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Q*bert™

Warren Davis began his videogame career in 1982 and spent over a decade making arcade games for Gottlieb and Williams/Bally/Midway.

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COIN UP!

The early 90s was a time for change. I went from being a mainframe programmer at a major telephone company to a Managing Editor at Game Players. Grunge stabbed Hair Metal in the back with a rusty fork and everyone breathed a sigh of relief, except for Axel Rose. Ren and Stimpy took over Saturday mornings and no one would ever look at cartoons the same way again. Here at OSG magazine, we've got Adam Goldberg and Jeff Peters! We've got NHLPA 93 and Burning Force, along with Final Fight and Virtual Bart. We've also got Revolution X featuring Aerosmith, who still kept a-rolling despite the rusty fork in their backs. So grab your beverage of choice, settle down in your comfy chair, and dig in to Issue 18 of Old School Gamer Magazine - The Early 90s!

If you've got questions, I've got answers. If you've got comments, I will listen, but I reserve the right to bust out laughing any time I want. Send me what you got. I'll take it from there. My email is billd.oldschoolgamer@gmail.com.

FEATURED SCRIBE



Adam F. Goldberg was born in Philadelphia and chronicles his childhood live on the ABC Series “The Goldbergs” which has finished it’s 8th season and is available on ABC and Hulu. Previous to The Goldbergs, he shared screenplay writing credit with Ernest Cline (Ready Player One) on FanBoys.

He’s a strong supporter of the retro gaming scene through his sponsorship of many books and movies documenting the video game scene of the 1980s. A television favorite of Old School Gamer’s publisher, Ryan Burger, who reached out to him in 2018 to send him a magazine and now, through Adam’s involvement in Brett Weiss’s latest book, he is a published magazine writer in Old School Gamer. He is pictured here with comedy legend Mel Brooks.

THE EDITORS



Bill Donohue did a 13-year stint as Managing Editor for Game Players, Ultra Game Players, and PSM magazines. He created Gazuga and The Cleansing. He caused hundreds of readers to send cheese-filled letters to Game Players. He composed the ultimate Super Bomberman 2 anthem - (He Ain’t Got) “No Boot”. Crazy? Hey, it’s a life choice...



Brian Szarek is co-editor of OSGM and enjoys repairing and refurbishing vintage home consoles and arcade games. He also enjoys collecting and playing everything from the entire Atari console line and ColecoVision to PS4 and Switch. He lives with his wife and two daughters in Cincinnati, OH.

THE SCRIBES



Thor Thorvaldson creates the covers and posters for each issue of OSGM as well as many of the logos featured within the magazine. He is also an artist/writer for Nintendo Force Magazine and has created artwork for Switch Player Magazine, Hardcore Gaming 101 and video game-themed nerdcore musicians such as Mega Ran.



Patrick Hickey Jr. is the author of The Minds Behind the Games book series. The first book in the series was released in April 2018. The sequel, The Minds Behind Adventure Games, was released in Dec. 2019. Three more editions of the series are forthcoming through 2021.



Mike Mertes knew from the moment he touched an Intellivision controller that he had experienced something incredible that would shape him for the rest of his life. As a writer for www.gamerlogic.net and other media outlets, Mike enjoys articulating why games from the 8 and 16-bit console generations are some of the best of all time.



Michael Thomasson is one of the most widely respected videogame historians today. He teaches college level videogame history, design, and graphics courses. He authored Downright Bizarre Games, and has contributed to nearly a dozen textbooks. Michael’s columns have been distributed in newspapers and magazines worldwide.

MORE SCRIBES



Todd Friedman is currently writing for Old School Gamer Magazine, Retro Gaming Times, and the Walter Day Trading Card Collection. He has co-promoted the Video Game Summit in Chicago, IL for the last 12 years. He is also the Chairman of the Nomination Committee for the International Video Game Hall of Fame.



Steve DeLuca is the warped brain behind the NES Goofy Foot controller and a founder of the Tetris World Order (tWo); Steve DeLuca contributes to the Classic Tetris World Championship (theCTWC.com), and hosts multiple CTWC Qualifying events (most notably the CTWC Desert Qualifier / Game On Expo, AZ).



Chris Charla works at Xbox where he leads the ID@Xbox program for independent developers. Back in the day he edited Next Generation magazine and was the launch editor of IGN.com, as well as spending 10 years as an independent developer. He edits the fanzine Incredibly Strange Games.



Brett Weiss is the author of 10 books, including the Classic Home Video Games series, The 100 Greatest Console Video Games: 1977-1987, and The SNES Omnibus volumes 1 and 2. Find Weiss online at www.brettweisswords.com, and check out his YouTube show, Tales from a Retro Gamer.



Warren Davis is a classic video game creator best known as the designer and programmer of the original Q*bert arcade game. His best known titles in the arcade industry include Us. Vs. Them, Joust 2, and T2:Judgement Day and Revolution X. He was a pioneer in the use of digitized video including usage in NARC, the Mortal Kombat and more.



Domino Donohue was a great help and inspiration to the Jaded Gamer this month. She explained how dogs think and what they like and don't like. She also threatened to bite me if I didn't put her picture in the magazine and write exactly what she told me to write. She can't read yet, so I might be okay with typing this part...



Walter Day is considered by many to be the "Father of eSports." As the founder of the Twin Galaxies Scoreboard, the International Video Game Hall of Fame and the Walter Day Collection of video game trading cards, he has spent nearly 40 years of his life uplifting and honoring the achievements of the gaming world.



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ONCE A NES KID, ALWAYS A NES KID

By Adam F. Goldberg

“Dude, look at those graphics! It’s like having an arcade in your house!!!”

Those were the EXACT words I screamed when I laid my eyes on the Nintendo Entertainment System for the very first time. The moment has been vividly burned into my brain. It was January, 1986. I was sleeping over at my friend John Gaines’ house. I assumed we’d spend the night making prank calls, eating Fritos, and playing his ColecoVision, as we did at most of our sixth-grader sleepovers. But my pal had a new game system, one that he boldly declared was infinitely better than ColecoVision, Intellivision, and Atari put together. It was called NINTENDO.

At that point, the system only had a handful of titles to its name - but that didn’t matter - because one of those games was *Super Mario Bros.* I vividly remember sitting on John’s bed, watching in sheer awe as that little plumber shot fireballs and dodged jellyfish and used drain pipes as warp zones. It really did put Atari to shame. The Mario brothers made Pitfall Harry look like a total ass clown. In that moment, I knew the future had arrived... and it was called Nintendo.

When my mom picked me up the next morning, I was fully converted to a Nintendo kid and never wanted

anything more in my life. Just one problem... my frugal father had JUST upgraded me to an Atari 7800 for Hanukkah, which at that moment I thought was the future of gaming. Murray Goldberg could not understand how the new and improved Atari was deemed obsolete a mere two weeks after he purchased it. I desperately tried to explain that Nintendo had superior graphics and cooler games. Hell, it came with a friggin’ gun that let you hunt ducks and a robot named R.O.B. that... did something. No one really knew, but still! Owning a Nintendo system was like having an arcade in your den! Think of all the quarters our family would save! It pays for itself! What’s not to understand!?

Naturally, my old man refused to make the

Adam F. Goldberg and Mel Brooks





memories center around playing video games in my best friend's room. I'm convinced that Chad and I are so deeply bonded largely in part to beating games like *Contra*, *Mega Man II*, *Kid Icarus*, and *Metal Gear*... even though, again, I watched most of the time. We had inside jokes for each game. To this day, we still randomly call each other and say, "I'm still in Okinawa," a reference to how we could never beat the typhoon level of the *Karate Kid* game. We even came up with our own nonsensical lyrics to the chiptune game soundtracks, my favorite being "RAMMA LAMMA JAMMA!" from the castle level of *Super Mario Bros*.

leap to Nintendo because our family had already invested a pretty penny into the Atari. I had a ton of games, an official *Tron* joystick, and a sweet hard-shell carrying case to lug the Atari console around. Buying an NES game system was a battle that raged on in the Goldberg house for the next four agonizing years. Luckily, my best friend Chad Kremp lived across the street, and he owned a Commodore 64, which his parents had bought in 1982. The Nintendo upgrade was a much easier sell to his parents. The moment Chad got a Nintendo for his birthday, it meant that I owned a Nintendo by proxy. It didn't matter that I mostly sat and watched him play. I was thrilled to be Nintendo adjacent, and it was glorious!

I'm proud to say that many of my fondest childhood

Chad and I even spent an entire summer creating our own *Legend of Zelda* map, planting bombs on every screen to uncover every single secret cave. The idea was to sell photos of our map at school, netting us a pretty penny. Unfortunately, *Nintendo Power* released an awesome three-page foldout cheat map, instantly destroying our brilliant business scheme. Most people would say that we completely wasted three months of our lives charting a *Zelda* map, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.

The greatest part of creating *The Goldbergs* TV show is that I've met many people on Facebook and Twitter that cite the NES as a formative part of their childhoods as well. I always thought I was alone, but it



turns out that being an NES kid is a universal experience... one we all still cherish to this day.

Being a NES Kid means you know the *Contra* Code by heart and you had a subscription to *Nintendo Power* magazine.

It means you felt a rush of adrenaline every time your player got into a hockey fist fight in *Blades of Steel*.

It means you never felt as cool as when you taught a friend the Infinite 1-Ups trick in *Super Mario Bros*.

It means you bought an NES Advantage because it would help you cheat in *Track & Field*.

It means you desperately wanted a Power Glove after seeing *The Wizard*... even though you never actually ended up buying one.

It means you played countless rounds of *Ghosts 'n Goblins* but never could get past stage one, because "F" that game.

It means you know that repeatedly punching in A-B-B-A gives you endless lives in *Ikari Warriors*... unless you accidentally reappear behind a wall, which meant game over.

It means you smacked the power pad with your hands because it made the games easier, and you madly blew into the guts of your cartridge when your Nintendo would glitch out. It means you still debate to this day if *Castlevania II: Simon's Quest* is better than *Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse*. Not that I actually played either. I just had to sit and watch Chad play, but part two sure looked better!

It means that your friend had an uncle who had a brother who had a second cousin who could actually beat Mike Tyson in *Punch-Out!!* Of course, you knew this was impossible because you typed in the 007-373-5963 code a million times and still never came close to beating the lightning-fast dude.


In late 1989, we Goldbergs finally became a Nintendo family. My mom was tired of hearing me say, "I'm going

over to Chad's to play Nintendo" every weekend. All Beverly Goldberg ever wanted was to have her kids under her roof, and it drove her bonkers that Nintendo stood in the way. Naturally, my Dad was beyond aggravated that my Atari 7800 had spent the last several years collecting dust in my closet. Thanks to pressure from my mother, Murray Goldberg finally broke down and bought me a Nintendo Entertainment System for my birthday in eighth grade. At long last, I would be playing with power! For a few months, at least.

In 1991, the Super Nintendo was released, and dammit, I never wanted anything more. Needless to



say, my Dad was not receptive to the idea of upgrading our now-obsolete NES to the newer, cooler, 16-bit Super NES. I tried to explain that the SNES actually did have the graphics of arcade games, if not better. Yes, I may have said that when the NES was released - but this time it was true!

It goes without saying, but I never got my Nintendo upgrade and still have my classic NES from 8th grade. To this day, I am still an NES kid and still love those old-school games... even though Chad was the one who actually played them as I sat and watched... not sure if I mentioned that. 

ADAM F. GOLDBERG WROTE THE FOREWARD TO MY NES BOOK!

By BRETT WEISS



Just in case you didn't know, I write retro gaming reference books. For my forthcoming book, *The NES Omnibus: The Nintendo Entertainment System and Its Games, Volume 1 (A-L)*, I wanted someone famous to write the foreword. I considered reaching out to actor Sean Astin, who has appeared in gaming documentaries, and *The Angry Video Game Nerd*, the most influential of all retro gaming YouTubers.

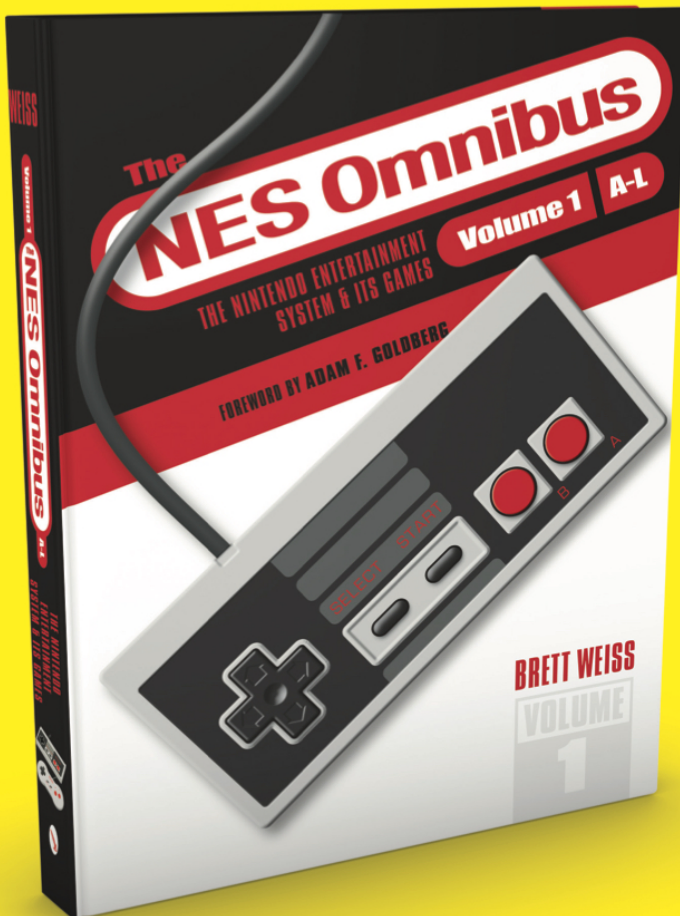
Volume 1 (A-L), including how you can pre-order the book, go to www.brettweisswords.com. You can also watch the trailer for the book on Brett Weiss's YouTube channel.

But then Adam F. Goldberg, the creator and producer of *The Goldbergs* television series, fell into my lap. (Thankfully, he did so metaphorically). My buddy Sean Tiedeman, who directed *The King of Arcades* (2014), suggested Mr. Goldberg and got me in touch with him. Much to my surprise, Adam was delighted to participate in the project and has been very supportive.

The Goldbergs, which captures the zeitgeist of the 1980s in fun, over-the-top fashion, is an homage to Goldberg's decidedly nerdy childhood. The show has featured the Nintendo NES prominently, as well as classic '80s-style arcades. There was even an episode with a *Tron* theme. Best of all, Goldberg, who co-wrote the screenplay for *Fanboys* (2009) and has produced several video game documentaries, is an avowed NES fan.

With his super geeky street cred, Goldberg, a gifted writer, had all the potential qualities as a forewordist for a retro gaming book. And, unsurprisingly, he turned in an absolutely killer account of his days growing up with the NES and the impact it had on his obviously fun childhood.

***If you are interested in more information about *The NES Omnibus: The Nintendo Entertainment System and Its Games*,



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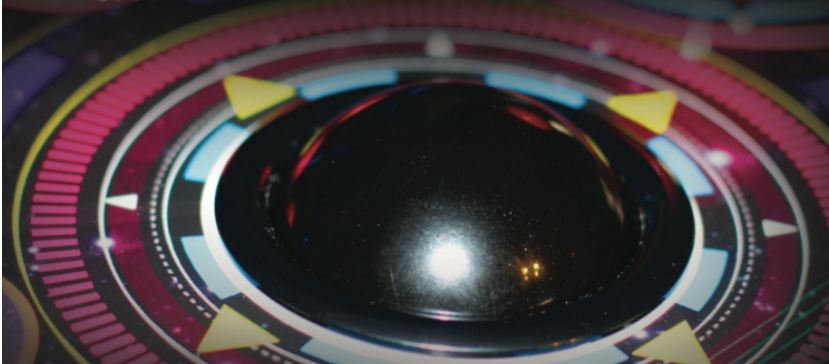
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iiRcade Update

The arcade is coming home. Over the last couple of years, hundreds of thousands of people have been able to recreate their childhood at the mall arcade in some form in their home. While the experience of playing a couple of games on a device has been great for "children of the 80's and 90's", Jong Shin of iiRcade has a better solution that is coming to the market this November!

Over the last few months, Jong and his iiRcade crew have been showing the public what they have been working on for the last couple of years in their Chicago office... the iiRcade. Old School Gamer was able to get a personal tour of their Chicago office and spend quality time playing games on the iiRcade, and reminiscing about gaming back in the prime era of arcade games with its CEO, Jong Shin.

For Jong, playing arcade games began with Congo Bongo, Kangaroo and Pooyan in the early 80's and expanded to the original Street Fighter when it became available at local Blimpies in New Jersey.

Jong: "I was a quarter feeder. And I was in the arcades since I was very young, like 6-years old. I wasn't too good at these games back then, but I remember spending all my allowances on these games and those days were my real nostalgic days".


OSG: How were you on the other side of things, like programming? Were you like me, wanting to know how games were programmed?

Jong: "Of course. Karateka and King's Quest were my favorite games on the Apple II and these games inspired me to start coding games on my Apple II using BASIC programming language. I remember programming a shooter game and calling Broderbund to get it published when I was in sixth grade. Of course, I never got a call back from them, but my love for gaming was how my love for computers and software development started. My parents wanted me to become a doctor, but I went to Purdue to become an engineer and majored in Computer and Electrical Engineering. Then I went to work for Motorola, Sony and Intel. During the 13 years I was at Motorola, I started as a software engineer making various phones and then moved onto product management and the business side, then expanded my role at Sony and Intel. During my career, I've pretty much done everything from software engineering to product management, quality management, taking products to the market, all different aspects of business, platform building, Vice President in charge of Innovations at a large consumer elec-

tronics company, launching new businesses and more, to prepare myself for iiRcade. iiRcade was the ultimate goal and dream that I wanted to make happen during my lifetime."

It has been Jong's childhood dream to have an arcade at his home. That dream was deterred by the expensive prices and huge sizes of arcade machines that didn't fit in his home, not to mention that he had to buy a new machine every time he wanted a new game. Realizing that what is out there did not meet his needs, Jong started planning the iiRcade in 2011. In 2018, he decided to dedicate himself to make this dream happen. Then Jong got together and started building his iiRcade team and prototyping what he wanted out of a perfect next generation arcade experience. During the interview, Jong explained how he has taken into account the experiences he has had in the gaming industry, his experiences as a kid going to the arcades and how these have impacted what everyone will be seeing this fall.

The biggest difference between iiRcade and the other options out there is that iiRcade is a platform, a system that you can download games into that have been optimized for the iiRcade experience. It comes with eleven games preloaded, including Dragon's Lair and Double Dragon, and already has over 200 games officially licensed with more on the way that will be available on iiRcade online store by or soon after launch. As Jong told us, "With iiRcade, you aren't just buying a cabinet that comes with three or four similar games. You are buying the experience of playing a next generation home arcade. Imagine playing the retro arcade games that you remember and the newest modern games transformed into an adrenaline-pumping arcade experience and playing them in a cinematic arcade gaming environment powered by a 19" high definition display, 100W of powerful stereo audio, premium arcade controllers and hardware and software that have been completely optimized for gaming. You'll be playing single and multi-player games against your friends at your house and online. You'll get new, officially licensed games that are completely optimized for your system, affordably, from an online game store that will have a continuously expanding library of new games. You'll be able to use both wired and wireless Bluetooth headsets and HDMI Out to connect to TV for social sharing. You will continuously get new features and new experiences for your system via software updates, that will always keep your iiRcade experience new and fresh. That's what iiRcade premium experience is all about."

This column over the next year will be covering the developments of the iiRcade system and releases of the new games for the iiRcade platform. Look for the coverage to include both hardware and software in the November issue of Old School Gamer, and make sure in the meantime to check out iiRcade's home page (iircade.com) and all the conversations happening on iiRcade's Facebook page (facebook.com/iircade) about this amazing addition to your game room. 

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NHLPA 93: FIGHTING FOR FUN BEFORE "IF IT'S IN THE GAME, IT'S IN THE GAME"

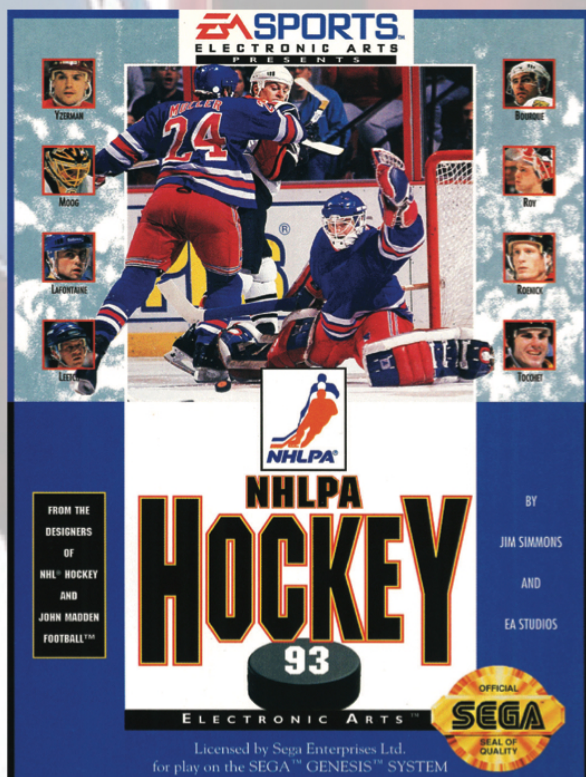
by PATRICK HICKEY JR.

Long before Electronic Arts trademarked the slogan, "If it's in the game, it's in the game," the mega publisher's sports titles were about much more than realism. While they were always about providing a realistic experience, there was always an effort to simultaneously maintain a massively fun environment. While the *Madden* series is often at the forefront of EA's legacy, their hockey games have been just as pivotal to their longevity as one of the most celebrated companies in all of gaming. In terms of EA's greatest achievements on the ice, *NHL 94* is often considered EA Sports' landmark hockey title - and for good reason. It's the one that set the tone for over 20 years of iconic games. With the addition of the one-timer (for non-hockey fans, that's when a player can shoot the puck when passed to him, without stopping it) and the updates to the already awesome gameplay formula from previous games in the series, *NHL 94* is an undoubted classic. It's still fun to play today - so much so that the source code for the game has been altered for years by amateur game developers who have updated the game's rosters and features. Simply put, in terms of EA's legendary hockey series, the fun never ends.

But *NHLPA 93*, the first pro hockey video game to feature real players' names and pictures and every NHL team [well, at least, the name of the city they played in] is just as important to Electronic Arts' pond hockey legacy as the iconic *NHL 94*. Without its success, there may have never been an *NHL 94*. However, the road from the original *NHL Hockey* to *NHLPA 93* and eventually *NHL 94* was a wild one, full of politics, handshake deals and compromises that make each game unique from one another. However, with more grit than *NHL 94* and more gameplay innovation than the original *NHL Hockey*, *NHLPA 93* is the most unique experience of the three.

Despite having the killer development team of Michael Brook, Scott Orr, Richard Hilleman and Jim Simmons, and the tremendous success with their first game, *NHL*

Hockey, the series was not without its controversy. As the first hockey video game to ever feature the ratings of professional players, *NHLPA 93* caused quite a stir when originally released, as some players weren't too happy with some of their ratings. Bringing in Winnipeg Jets scout and former Soviet sports writer Igor Kuperman to do the game's ratings, EA Sports was the first video game publisher that had to directly deal with players and a league for their games. While Sega was all about putting mega athletes on the covers of their games, a-la *Buster Douglas Boxing*, *Mario Lemieux Hockey*, *Tommy Lasorda Baseball* and *Pat Riley Basketball* (all awful games that did little to advance their respective genres), EA, even with having coaching legends the likes of John Madden and Earl Weaver on the covers of their football and baseball games, saw the allure of



having real players and real teams. Well before they had proper licenses for their games, EA had the correct city names, team colors and the right numbers for all the players on the teams in their games. Even back then, if it was in the real game, it was in their game, but so much authenticity came with a price. Imagine having to explain to former Toronto Maple Leafs tough guy Ken Baumgartner, a dude with just 13 goals and 2,242 penalty minutes in 696 career games, why he was rated a 0 in intelligence. That's exactly what Michael Brook, the producer and designer of iconic EA Sports titles the likes of *Madden '92*, *NHL Hockey*, *NHLPA 93* and *NHL 94* had to do. To make matters worse, Baumgartner's overall rating in the game was a 2 (second only to the Tampa Bay Lightning's Shawn Chambers, who was rated a 1), out of a 100.

"I was sitting down at the time and looking up at him so that certainly didn't help," Brook said. "As he said it, it kind of dawned on me that these guys are real people. They're more than just names and statistics or guys on TV that I watched. He said it in a real gentle way because he knew we were still getting to know all the players. I'm just happy it wasn't Tie Domi. There were probably guys who would have reacted differently. My response to him was that the attribute shouldn't have been called intelligence.

"The NHLPA's response was a bit different. Ted Saskin (future NHLPA president) said that, going forward, the lowest rating in the game was to be a 60. I told them that made no sense because they were all NHL players and that it should be zero to 100. Ted just said, 'Well that may be true, but no player can have a rating lower than 60 from here on out.' So we had to go and change the rating system because I guess 60 is passing. From a computer programmers standpoint it made no sense, but from an optics perspective I can appreciate it."

While some players were naturally upset about their ratings, Brook said it made a big difference in determining the feel of the game. With 16 different attributes to be rated within their physics engine, every player played differently. Up until that point, no other hockey game had ever done that before. "I showed the game to Los Angeles Kings' head coach Barry Melrose and he said 'Wow, I can really see these players. They're playing the way they really do,'" said Brook. "Because we had things like awareness, players were in different places on the ice and to have someone like Barry Melrose see that and say wow, that things were really looking good, from a ratings standpoint and a hockey video game per-

spective, I thought we were really on the right track."

A graduate of the Stanford Business School, Brook had a mind for business and gaming. By the time he was 24, he was working for Electronic Arts full-time and after he left the company to pursue other interests in Amsterdam, Brook returned in 1990 to help design and produce *John Madden Football*, *Madden '92*, *Earl Weaver Baseball II* and of course, *NHL Hockey*. One of the main voices at EA that believed a sports title should



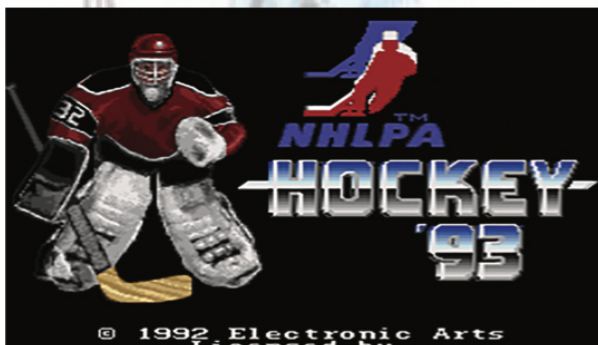
Michael Brook

be released every year to reflect the new season, Brook is an EA Sports founding father and video game pioneer that influenced the *NHL*, *Madden* and the game script that eventually gave birth to the *FIFA* series, in a plethora of ways. More than a passion project, Brook was the guy that showed both *NHL Hockey* and *NHLPA 93* to the league and its players before it was released. He was an ambassador for the industry to society. As a matter of fact, it was on one of those occasions that the fate of the series was put in serious jeopardy.

"Time Warner (who was in charge of maintaining the NHL's licenses at the time) approved the game and we took it to the 1991 Stanley Cup Finals," said Brook. "We were invited by the NHL to show the game at the media center. So it was the introduction of the game to the press and they really ate it up. We had a couple of monitors set up and the media eventually found a way to incite fights. In the original game, anyone could get in a fight, including Wayne Gretzky. The fighting model was pretty realistic. You could incite fights by hitting other players, dish out a cheap shot, and stuff like that, so it wasn't really difficult to start a fight.

"Some of the reporters found a way to get Wayne Gretzky in a fight. You know Wayne Gretzky doesn't get into fights, but we hadn't gotten to that level of realism

yet. Unfortunately, that monitor was right in front of the NHL brass, John Ziegler, the NHL's commissioner,



and a bunch of other guys. They saw this and pretty much freaked out. We got back from the Stanley Cup Finals and there's basically a message from the NHL saying that they couldn't approve this game. So we had to tell them that we already invested \$10 million in cartridges and you've already approved it. They backed off of that, but then they said they were going to cancel the license for the future if we kept fighting in the game."

EA Sports could deal with things like players and individual ratings, but a league? That was a bit tougher. *NHL Hockey* upset the NHL so badly that they refused to work with Electronic Arts on their next game (which turned out to be *NHLPA 93*), but Brook and his team knew the game was better with fighting in it. Fueled by the success of the John Madden series on the Sega Genesis, EA knew they didn't need a license from the league or the Player's Association to sell or be successful. There was never a choice to sacrifice all of their work to make a huge sports league happy. The plan was always to stick to their guns and stand by the game they created. As a kid that grew up watching the Broad Street Bullies in Philadelphia during the '70s, Brook did not want to take fighting out of the game. He didn't do it for *NHL Hockey* and he wouldn't do it for *NHLPA 93*. In the end, Brook and his team realized that fans cared more about fun and fisticuffs than the names of actual NHL teams and their logos. For anyone who has seen the 1996 film *Swingers*, which features a young Vince Vaughn and Jon Favreau, playing *NHLPA 93* - that's exactly the audience EA was looking to entertain. They knew what fans wanted.

But with the relationship between EA and the NHL now a rocky one, despite the fact that *NHL Hockey* sold in the six figures, Brook and his team had to come up

with a licensing solution for their next game, scheduled for release in the Fall of 1992. The one they came up with helped it continue to develop as a franchise. Going instead to the National Hockey League's Players Association to give the new game the added legitimacy they craved in an effort to promote the realism and authenticity of their product, EA secured the right to use real players' names and pictures in their game (which *NHL Hockey* did not) but could not use real team names or logos (which *NHL Hockey* did). The end result of all of this was a blessing in disguise. Although EA didn't have the NHL's permission to use real teams for the game, they got to make a game that they knew would sell and continue the series' young, but sturdy, legacy of providing fans with fun games that also mimicked what they saw on the ice.

Luckily for EA, the relationship between the NHL and its Players Association was just as strained, opening the door for the publisher and the NHLPA to make a deal. When Brook originally approached the NHL and the NHLPA for a licensing agreement for *NHL Hockey*, he was told by the Joint Licensing Agent at Time Warner there were problems with the NHLPA that wouldn't allow EA to secure a deal with them, but the NHL was happy to oblige them. As said before, it wasn't the end of the world as EA planned then, similarly to what they did with the *Madden* games, to use the uniform numbers of the players on each team and not their names. But after the fracas with the NHL due to the in-game fighting in *NHL Hockey*, EA went to the Players Association and the truth about what really happened to the licensing deal for *NHL Hockey* came out. They then found themselves in the middle of a brooding war that played a role in the 1992 NHL players strike.

"So I reached out to the NHL Players Association and I said I don't know why we didn't get this license last year, but would you allow us to have player names in



the game and keep fighting in the game and we'll pay you the licensing fee we were going to pay the NHL," Brook said. "I had gone to Toronto and I had met with Ted Saskin, who, at the time was the head of licensing and after I had described what happened, he brought in Bob Goodenow, the executive director, into the room. They confirmed that Time Warner had never contacted the NHL Players Association about our licensing opportunity (for the first game). They (Time Warner) had basically just given it all to the NHL. There was a lawsuit going on because we weren't the



only people this had happened to. To make a long story short, they said sure, we could keep fighting in the game as long as it's realistic. That's how the game became *NHLPA 93*."

With fighting now front and center in *NHLPA 93* (which also sold in the seven figures for EA. Brook comfortably estimates in between 1.5 and 2 million combined copies on the Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo), it stands as uniquely different from future games. It's also a reminder of Brook and his team's central notion from day one, that their games were always meant to be realistic, but fun too. While the Player's Association agreed to grant the license if fighting in the game was at the league average of 1.5 fights a game and the chances of a player like Gretzky getting in a fight were eliminated, Brook and his team even worked around that.


"What realistic meant in terms of the licensing deal was the average of fights on an NHL level, so they wanted it tuned to that level," Brook said. "So I'd send them a build to test and they'd say, 'Yeah, there's 1.5 fights a game.' The only thing was after the whistle blew, the testers would stop playing. But any video gamer knows that after the whistle blows, you still have control of the player and if you can take someone out, you'll do it every time. That's why there ended up

being a lot more than 1.5 fights on average per game. The testers that played the game for licensing purposes played hockey the way you're supposed to play hockey. Not the way you're supposed to play a hockey video game."

With the added violence, and the focus on the NHLPA license, the legacy of *NHLPA 93* is something that the National Hockey League was not proud of. "They were pissed," Brook said of the NHL, "because *NHLPA 93* was a bigger seller than *NHL Hockey*. This was an NHLPA game and at that time, there were very few products that were NHLPA only and didn't have an NHL license."

A year later, *NHL 94* had both the league and the Players Association license. With one-timers added and continued efforts to improve the presentation, which included player photos, hot and cold streaks and organ music from every arena in the league, the legend was born... but at a price.

Fighting was completely eliminated from the game, but even in the face of that letdown, *NHL 94* was still a wonderful game that continued the legacy of the series. What is often understated is what *NHL Hockey* and more importantly, *NHLPA 93* did to change the hockey genre forever. Away from improving upon the gameplay of *NHL Hockey* and adding real players and ratings, the presentation of *NHLPA 93*, which included highlights from other games and pre-game commentary by national radio host Ron Barr, was vastly improved over *NHL Hockey*. It set the groundwork for the series to follow in the years ahead.

Before the *NHL* series, games the likes of *Ice Hockey* and *Blades of Steel* set the home console standard. Although both were fun to play and are classics in their own right, they lacked the realism and gameplay depth some fans craved. Competition from Nintendo and third party developers in the form of *NHL Stanley Cup*, *Pro Sport Hockey*, *Brett Hull Hockey* and even *Hit the Ice* all failed to hit the balance that Electronic Arts did with *NHLPA 93*. Taking the gameplay elements of *NHL Hockey* and adding real players' names and pictures, *NHLPA 93* could be either an offensive machine, with offsides and penalties turned off and no line changes or a realistic hockey-sim with everything a fan could want. No other game on the market at that time could do that. That, Brook said, was the game's mission in development, but he never thought of any lasting impact the game would or could ever possibly have. 

FINAL FIGHT

by MICHAEL MERTES

The Mad Gear gang has pulled a stunt right out of *Double Dragon's* plotline and kidnapped Jessica Haggar, the daughter of the new Metro City Mayor. Too bad the Mad Gears never called the Black Shadow Warriors, because had they done so, they would have found out that kidnapping someone's daughter or girlfriend usually ends in a *Final Fight* that doesn't benefit the bad guys.

Final Fight takes the side-scrolling beat-em-up action of *Double Dragon* and kicks it up a notch with the Capcom quality stamp of approval that gamers throughout the 90s would instantly recognize. Players will take control of Mayor Mike Haggar, Cody, and Guy through the slums of Metro City all the way to the Uptown, taking names and smashing faces to the very end. The game takes place in the same universe and storyline continuity of the *Street Fighter* series and was once called *Street Fighter 89* until the developers decided that the true sequel of the *Street Fighter* would keep within the bounds of a one-on-one fighter. The name change to *Final Fight* did not hurt its debut in arcades and was a smash hit worldwide.

Final Fight's popularity warmed up the arcade crowds to what great games Capcom would be bringing out and proved that Capcom's arcade hardware, the Capcom Play System (CPS), was a successful development system they would continue using for its future arcade games. Unfortunately, it was discovered that the CPS could be easily bootlegged, forcing Capcom to implement changes in its second and third generations of the CPS hardware. Home arcade board collectors looking to pick up a *Final Fight* CPS board can expect to drop anywhere from \$150 and upward to own the true arcade original. In 2018, Arcade1UP released a very playable replica cabinet of *Final Fight* containing the arcade original and three additional games. This replica gave gamers a more economical way of owning a *Final Fight* cabinet and brought to light the great artwork that the original arcade cabinet featured.

Final Fight would eventually become a series, with two sequels being developed on the SNES console, making it the beat-em-up series to contend with Sega's *Streets of Rage* series. The arcades would only see one more *Final Fight* game, but as a one-on-one fighting game called *Final Fight: Revenge*. The arcade game was more



prevalent in Japan and had an almost nonexistent presence in North American arcades.

Three Ways To *Final Fight* At Home

There are so many ways to play *Final Fight* that it can leave your head spinning faster than taking a piledriver from Mike Haggar. Rather than covering the gamut of ports out there, let's pit the three most popular versions of the game against each other and see who ends up on top!

Final Fight (Super Nintendo)



The SNES version was the first version of *Final Fight* I played, and I convinced my little brother to split the cost for a used copy of the game since it would be the ultimate two-player experience for us. It wasn't until we got home and popped the game in that we discovered that the SNES version does not contain a two-player mode. After my brother stormed off in a fit of rage, I played through as much as I could of by myself. I ended up not being very impressed by the game. After eventually playing the arcade game and various other ports, I realized why there were so many reasons why I thought the SNES version was lackluster. Capcom made a variety of cuts to this game due to memory constraints, removing an entire stage and a playable character. The placement and number of simultaneous on-screen enemies were reduced, which probably played a significant factor in removing the two-player option. Some subtle stage effects, like lights flashing on and off, were removed, along with modifications or complete changes to certain enemy characters. Even after 30 years, my brother still gets angry at me over this version of the game being only one player. Angry sibling aside, this version of the game does not win the three-way dance of ports to play and should be skipped.

Final Fight: Double Impact (Xbox 360/PlayStation 3/Xbox One)



Released in 2010, *Final Fight: Double Impact* brought the original arcade version of the game back to gamers. While this game featured a variety of neat extras like a remixed soundtrack, an online two-player mode, and stage challenges, it is not without its issues. The remixed soundtrack has a muddy, overly compressed sound that was not present in the promotional soundtrack. It also suffers from input lag, making it tough to do Cody's turn punch combo. The stage challenge pop-ups stay displayed for too long and take up a large chunk of the bottom of the screen, causing you to miss details like smashing the car in the bonus stage. While this is much better than the SNES port, it still doesn't have enough to come out on top.

Final Fight CD (Sega CD)



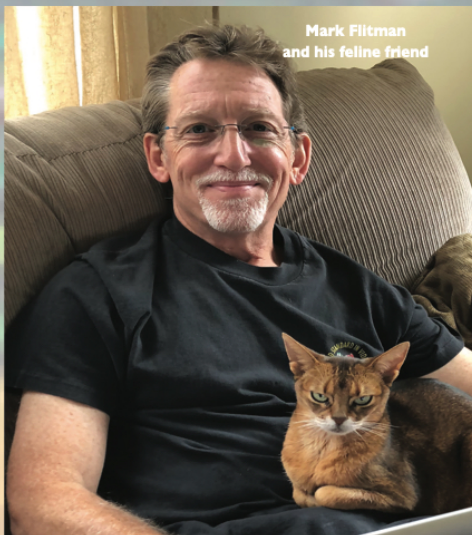
I discovered this version of *Final Fight* in 1993. I remember being particularly impressed that not only did it have all three playable characters, but it also had the two-player feature. I wouldn't have an opportunity to play this version until many years later, but this version remains my favorite. The two-player inclusion is an obvious improvement, but this CD port restored the missing Industrial Zone stage. The soundtrack has also been enhanced with CD-quality music and includes voice-overs. The game certainly doesn't stand as a one-to-one port of the arcade version, but it is far more playable and enjoyable than the SNES version. *Final Fight CD* wins this three-way dance! 🏆

MARK FLITMAN: VIRTUAL BART

DROP THE GLASSES, KEEP THE GAMEPLAY

by PATRICK HICKEY JR.

From their debut on the Nintendo Entertainment System to their classic arcade game and plethora of other games on seemingly every console ever created, *The Simpsons* have always had a stake in gaming history. Connected with publishers the likes of Konami, Electronic Arts and Acclaim, games based on the franchise have run the gamut in a variety of directions in terms of genre, quality and even legacy. In the mid-90s however, with the video game license for the animated sitcom in the hands of Acclaim, *The Simpsons* hit every console hard, releasing at least one new title a year for over a half-decade. Among them, *Virtual Bart*, with its unique original story and variety of gameplay options, remains as a solid experience that not only leveraged existing technology from previous Acclaim games but created an original story that was approved by the series creator, Matt Groening.



Produced by Mark Flitman and developed by Sculptured Software, *Virtual Bart* may not be the most heralded game in *The Simpsons* franchise, but it was one that was full of passion. A huge fan of the series, it's a special one for Flitman. Considering his work on games in the *MLB Slugfest*, *NFL Blitz* and *Spider-Man*

franchises, that's no small feat. "I was a huge *Simpson* fan before I worked at Acclaim," Flitman said. "I had every episode recorded on VHS tapes. I knew Acclaim was going to do another *Simpson's* title after *Bart's Nightmare*. I remember sitting down with the VP of Product Development. I don't remember if we were on a business trip or in Oyster Bay where Acclaim was located, but I have a memory of us having lunch and talking about the game. We were talking about what the next step for *The Simpsons* should be and what the title was going to be about."

From there, Flitman, Acclaim and Sculptured Software began crafting what gamers eventually experienced. For the long-time *Simpson's* fan, it was a dream come true. "We wanted to have different environments and different styles of gameplay. So we thought of a storyline that would allow us that freedom. Bart would walk through a Springfield Elementary Science Fair where we would show some *Simpson* characters and their science fair exhibits, all keeping within the *Simpson* humor. The last exhibit was a Virtual Reality machine looking for volunteers and Bart gets hooked up. With that introduction, we opened up the door to creative freedom. Now we could place Bart or versions of Bart in a variety of Virtual Reality environments. We wanted to have a prehistoric-level where he's a dinosaur, half-Bart, half-dinosaur. And that was going to be a side-scrolling, jumping level. It was inspired by Mario-style games, but nobody came close to the genius of *Mario*."

But make no mistake, with several other types of gameplay and even different views, *Virtual Bart* was anything but a *Mario* knockoff. You wouldn't know it, but another level was reflective of a sports title at the time. "We had a game called *NFL Quarterback Club* which was all these mini-games that actually took place at the NFL All-Star weekend, where the quarterbacks competed. One of the mini-games was where these moving player pillars would slide across the field at different distances and you'd have to hit them with the football," Flitman said. "So we took that engine and we said, 'Okay, what can we do with that engine? I know,

Bart will be hiding outside of school and when the kids leave school, he'll throw tomatoes at them, because, well, that's Bart. In those days, when I was at Acclaim, even though we usually had a reasonable amount of time to develop our games, Acclaim was like a well-oiled machine and they were just churning out title after title after title. Some of them were better, some of them were worse. But man, they got them out and they used their licenses well. Acclaim (we) put out the best games possible, but they had certain slots to fill.

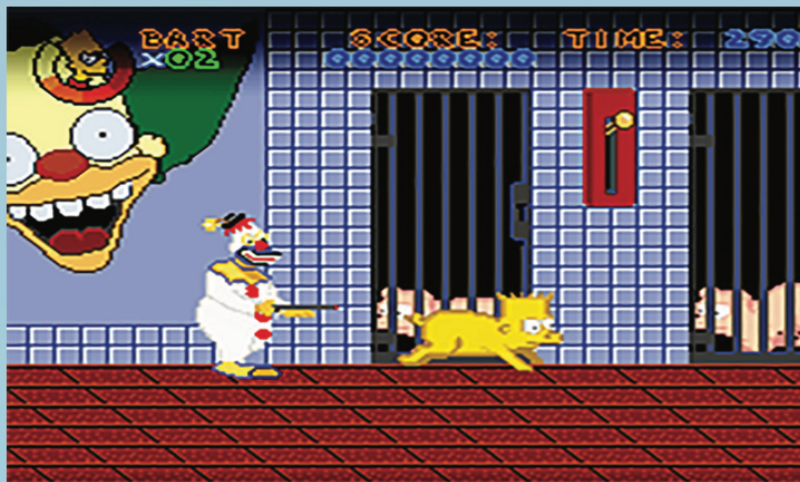
They were a public company. There were shareholders and responsibilities. You had to get out a certain number of titles every year and you had to get out a certain number of titles on every platform, whether it was Genesis, NES, SNES Game Gear, Game Boy, the PAL titles, etc. You had multiple titles in development all the time. So if you could save time and money using an engine from another game or figuring out how to reuse something, it was a smart way to do it. You can see this from the Acclaim wrestling games, too. We would keep building upon each game. I mean, you wouldn't start from scratch, just like *Madden* doesn't start from scratch today. You build upon what you have and you add some new features that make it worth purchasing the next title. So we used the *Quarterback Club* engine for that one gameplay element. We used it for the tomato toss. We had another level where Bart was a baby because there was a *Simpson* episode or two where he was a baby, he crawled out the window of the house and he was bouncing across clotheslines and you had to get across these clotheslines and avoid certain things. It's been a long time since I thought about it, but I think the goal was that Baby Bart was trying to get to an ice cream truck."

Virtual Bart was so much more than a mishmash of recycled engine parts though. Even if most gamers never got to experience it the way it should have been played, it was still an industrious title. "It was originally developed to be 3D," Flitman said. "And there was no other game on the market that I know of that was 3D like this. What happened at the time is Acclaim bought Valiant comics and Valiant comics introduced a few comics that were marketed as 'Valiant Vision' or something like that. What it was, is you put on his these glasses and because of the colors they used. It wasn't the blue and red glasses that had been used for 3D comics up to that point that had a black and white 3D effect. This was much more colorful. So we were developing the game using this 3D technology. When we got about halfway through development, the marketing

people and Acclaim decided, for various reasons, probably the cost of the glasses, not to include it."

Sadly finances were only one part of the equation. It seems laughable today, but the industry, a good two years away from real 3D games, was petrified of advancing technology. "They were also worried that it could mess up people's eyes," Flitman said. "Because in those days, you didn't know. I remember all the warnings they had on the Virtual Boy. Don't play it for more than 20 minutes, they used to say. You know, give your eyes a rest, do this and that. Acclaim was worried. So they canceled the 3D part and didn't market it. But to this day, if you get that cartridge and you get those glasses, which you can find with the old Valiant comics. There was also another product that used those glasses, I think it was Crayola that had those glasses included with some markers where you could use those colors and draw pictures that would be in 3D. If you get those glasses and you play *Virtual Bart*, parts of the game will actually be in 3D. It's very cool. It's one of those things that you'd never know because you don't need the glasses to play it. When you have time and you find a pair of those glasses, play it that way. It's a different game. I think it was more that they were scared of the possible damaging effects. I mean, it's one thing reading a comic book for a few minutes and it's another thing





sitting there playing a video game for hours with these glasses on. I think they were just worried and wanted to play it safe. So they said, Nah, screw it. We're not gonna do it. You can even tell by the colors used in certain parts of the game where we were working on the 3D element and where we gave up after we were told that it was not going to be a feature anymore."

Regardless of that, Flitman doesn't have any regrets about *Virtual Bart*. If anything, they allowed him to rub elbows with the series creator, Matt Groening again and do a few other cool things.

"I remember when I met Matt while I was at Konami working on *Barts House of Weirdness* and *Simpsons Arcade* for the PC. It was early on in the show's history but the *Simpsons* were quite successful," Flitman said. If memory serves me right, Matt was in this little house on the Fox lot - nothing impressive at all. Matt was a genuine, laid back, creative person and he gave me a few drawings of *Simpson* characters as well as some of the characters he had created before the *Simpsons*. "You always have to get Matt's approval. Of course, with any license, if you do it right, you need approvals throughout development. I remember going to FOX the first time and when I pulled up to the hotel they booked me in, I looked at the outside of the hotel and I'm thinking, 'I've seen this hotel before.' It was the hotel that they shot *Die Hard* in. "When I eventually met with Matt. He had a Bart coffee mug in his office among other proposed licensed products that people were pitching and I'm pretty sure he said, 'I'm not gonna license this cause it just looks goofy.' He gave it to me and I still have it somewhere. It's funny because over the years, there's practically nothing that hasn't been licensed by the *Simpsons*.

At the same time, Flitman and Acclaim's interactions weren't entirely pleasant ones. "When we got this game done, it wasn't great and it wasn't awful. It was a fun game with a lot of creativity and thought behind it," Flitman said. "At that time, for me, *Super Mario World* was one of the most incredible games I'd played. And what happened was, I'm pretty sure Matt had just gotten that game for his kid and they were playing it and then he looked at *Virtual Bart*. We were on a call with him to get his final approval and he said, 'You're not putting this game out,' because he was comparing it to *Mario* and there's no comparing. I mean, none. And we're like, 'What are you talking about? You've given us approvals all the way throughout development. We just need your final approval for the game and it is done.' I just sat there with my mouth open. Actually, I think my boss got in a pretty heated discussion with Matt. Acclaim was so powerful at that time and we were a public company with financial obligations, so we convinced Matt that the game had to go out as is. If we started from scratch or made all the changes he wanted the game would be delayed for months and it would miss the marketing opportunities and lose its retail space, etc. The game came out and I don't remember how it did. Nobody makes games like Nintendo, especially *Mario* in those days, *Mario* was the reason you bought the system.

Flitman's qualms and Matt's concerns were absolutely fair ones and especially considering the mixed reviews of *Simpsons* games up until that point, but he and Acclaim certainly had leverage. While Flitman admits *Virtual Bart* isn't *Super Mario World* or *Sonic the Hedgehog*, it's not *Simpson's Wrestling* either. As well, even the better games in the franchise have their issues. While *The Simpson Arcade Game* and *Bart vs. The Space Mutants* have their share of hardcore fans, neither one of those games, the then stalwarts of the series up until that point, incorporated the type of story Flitman and the development team did in *Virtual Bart*. For Flitman, it's something he hangs his hat on.


"Nobody was doing strong *Simpson*-like storylines in *Simpson* games at that point. The most successful game up to that point was the *Simpsons Arcade Game*. Konami's gameplay really had nothing to do with the

Simpsons show. I mean it did have *Simpson* characters, but it was Marge whacking things with a vacuum cleaner and I think Lisa was hitting things with a saxophone or something. It was just an arcade game where you just run from right to left (a side scroller) and whack things to see how far you could get. Different *Simpson* characters would pop up and you would just hit them. When you lost your life, you put more quarters into the arcade game to see how much further you could get. But it was one of the first *Simpson* games and it was very popular. So that was where people were starting from and that's where development was going. And I think *Bart's Nightmare* was also side-scrolling walking down the street. So at least for *Virtual Bart*, we said, 'Okay, we're going to have different levels and it's not going to be all side-scrolling.' We just tried to do different things. But you look at all the games back then and there really weren't a lot of storyline titles. We had Bart Pig in one world trying to escape the Krusty factory, which now that I think about it was years before the *Simpsons Spider Pig!* We also had a spoof on *Mad Max* because it was cool and because the *Simpsons* always had movie spoofs or homages."

With so many *Simpsons* games over the years, it's hard to gauge *Virtual Bart's* overall legacy. The thought that Acclaim bowed out of making the game truly stand out with 3D glasses is a sad afterthought, considering it could have made them stand out of the crowd. For Flitman, while he'd stay on at Acclaim for a few more years and produce the beat-em-up classic *Maximum Carnage*, he sees the development cycle as the beginning of the end of the 16-bit era. At the same time, he's happy with what the team created.

"I wanted it to be true to the characters and the license, but there are still those limitations technologically. In every 'world' we tried to incorporate as many *Simpson* characters as we could as long as they worked well. We worked hard to make a game that had different modes of gameplay. We also wanted there to be a feeling of freshness. As with any game, I wish we had more time to tweak the gameplay and fine-tune the controls, but most games have a development timeline and again, you do the best you can to put the best product possible within the limitations. The plus side of that was in those days

a lot of things got approved that nowadays probably wouldn't," Flitman said. "Or got green-lit. Maybe I got spoiled at Acclaim because when I was there nothing I produced got canceled. Later in my career, I started to see producer's titles get canceled halfway through development. And I said, 'What's this? I don't get it.' I think it was a combination of the competition getting tougher, development getting more expensive and everybody thinking that game development was an easy way to make money. It wasn't that way anymore."

With those changes came higher standards, but also a lost appreciation for the development of cartridge-based games of the '90s. With it easier than ever to hope on YouTube or a forum and say a game is bad, Flitman's hope is that players understand how difficult some of the hurdles were in the development process and how they still delivered a game that did plenty more things right than it did wrong. "I want gamers to enjoy *Virtual Bart* for the flavor of *The Simpsons* and the characters, and who knows, maybe after they read this, they'll see some of the hidden things we did in development and have a whole new outlook on it, especially if they can get the 3D glasses," Flitman said. "I realize that a consumer is spending their hard-earned money on a product and they expect it to be great, but sometimes you don't know how much effort a developer puts into something. You take it for granted and you just go to the movies or you play a game and you go, 'Eh, you know, I don't like it or that sucked,' but I've taught my kids that when you go see a movie, even if it's a bad movie, think about the effort that the whole creative team put into it. You may walk away with a whole new outlook on it, or at least get an idea of what they were trying to achieve. No creative team sets out to make a bad product. 



THE HALLEY PROJECT

OR

WALKING THE DOG

by the writer formerly known as The Jaded Gamer - BILL DONOHUE

Space... deep Space... infinite in all its dimensions...
Sas black as Satan's heart... punctured by the occasional star, bleeding light in a half-hearted attempt to push back the cold, black depths... to no avail... and deep in the darkness below, a small silver dot crawls slowly, intent on its mission...

And I'm the one stuck in that forsaken silver dot, trying to finish a mission I'd put off for 35 years...

Some say I got tired of all the astrophysical data I had to study to become a Starbird pilot, using only books and a typewriter. Remember, this was a long time ago...

Some say that I got tired of the strict routine of qualifying for Starbird status, even after setting a new speed record for the Starbird run, a record that still stands to this day...

Some say I lost my drive and quit to play punk rock with my band in every rat-infested hell hole club in the Solar System that would have us...

It was probably for all of those reasons that I quit, but the honest truth is that as the missions went further out into the stars, a lot of the pilots were cracking up from the intense loneliness of deep space. The Starbird was a single seater in the early days. It was only after

I heard that the Starbird Mark II was ready for deployment with two seats: one for the pilot and one for the genetically modified talking dog, whose sole purpose was to keep the pilot sane, that I decided to rejoin *The Halley Project*.

I and my assigned Rocket Dog, Harlan, started training together and the time flew by. Before we knew it, we were transferred to Halley Base to begin our mission. Harlan was a great dog; clever, curious and friendly, with a great sense of humor. We were sealed into our Starbird Mark II and blasted into the depths of space.

"Captain, is it time for foodies yet?" It was Harlan's favorite question, one that I heard four or five times every "day." It wasn't really a day, of course. It was a lighting pattern designed to give you a sense of Earth time. You got 16 hours of white light in the ship, followed by eight hours of red light, or "night."

"No, Harlan. I just fed you two hours ago, so you won't get another meal until noon, which is in two hours."

SATELLITES OF THE PLANETS							
SATELLITE	KM DISTANCE /PLANET	Orbital PERIOD days	DIRECTION OF ORBIT	TILT/ORBIT /EQUATOR	RADIUS KM.	MASS GM.	IAS GM.
EARTH							
MOON	384,000	27.3	direct	23.5dg	1,738	7.3×10 ²⁵	
MARS							
PHOBOS	9,000	.32	direct	1dg	13	--	
DEIMOS	23,000	1.26	direct	2dg	7	--	
JUPITER							
IO	420,000	1.77	direct	0dg	1,830	7.3×10 ²⁵	
EUROPA	670,000	3.55	direct	0dg	1,460	4.8×10 ²⁵	
GANYMEDE	1,100,000	7.15	direct	0dg	2,550	1.5×10 ²⁶	
CALLISTO	1,900,000	16.69	direct	0dg	2,360	9.5×10 ²⁵	
SATURN							
VI	11,500,000	251	direct	28dg	--	--	
VII	11,700,000	260	direct	26dg	--	--	
VIII	23,500,000	737	retro	33dg	--	--	
IX	23,700,000	758	retro	25dg	--	--	
X	11,700,000	253	direct	28dg	--	--	
XI	22,600,000	692	retro	16dg	--	--	
XII	21,200,000	631	retro	33dg	--	--	
URANUS							
MIRANDA	190,000	.94	direct	2dg	--	4×10 ²²	
ENCELADUS	240,000	1.37	direct	0dg	--	7×10 ²²	
TETHYS	300,000	1.89	direct	1dg	--	6.5×10 ²²	
DIONE	380,000	2.74	direct	0dg	--	1.0×10 ²³	
RHEA	530,000	4.52	direct	0dg	700	2.3×10 ²³	
TITAN	1,220,000	15.95	direct	0dg	2,440	1.4×10 ²³	
HYPERION	1,480,000	21.28	direct	0dg	--	1.1×10 ²²	
IAPETUS	3,560,000	79	direct	15dg	--	1.1×10 ²³	
PHOEBE	12,900,000	550	retro	30dg	--	--	
JANUS	170,000	.82	direct	0dg	--	--	
NEPTUNE							
TRITON	350,000	5.88	retro	20dg	2,000	1.4×10 ²³	
NEREID	5,600,000	360	direct	28dg	--	3×10 ²⁶	

“Okay. Will you tell me about Skwerlo again?”

Skwerlo was an imaginary planet I’d concocted to keep Harlan occupied during the long stretches when we weren’t very busy. It was a wonderful place: there were huge green meadows, pristine blue lakes and deep, dark forests. The only inhabitants of Skwerlo were squirrels; great, bushy-tailed creatures that romped all over Skwerlo and sometimes even flew from tree to tree in the deep forests. I guess it was just about Harlan’s favorite place.

Harlan was familiar with squirrels. She’d seen and chased many of them back on Earth when she was just a puppy. The stories helped her pass the time quietly. At the end of every story, she would always ask me the same question.

“Captain, can we go to Skwerlo now?”

“No, I’m sorry, Harlan, but we have an important job to do now. How does this sound? After we finish our mission, we can take the long flight to Skwerlo and you can have fun with all the squirrels, okay?”

“Yay! That sounds great, Captain. Will you show me again where Skwerlo is?”

I pointed out the viewscreen to a tiny, isolated star many lightyears away, its flickering light barely visible to the eye.

“Do you see that star all by itself? That is the Dog Star and Skwerlo orbits around it. We’ll go there someday.”

“Can we go today, Captain?”

“No, Harlan, we have to finish our mission first. I wish we could go tomorrow too, but we have a job to do.”

“Captain, is it time for foodies now?”

“Yes, it is! What would you like for dinner?”

Harlan decided on the chicken, and I chose the tacos. We ate, played catch with a tennis ball for an hour and then the lighting slowly faded to red and we went to sleep. It was the end of another day in deep Space. I’d long since stopped counting them...

When I awoke, the light was just fading from red to white and Harlan was jumping up and down on the bed.

“Wake up, Captain, wake up!”

“Huh? What?”

“Wake up, Captain! It is a great day!!!”

I dragged myself out of bed and into my uniform as Harlan danced all around the cabin. I splashed some water on my face and headed into the Control Room.

“What the...!?!?”

The Control Room was in shambles. Loose wiring hung from the walls. Components and controls had been smashed and... chewed? A quick look at the Radar screen showed we were completely off course.


Our ship was ruined... ruined and unrepairable. I collapsed into my Command Chair and stared at the viewscreen, which was now centered on a tiny, flickering, barely visible star.

Harlan jumped onto my lap, licking my face.

“The mission is over, Captain! Now we are going to Skwerlo! We both got our wish!!! YAY!!!”

I turned my head slightly and stared deep into Harlan’s happy eyes.

“Captain, is it time for foodies yet?”

Space... deep Space... infinite in all its dimensions... as black as Satan’s heart... punctured only by the dim light of a far off, flickering star and deep in the darkness below, a small silver dot crawls slowly on its voyage to that mythical planet, Skwerlo... 



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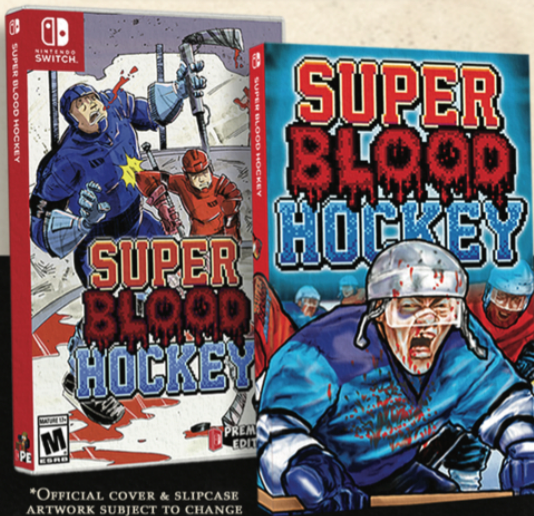
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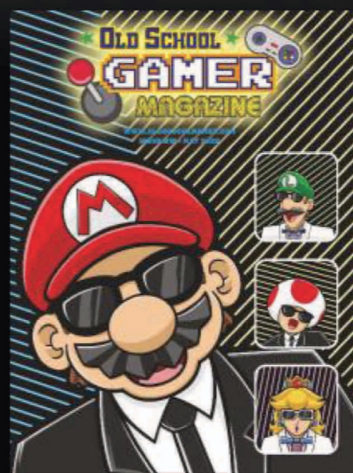


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