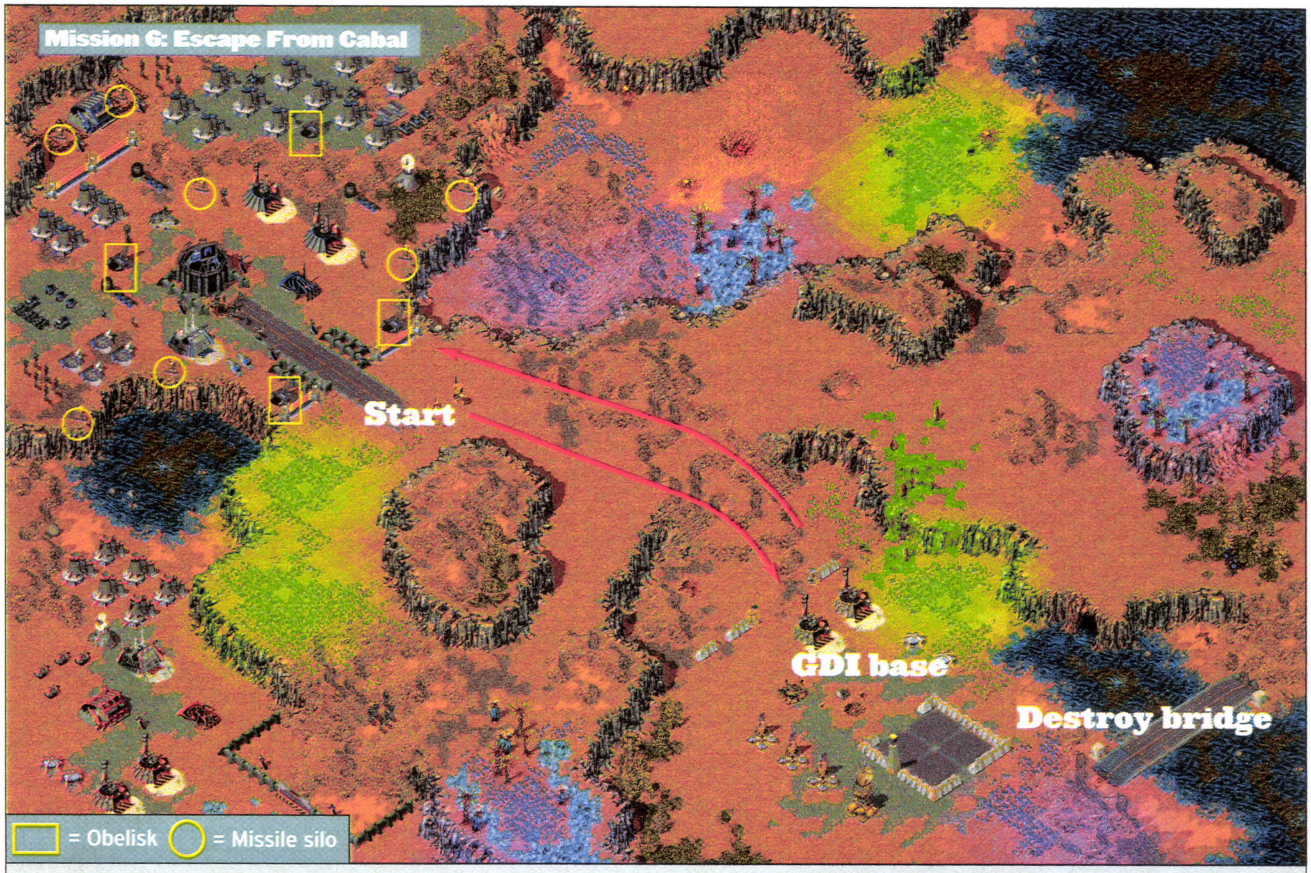


1. Build a base at the starting point and then push ahead to the north. Destroy enemy buildings, the bridge, and the technology center. Be sure to save the scientists first.
2. Destroy the second bridge to the west. This will destroy the NOD's supply lines. Use an amphibious APC to ferry the scientists over.
3. Send one scientist to every fence power array to deactivate the laser barriers. Destroy Cabal's Core.

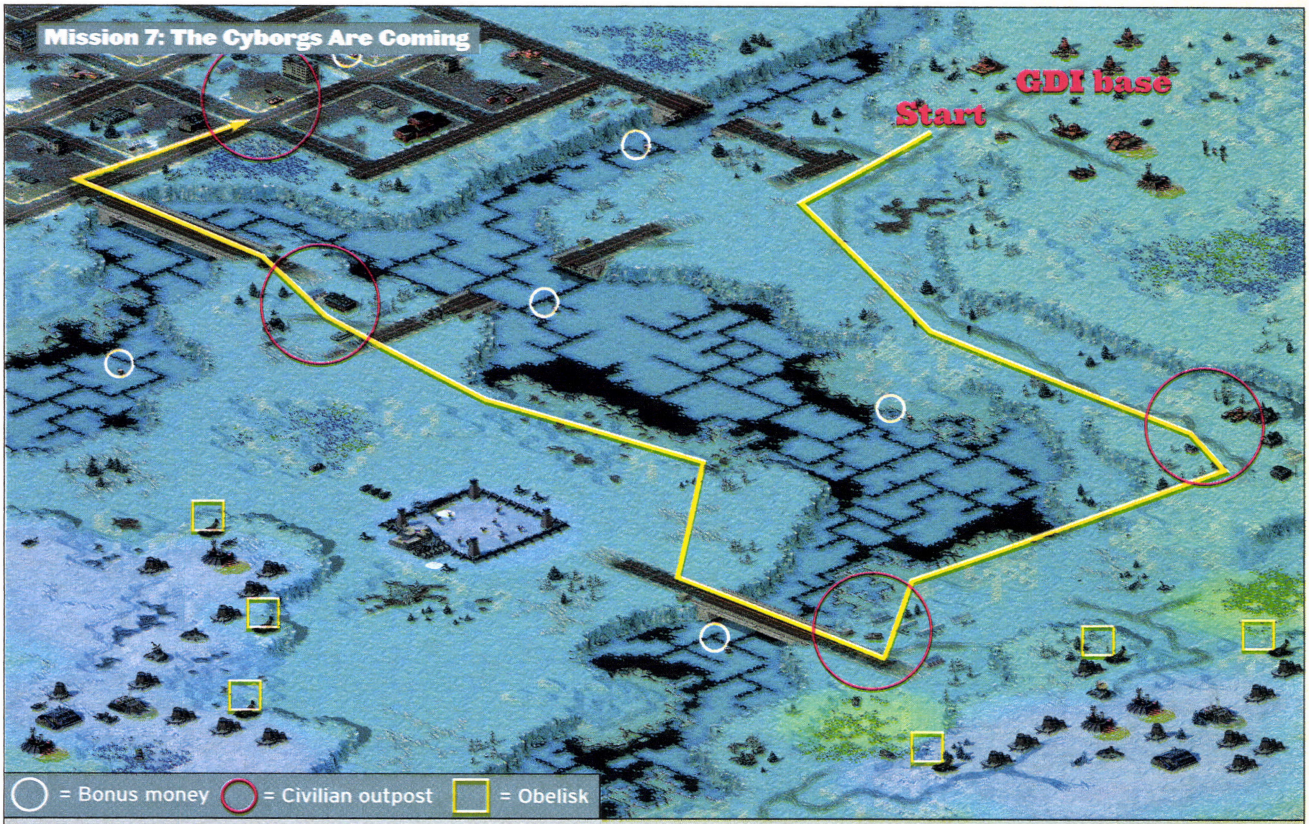




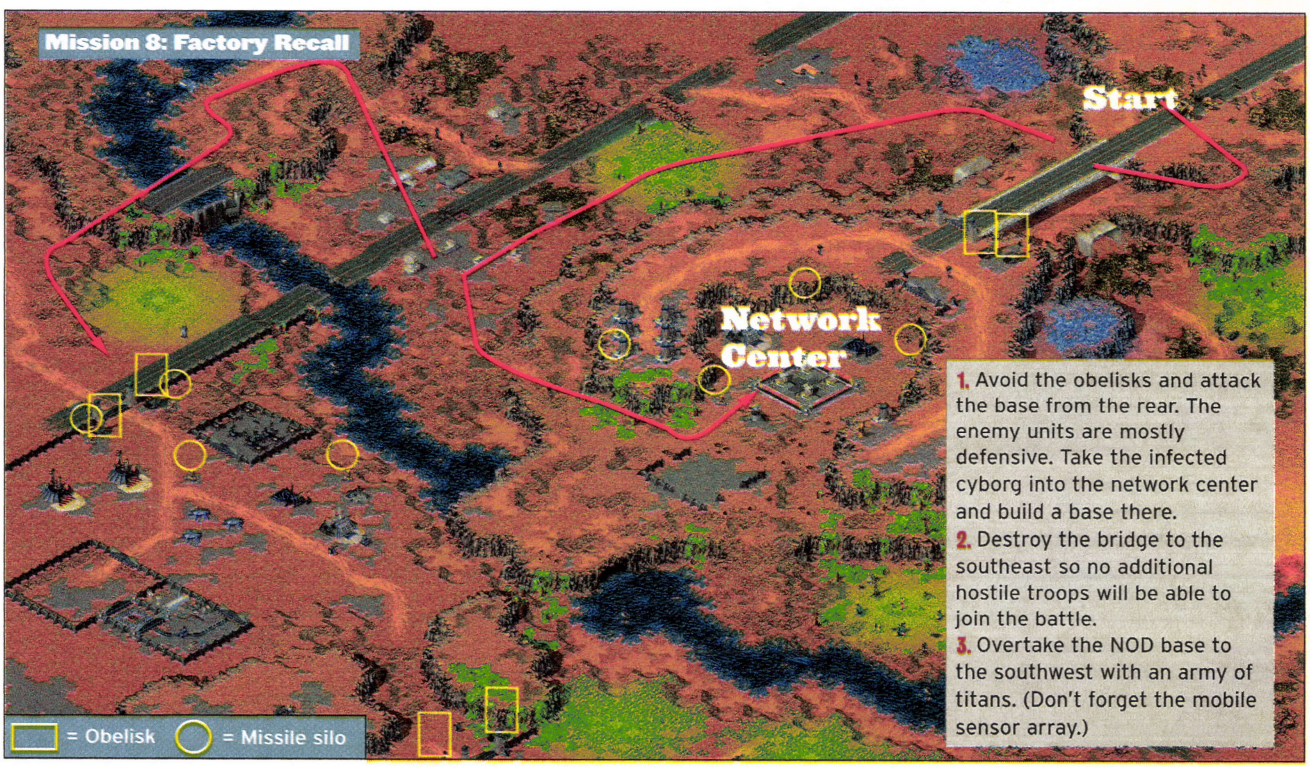
1. Go to the first sect member to the northwest. Be sure to leave the juggernaut a few meters behind: If it stays too long on the orange plant it'll explode. Use the ghoststalker to eliminate both believers and the orange plants.
2. Move on to the third temple and destroy the trucks on the way. They hide medical supplies that come in handy during this mission. Use the doctor to heal the ghoststalker.
3. Mortimer is near the Tacitus temple. As the leader of the sect, if you kill him (use the Juggernaut), all of his followers will commit suicide.
4. Get the Tacitus out of the temple and wait for the transport unit to show up a bit later.



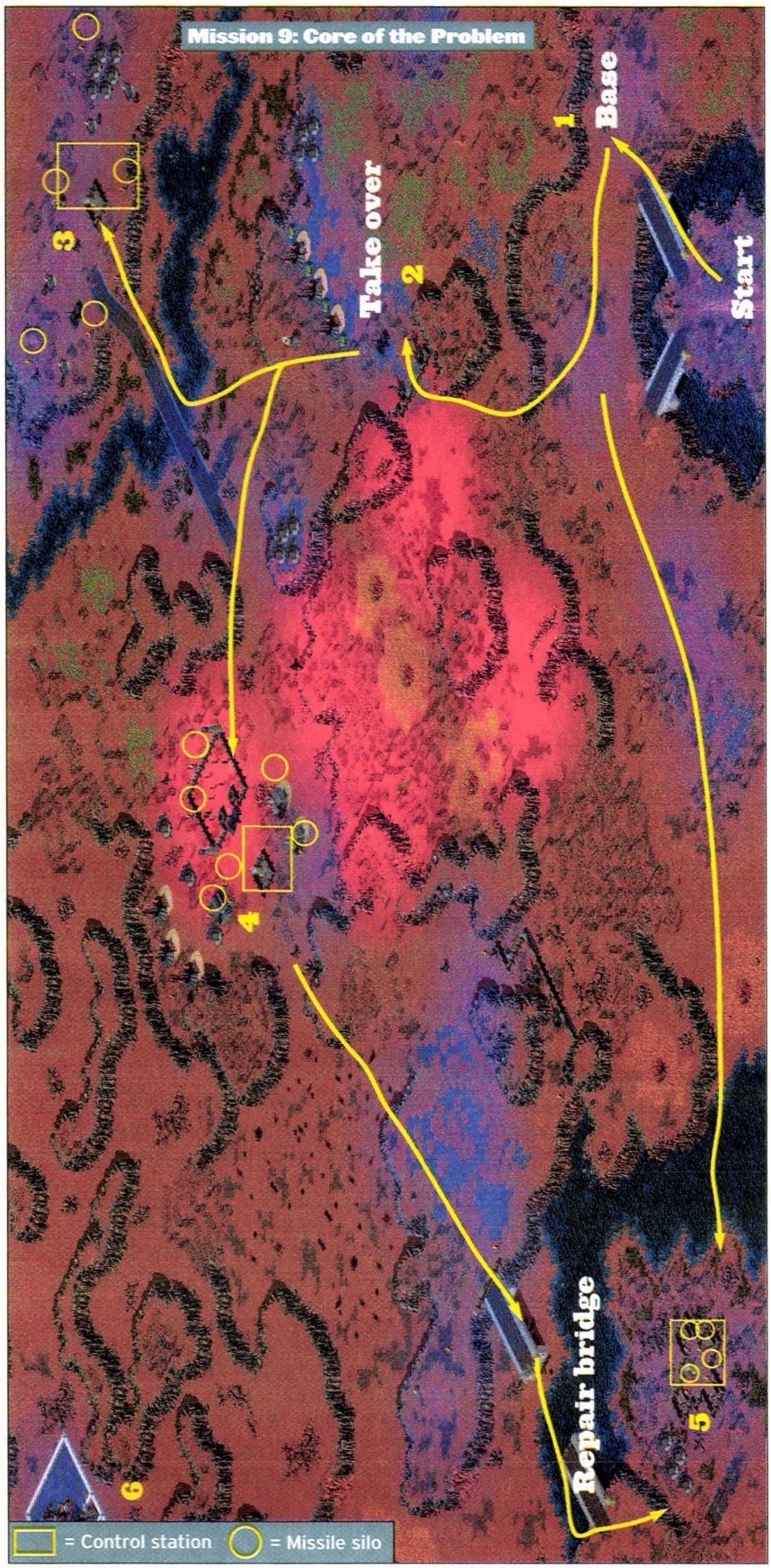
1. Withdraw your units into the half-destroyed GDI base. Next send Mr. Boudreau to the airfield, where he will be picked up by a transport unit.
2. Destroy the bridge and put up an RPG at the entrance to cover the base from regular attacks.
3. The NOD base lies to the northwest. Build some titans and destroy it. Be sure to bring along a mobile sensor array to detect the subterranean units and buildings.



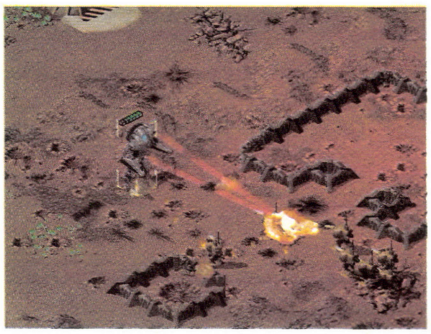
1. In every civilian outpost you'll get support in the form of infantry and a harvester.
2. In the city of Trondheim you'll receive a mobile construction yard. Drive it as inconspicuously as possible to the half-destroyed GDI base to the northeast and put up a base there.
3. Build an army of titans and one mobile sensor array, and attack the bases to the southeast and southwest.



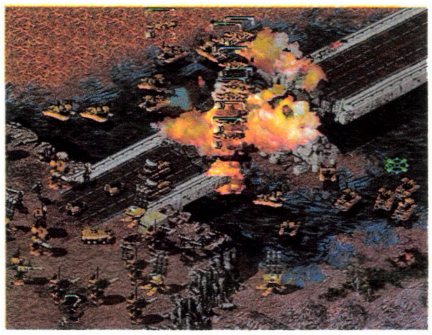
1. Avoid the obelisks and attack the base from the rear. The enemy units are mostly defensive. Take the infected cyborg into the network center and build a base there.
2. Destroy the bridge to the southeast so no additional hostile troops will be able to join the battle.
3. Overtake the NOD base to the southwest with an army of titans. (Don't forget the mobile sensor array.)



1. First, be sure to take out the artillery at the two bridges.
2. Put up a base under cover of the wall of rock. Minimize damage from launched missiles with a firestorm fence or spread out your important buildings.
3. Take over the northern base with your engineers and build up a solid defense.
4. Occupy the relay station to the north.
5. Overrun the southern base with Orca bombers and Juggernauts. Take over as many NOD buildings as you can and occupy the second relay station.
6. Repair the bridge and destroy the missile silos. Occupy the third relay station. Catch the defender at the bridge.
7. Destroy Cabal's Core.



VANDALISM The Defender destroys everything, but on his way he'll have to cross this bridge.



CRASHED To kill the Defender, destroy the repaired bridge just when he moves over it.



EAT IT Now you just need to destroy Cabal's Core to win the day. Rock on!

5-Karat Diamond

It's time to play like a big leaguer in *Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001*

We awarded *Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001* our highest rating last month for its uncanny realism, so it stands to reason that the same baseball strategies the pros use behind the plate will work just as well in front of your computer monitor.

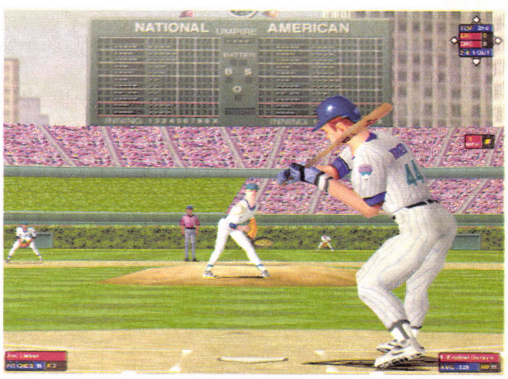
Bat Tricks

To refine your timing, we recommend you make use of the batting-practice mode. First try configuring the settings for just fast balls, as they're the hardest to hit. After you've mastered hitting the high heat, add curve balls, sliders, and the like to the mix.

In real nine-inning games, patience is key. Resist the temptation to swing at every pitch. Get the pitcher in a "hitter's count": three balls/one strike or three balls/zero strikes. In this situation, the chances of getting one right over the plate increase dramatically.

Say the count is 3-1. You should have a specific pitch in mind before you swing – like a fastball – and assume it's going to be in your strike zone. If it *is* a fastball, you'll pound it; with ideal timing, you'll hit a homer and touch 'em all. Conversely, counts in the pitcher's favor (0-2, 1-2) increase the chance of the pitcher's trying to get you to chase something out of the strike zone. Get used to checking your swing by tapping the "hit" button – you'll soon find yourself pulling back on a lot of pitches that end up out of the strike zone.

Chicks dig the long ball, but don't shy away from playing little ball either: Bunt the runner over to second, go for the sacrifice fly, steal bases. You'll find most games are won not by your ability to blast one out of the park, but by moving runners into scoring position and looping singles to the outfield.



CHECK MATE **Put yourself in a hitter's count and check your swing often. You'll soon get that gift over the middle.**

Pitching In

One of the oldest adages in baseball is also one of the truest: "Good pitching beats good hitting."

If you're pitching well, all you need is one run from your offense to win, right? There are a few strategies that can improve your chances of your pitchers putting up zeros on the board. Your approach should be different depending on whether you're facing an AI or a human opponent.

Against a human opponent, changing pitch speeds is the best weapon. Wean him on a few fastballs in and out of the strike zone, then get him way out in front on a change-up. Try to recognize patterns. If an overzealous opponent consistently swings at first pitches, you'd be a fool to give him anything in the strike zone.

AI batters are less susceptible to falling into such patterns. Still, there are a few situations when they'll behave consistently. When you have two strikes on an AI player, he'll almost always hack at a high fastball or a splitter up or down and out of the zone. Just make sure it's completely out of the zone by using the Pitch a Ball button, and press up or down on the directional pad.

For both human and AI players, a fastball that "paints" the inside corner is a safe pitch. Even if it's hit, it'll most likely be a dribbler in the infield. This is especially ideal if you need to start a double play to get out of the inning. Be careful with the location, though: If you miss (your accuracy varies by the pitcher you're using), that easy out is an easy hit. There's a slim margin for error: A few inches to a Mark McGwire–type slugger could mean the difference between a grounder and a mammoth home run.



HEAT THERAPY On 0-2 counts, a well-placed high fastball should get you the strikeout.

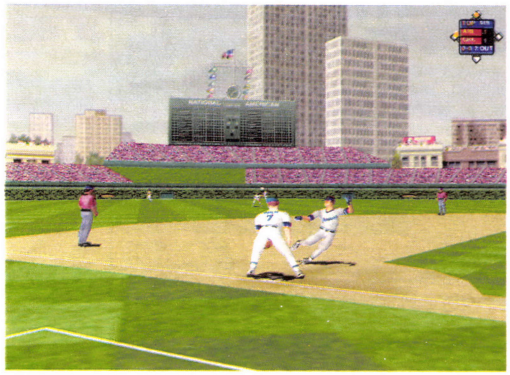
Golden Gloves

It's easy to get so absorbed in the batter-pitching confrontation that when there's a play in the field, you get caught in a brain lock. Always know how many outs there are and where all of the base runners are.

Be aware of a hitter's base-stealing stats – if they're high, be on the lookout for a steal. On hits to the outfield, always throw the ball to the cutoff man (press the Throw button without pressing on the directional pad). You'll have a much better chance of tagging out runners who are trying to get greedy and take that extra base.



CLOSE CALL It doesn't hurt to move a batter off the plate every once in while when you're on the mound. Playing a little chin music is pretty amusing as well.



RUN SUPPORT Taking the extra base is integral to winning on any level in *High Heat*. Learn how – and when – to steal.

Don't get too flashy in the field. A diving catch in the outfield is one of the sexier plays in baseball, but if you miss it, there's no one behind you to run after it, increasing the runner's chance to get a triple or even an inside-the-park home run. Save your diving for the local pool.

The Running Game

Be aggressive on the base paths but not too aggressive. Although *High Heat* is more realistic than any other game, you won't be able to score from second on every single. Hold the runner at third on hard-hit balls that reach the outfield in a hurry or if it's a particularly sluggish runner trying to score.

Micromanagement

Don't forget to rest your players. You can monitor fatigue by looking at each player's name in the rosters. Starting from the left, a pink smudge will begin to overlap the name; the longer the smudge, the more tired the player is. If a player is really worn down, his name will appear in blue, and it's best to bench him for a game or two: Burnt-out players won't perform well anyway.

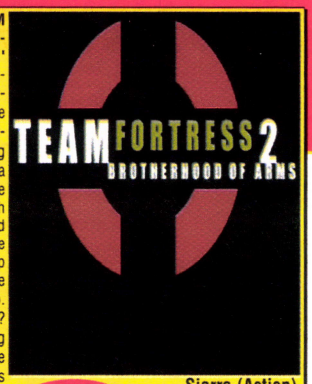
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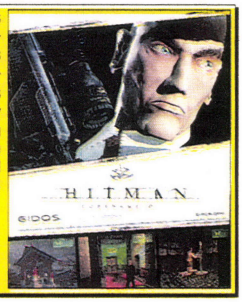
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'HALF LIFE: TEAM FORTRESS 2: BROTHERHOOD OF ARMS' Battle as part of a cohesive squad of fellow warriors all bent on the same goal, whether it's storming a beach, demolishing a bridge or escorting a VIP to safety. Assume one of 12 roles, each with unique strengths and weaknesses. If you're looking for a straight-up fight, you'll choose Marine or Commando. Prefer the shadows? You'll make a cunning Spy or Sniper. Focus the raw force of your team's talents through communication and strategizing.



$42.95 Sierra (Action) Release: 10/00 PC CD

'HITMAN: CODENAME 47' casts you as a hired assassin and chronicles your progress through a series of contracts. Includes some 27 levels that cover five actual hits, as well as the preparations necessary to make those hits - accumulating equipment, information, and the like. Most missions are comprised of about 80% planning and 20% action.

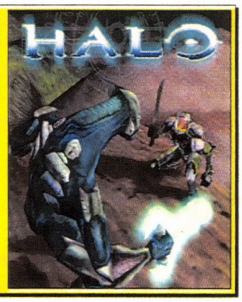


Eidos (Action) Release: 5/00 PC CD **$32.95**

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'HALO' is a 3rd person action/shooter from the creators of Myth. You are one fighter of an army in a battle between humans & aliens, each with their own weapon types. Vehicles include jeeps, tanks, hovercraft, aircraft, & more.



Bungie (Action) Release: 5/00 PC CD **$42.95**

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'SILENT HUNTER II' recreates the battles between Hitler's U-boat force & Allied convoys. Multiplayer mode for hot action & cooperative play over the Internet or LAN. Multiple difficulty levels & enhanced dynamic campaign complete a very detailed & realistic environment.



Mindscape (Simulation) Release: 9/00 PC CD **$44.95**

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'BANJO-TOOIE' Join Banjo & Kazooie as they travel through 9 3D worlds, full of magic, power ups & enemies. The worlds cover about 150 areas & 9 bosses, which the pair can explore together or separately. Mini-games are featured in every level and players can control the spell-casting Mumbo Jumbo. Up to 4 players can play.



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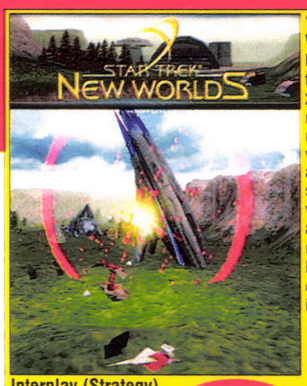
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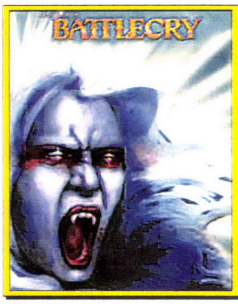


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SSG (Strategy)
Release: 5/00
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Blizzard (Roleplaying)
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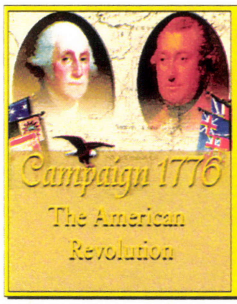
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Interplay (War)
Release: 3/00
PC CD
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Interplay (Roleplaying)
Release: 6/00
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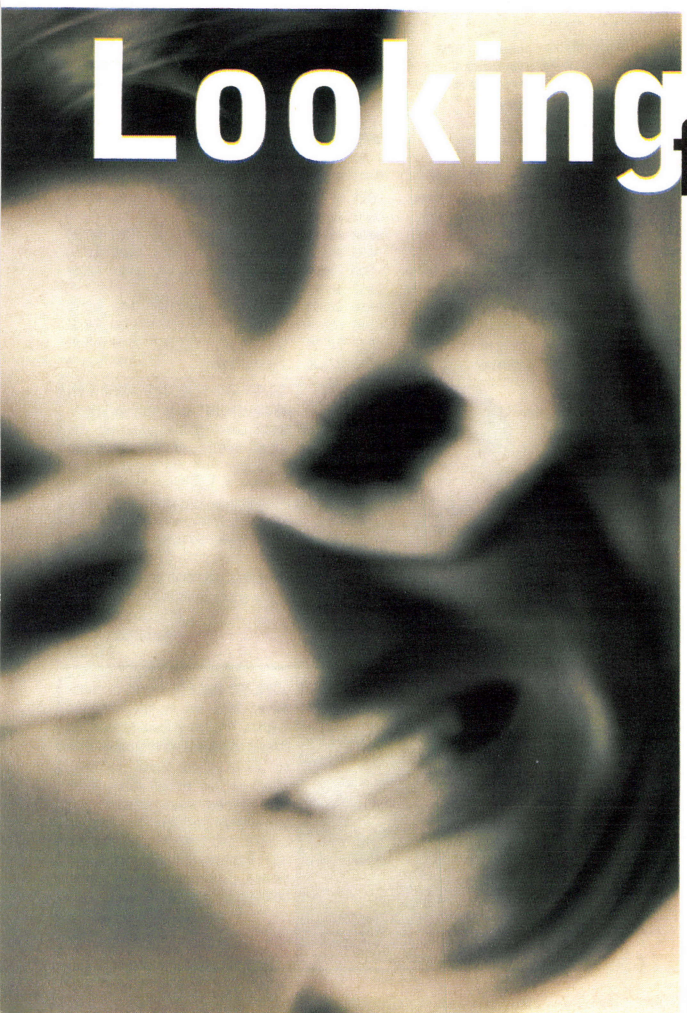
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Your parents shelled out a mint so you could spend the last four years getting drunk and stealing panties. Now show 'em you didn't waste their hard-earned cash. If there's one thing that best signifies what the month of June is all about, it's graduation. Here is a sample résumé that we guarantee will help you land a gig as a gaming editor.

EDWIN J. MCSORLEY

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OBJECTIVE:

~~Seeking a position where I can play games, surf the Net, chat online, and talk on the phone all day.~~ Seeking a challenging position where I can fully utilize my communication skills in a fast-paced setting.

In other words you know how to spell-check email and you're willing to pull all-nighters during deadlines.

EXPERIENCE:

~~Stocked shelves at Barnes & Noble during winter break.~~ Worked as an inventory-tracking engineer for a national retail chain.

Since you're strong enough to lift boxes of books you'll be able to lift computers, fetch lunch, and give back rubs like a good little soldier.

~~Always worked the keg at the Sigma Gamma Rho parties as well as taking on door duty sometimes.~~ Performed customer service at a prominent social event. Other responsibilities included equipment maintenance and security.

You know how to use complicated mechanical devices, so you may have a future in information technology. You're also not afraid to take a couple of swings from drunken guys. You'll do well at industry conventions.

EDUCATION:

B.A. in Liberal Arts, majoring in "The Role of Religion within the Framework of a Post-Nietzschean hierarchy."

Liberal arts degrees are useless. They just tell your prospective employer that your parents are rich. In other words, you can afford to take an entry-level job that doesn't even cover rent because your upwardly mobile lifestyle is subsidized by the bank of Mom and Dad.

SKILLS:

~~Talk ad nauseam about the plight of Third World peoples in a Western-dominated world, how/where to get drunk for under $5, return any punt for a touchdown in *Madden 2000*, and find naked pictures of stars on the Internet.~~ Extensive experience with myriad computer systems and programs, excellent communication skills, and Internet savvy.

Great! Your parents bought you a Commodore 64 when you were a kid, and you'll crash the company's server sucking porn off the Net. And you don't know when to shut up. (You might want to work on that.)

SPECIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

~~Set Alpha Phi Alpha record by drinking 10 beer bongs of King Cobra in five minutes and smoking an entire ounce of weed in one sitting.~~ Recognized in my fraternity for setting lofty goals and achieving them.

Regardless of how stupid the task before you is, it's apparent that you'll attack it with everything you have.

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