

# SYZYGY

## MAGAZINE

Winter 2000-01

(Pronounced sīz' ə-jē)

Reviews:  
Playstation2  
Dreamcast

Interviews:  
Eugene Jarvis  
and  
Ed Rotberg

**BOOK REVIEWS:**  
The First Quarter  
and  
Shoot the Robot,  
Then Shoot Mom

Winter 2000-2001  
\$4.99 U.S./\$6.99 Canada



DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 2001

STILL THE ONLY HARDCORE ECLECTIC VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

**Robotron:2084**  
The greatest  
video game  
of all time?



# Cover Artist: Mike Manley



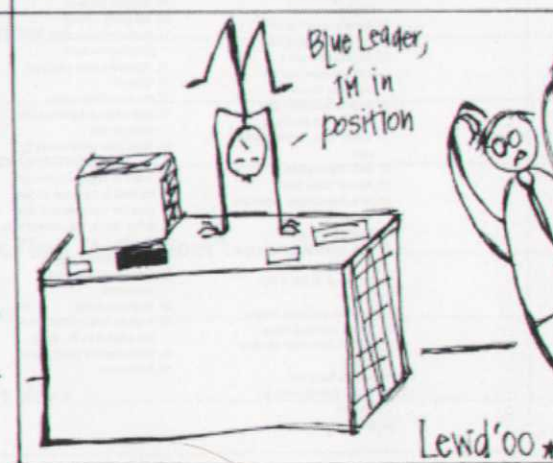
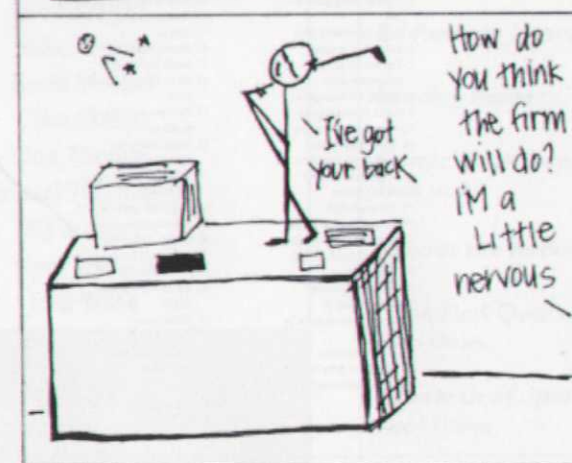
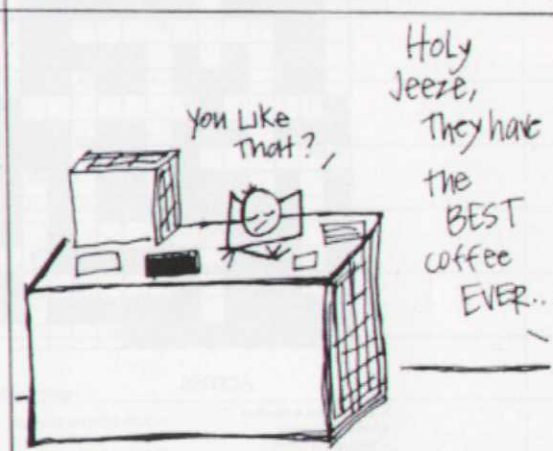
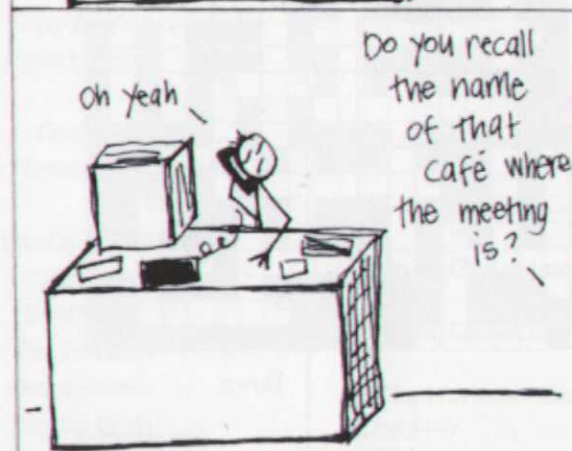
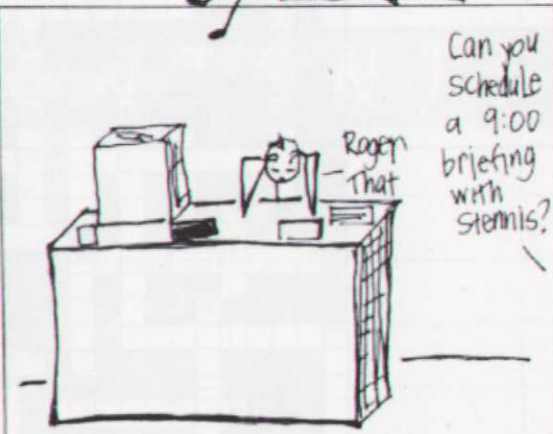
Mike Manley of Action Planet Comics (ActionPlanet.com) rednered the phenomenal cover art for this issue of Syzygy. He has worked for Marvel, DC, Cartoon Network, and MTV, in comics and animation. The new Robotron scene is a spectacular version of the classic game we all know so well.



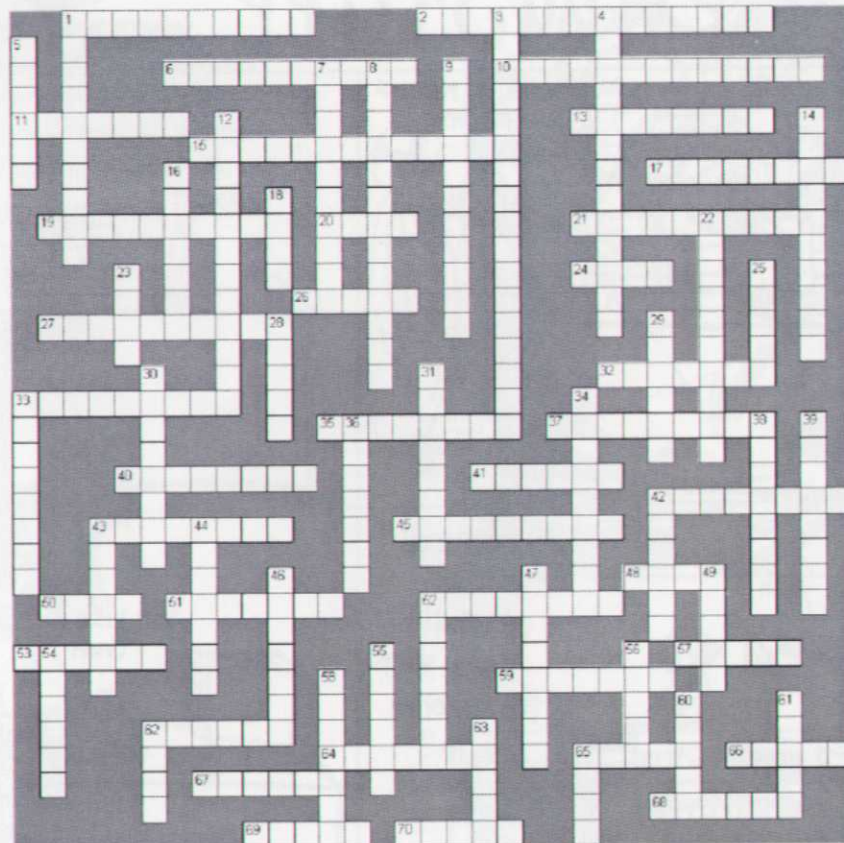
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# Lewda Stripp



## Classic Coin-ops



### Across

1. Firing direction in Tharkham
2. Trak Ball arcade game
6. Cinematronics spin-off company
10. Sprint's control device
11. Pac-man's original name
15. 1st coin-op to use a microprocessor and not solid-state circuits
17. Circus target practice
19. Warner Bros. cartoon licensed game
20. Buck Rogers planet
21. Hero of "Make Trax"
24. An X-shaped layout makes one of these
26. Slinger manufacturer
27. 1981 arcade hit feared to be a major failure
32. Prepare to do this is Pole Position
33. Use these to destroy Snotstar
35. Picky's baby bird haven
37. 3 Player, fear of that which is foreign
40. 4 player fun at war?
41. Turtles alternate name & synonym
42. Space Ace animator

45. Public outcry over this violent Exidy driving game
48. Dragon's Lair hero
50. Kee games coin-op
51. Jump over these while patrolling the moon
52. Mysterious Atari subsidiary
53. Olive oil
57. Mr. Do's chosen career
59. Sega released this Konami hit within the USA
62. Build these constructions in Satan's Hollow
64. A bird in Egyptian mythology that lived in the desert for 500 years and then consumed itself by fire, later to rise renewed from its ashes
65. Killer tomato w/ goggles
66. Space Fury's spaceship armaments
67. Burgerime enemy
68. A special version of Battlezone was adapted for this group
69. Space Invaders manufacturer
70. Stilder hero

### Down

1. Time Pilot enemy
3. 1980 shooting game by SNK
4. Tightrope walking hero
5. Burgerime weapon
7. Premier 1st person perspective game
8. 1st trak ball videogame
9. Atari's 1st vector game
12. Kangaroo's armament
14. Roc'n Rope stunner
16. Rock band adventure
18. R-type manufacturer
22. Vector spiders
23. The zoo keeper
25. Bouncing police mouse
28. Common Robotron enemy
29. Frogger's latest nemesis
30. Nervous fighter
31. Gene Roddenberry
33. 1981 Konami hit
34. Shooting gallery game by Sega
36. Collect vegetables
38. Smiley face gone Bernerk
39. Krull manufacturer

42. Giant attacking meta fish
43. Hero of Donkey Kong 3
44. Donkey Kong's level 1 weapon
46. Moving walls
47. Sente/ Midway game
49. Movie licensed based game
52. Pac-man guest starred in this game
54. Space Panic's vital element
55. A BIG robot with a BIG red missile
56. Pusby little antarctic bird
59. Suprappier
60. Capture these while going Up N' Down
61. Hero of Venture
62. Spy Hunter's alternate vehicle
65. Classic game manufacturer
65. 'Avoid missing ball for high score'



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# SYZYGY MAGAZINE

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## SqUeal likE a sTuCk PiG

### Nicotine-Caffiene-Sugar fix

Your mag sucks. Your website blows. Get a life, losers. Nobody cares about old-ass games. Nobody cares what you think about the PS2 either! And you waste everyone's g---m time talking about NUON and X-Box.

Jeff Ferrier  
Knoxville, TN

*But Jeff, wait a second. Have you ever heard me rap? Check it out... "Nobody disses me, and it's plain to see. And in the back is Joe Cool-ey." Yeah, you know that rocks, you punk.*

### Cancer? Joey? Crusher Creel? Breet Wheer?

JWC,

I loved your first issue! I got the *Half Baked* jokes, but who is Joey? And why is Mr. T dedicating the first issue to him?

Calvin Tome  
Northridge, CA

*Calvin, I'm not sure. I'm not sure whether or not Mr. T really has cancer or not, either. So it's anybody's guess.*

### Bargain Bins 101

My name is Seth Goldman, and I enjoyed your first issue immensely. I wanted to applaud you on your interviews of Tim Skelly and Owen Rubin. Both were very fun to read, especially the Skelly article. My biggest problem is with the NUON section. Why are you bothering to cover NUON at all? These players are so dead it isn't even funny! There are no games out for it! I think there is one racing game that looks like SNES Mario racing and that's about it. You joked about the bargain bin in your article. Well, I am wondering why you would do this. Something has to at least exist and have some kind of impact to make it to the bargain bin. As a matter of fact, any bargain bin full of games of a particular



"Did you say something, JWC?  
Yeah, I didn't think so."

system is a testimony to the fact that at one point that system was hot, and one thing led to another and they over-produced it, the game was a flop, and so on. The point is that NUON in its wildest dreams could only wish to have a bargain bin full of its games. I am still wondering, does it even exist?

Seth Goldman  
Rochester, NY

*Yes, Seth ol' buddy, it does exist. But I guess I can't argue with your comments, other than to point out that I never said anything in the last issue about NUON in a bargain bin; that was the N'SYNC rating. NUON got the Debbie Boone rating. And as to why I bothered to cover it...well, although definitely not a sound video game purchase, it is an interesting unit. And it does have a few unique games. But, yes, it will never have top development, because its market is incredibly small compared to the mainstream systems. But with the Virtual Light Machine and Tempest 3000, it is solidified in the underdog, underground video game fandom, members of which like to back systems that nobody else does. I tried to make it a part of the "Console Wars" article, just as an excuse to talk about it, as a favor to the VM Labs guys, since basically nobody else will go near the subject. And actually most of the emails and letters I got about NUON were of the theme "I have never heard of NUON...what is it?" Well, you can check them out online at [www.nuon.tv](http://www.nuon.tv), a website that is fairly unkept. Yes, Seth, NUON has arrived... but will it stay? You might be surprised. It's a struggling video game machine, but as an interactive DVD unit, it's alive and well, if a bit lonely.*

### Damn, it feels good to be a Gangsta

Dear Jason,

I wanted to compliment your unique approach to covering the gore aspect of *Soldier of Fortune*, and I wanted to ask you what do you think of Joseph Lieberman's (since he has been in the news as the VP candidate) campaign to rid the world of violent video games?

Frank Portal  
New York, NY

*Frank, and all others who wish to read the final word on this, see "[SNR]Lieber" on p.24*

### Fragmaster poses out.

JWC,

I'm just emailing to show you this Major Havoc review on Classicgaming.com. <http://207.199.1.106/rotw/mhavoc.shtml>

Matt  
Atlanta, GA

*Well, first of all, the guy's handle is "The Fragmaster." So basically, I would've normally stopped reading right there. But since you brought it to my attention, I read it and was pretty much embarrassed for the guy. He obviously has no clue about vector games or that technology and absolutely no perspective in which to place Major Havoc's brilliance. He had some time on his hands in between a Duke Nukem game so he raddled off a bashing review of a game that is far too elite for him to grasp, apparently. Hebe. Actually, no. I don't care whether or not people like a game or hate it, when they review it. But to bash a game developed in 1982 for not having more graphical detail (and a vector game at that) is just laughable. I don't know who The Fragmaster is, and maybe he just had an off day. But that's about the poorest excuse for a classic game review I've seen. I'll be watching for him on the UT servers. I have a shock rifle I'd like to introduce him to.*

Can anyone suggest a better name for this section than the current one? Please try. Because I think I'm alienating the rain forest proponents of charm and goodwill and all that is furry and cute with the title as it is now. Also, I fear I may be getting on the bad side of warthogs, which frightens me.



# SqUeal likE a sTuCk PiG

## At Long Last...

JWC, Exidy, everyone:

Finally, a video game magazine devoted to the hobby of video games and not the commercialization of them. Really, it was a pleasure to spend my hard earned money to be treated to down-to-earth in-your-face hardcore information instead of a magazine full of glossy advertisements treating me like I was a twelve year old kid.

I enjoyed the overall coverage of the gaming scene, from Vectrex to Dreamcast and Colecovision to the PSX.

The article on Frank Brunner really knocked my socks off. I knew he was a great comic book artist, yet I had no idea he's been involved with the video game industry as well.

I'd like to thank you for your coverage of the Jaguar. Few people realize the Jag is in better hands now than when it was under Atari's regime. As your mag well documented Battlesphere is here, and it's proving to be the Holy Grail of the Jaguar in more ways than one. The interview with Doug Engel was top notch.

Randy Femrite  
Manassas, VA

*Ab, good ol' Randy, you were one of the most persistent emailers from the point of Syzygy's conception to the first issue, so I let out a great sigh of relief that you liked it. Hebe. Really! Thanks for the kind words, also. Hope you enjoy this issue even more. See Randy's elite vanity plate in the Hardcoreness section of p.20.*

JWC:

The best write-up was the one Kevin Phillips did on the Tempest search. What is a "cocktail" though? What does this game look like? Has anyone ever seen one?

Phillip Casey  
Port Washington, NY

*Phillip, gander to the right, once again we turn to JWC's living room. And no, I don't let Kevin near it.*

## Russ be shake-shake-shakin it.

JWC, you're a poser for insinuating that players who enjoy Parappa the Rapper (you spelled it wrong) are posers. That makes you a poser.

Russ Holcroft  
Greenville, SC

*"Drop it down a little low like that. Hit it in the front with the Splack Pack. Palm Beach county style from the bottom. Uh."*

## Six degrees of Frank Brunner

JWC,  
I loved the Tim Skelly interview. Rip Off is one of my favorite video games of all time. I'm also a comic book fan, and I had NO idea that Frank Brunner, whose comics I read all through college, also drew the sideart for the game I loved so much. It's a small world, after all. All I had to do was look at the Rip Off sideart to see his signature, but never noticed it. Amazing. I even attended a convention in CA and got an issue of *Howard the Duck* signed by Brunner long ago. Sadly, I don't know where it is now. Just had to say it's a small world that makes you shake your head sometimes. Keep up the great work!

Rick Wilson  
Hermosa Beach, CA

*Hab. That is neat. Glad I can bring way-out interesting information to the un-masses. Now, if only Frank could work on a movie with Kevin Bacon. The everything would just...connect.*



*Just look below. Just look.  
That's terrible.*



## Who could ask for anything more?

Syzygy:

I liked the first issue. First let me say the interviews were great. But the reviews? The reviews of the consoles were weird. I've never heard of rating anything with song titles. Is this something you are going to continue with? I would suggest using a numerical point system like the other magazines do. It leaves no area for ambiguity. Looking forward to seeing the next issue. Also, for the record, my song for "Metaphysical Domination of the Home Console Marketplace" would be "Everlong" by the Foo Fighters.

Thomas Simpson  
Reno City, NV

*Thomas, that's why I pick the songs and you don't. If you had trouble with last month's console ratings, then you're gonna hate the DC reviews this issue. You see, I require that my readers have a basic musical interest and a minimal level of taste. If they do, then my ratings make perfect sense. Actually, all I require is reading comprehension, because I tell the reader what I think, rather than showing with numbers. Words say more than numbers, don't you think? And the songs say that much more. Sigh. "Everlong." You need to be slapped.*



# HYPERSPACE EXPLORATION...

## THE EUGENE JARVIS INTERVIEW

Eugene Jarvis has contributed more to the advancement of video games than anyone I can think of. His longevity is equaled only by Miyamoto and a few others. His name may not be immediately recognizable to the casual video game fan, but his games certainly are (even to the ultra-casual). You have loved his games, you love his games, or you will love his games. It's that simple. They are some of the most addicting and unique games in existence. Eugene took some time out of his busy schedule with Midway Games to talk to me. So sit back and enjoy this interview! And play some Beastie Boys in the background. And eat some peanut M&M's® , too (with Barq's™).



**"I wanna be a Cow-boy, bay-bee!"**

Promo shot of Eugene for the Cruis'n World release. Courtesy Eugene Jarvis.

**JWC:** OK, first tell us how you got your foot in the door of the game business? You got your start in pinballs right?

**Eugene Jarvis:** Yeah, my start in amusements. But I got my first job right out of college working at Hewlett Packard on a six year project to create the ultimate Cobol compiler. And...I lasted 3 days. And a couple days later I got a call from Atari, following up on an interview 4 months earlier. I thought they had blown me off, but I guess they finally had gotten to the bottom of the resume pile. So, I took the job as assistant programmer for pinball machines for \$14,000 a year. The next day the head programmer quit, and the day after that the project leader, who was my boss, quit. So after two days on the job, I was head of pinball design.

**JWC:** Yeah, the industry was very unstable and yet about to explode, if I am getting the time right...

**EJ:** Oh yeah, it was a crazy time in the games business because the microprocessor was revolutionizing everything. I remember the first week on the job I made a light blink on the pinball game called The Atarians. Everyone was

stupified. The previous programmer had proved that this was impossible. Then I made a sound as the light beeped. I was a certified child prodigy programming wizard. [laughs].

**JWC:** After this now-defunct Pinball 2000, people are saying "RIP pinball." Do you think there is any future for pinball in the arcades of the future?

**EJ:** Well, pinball certainly looks like it is down and out for the count. Hmm...is there a place for it in an electronic, internet world? All you can say is "the 'ball is wild!"

**JWC:** What was your first experience with video games?

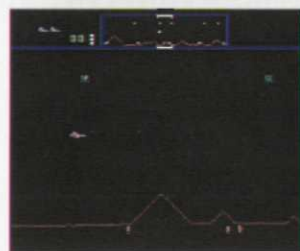
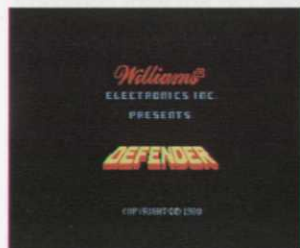
**EJ:** The video game that first addicted me was Space War. It was a two-player black and white vector screen showdown. The original deathmatch. It started out of MIT in the '60's, and I played it in Berkeley on an old IBM 704 machine in the basement of the physics department. The output device was an X-Y oscilloscope. You had to boot up the program with a deck of punchcards, and jiggle around some bulky circuit boards. Each circuit board had one bit of memory on it. It would take 10-20 minutes to get the

cranky, old machine the size of about 7 refrigerators to run, but then it was pure heaven. There were all kinds of variations: gravity, anti-gravity, no gravity, and so on. But the most fun was just good, old-fashioned intense gravity. The ship controls were simple: rotate left, rotate right, fire and thrust. You'd start playing at 8 or 9 at night, and before you'd know it, it was like 9 a.m. and you were late to class. As always, showering was optional.

**JWC:** [laughs] Isn't it always? What about in the 70's...the games in particular that you would have drawn inspiration from to be a game creator?

**EJ:** Well, of course, in the 70's Space War appeared as an arcade game, and it was totally fun. Later in the '70s my favorites were Space Invaders and Asteroids. Space Invaders really created the genre of the wave based, AI driven, player-against-the-machine video games. The key element was the struggle against a computer-controlled machine intelligence, with a continuously increasing pace and difficulty curve. The classic Darwinian struggle of "survival of the fittest" compressed into a sweat and adrenalin-drenched three minutes. This insane rush of intensity spawned the legendary video game frenzy of the late 70's and early 80's.





Defender changed the video game industry forevermore. Every arcade R&D dept. had one in their gameroom. And it is still copied to this day. Above: Flyer(top) and screenshots.

Below: A scene from the corner of JWC's bedroom.



**EJ cont.:** ...This obsessive-compulsive struggle against relentless computer AI's is what actually inspired me to start Defender.

**JWC:** *Ok, now about Defender, I have heard that the general consensus after the 1980 AMOA was that it was a dud, how long did it take after the show for the buzz to reverse?*

**EJ:** The cool thing about the arcade business is that buzz means squat. It's a very street oriented, word-of-mouth kind of thing. Either players get off on your game or they don't. It doesn't matter how many magazines say your game is cool...if it sucks for players, it sucks. Conversely, if a game rocks, it rocks...no matter the press. After the show, I spent a week finishing up the game, and then we put it out at Mother's arcade. I was afraid to show up the first night. But I heard people were digging on it, so I showed up the second night. There were about 20 people lined up behind the game, and players were pulling up stools, camping out on the game. It was pretty obvious in 5 minutes that the game was going to be insane.

**JWC:** *Many games at that time were ingenious and very fun, but Defender was a total package in terms of its success...players loved it and it was also a top-rated, mega-earner...*

**EJ:** Yeah, during those boom days designers had a lot of freedom, and a lot of real wacko sh-t hit the street. Game developers were all designing from the gut. They were designing the ultimate game for themselves. The thing is, if the guy was really a queer duck, the ultimate game for him might not have much appeal to the average guy.

**JWC:** *Were there any of these wacky, underacheiver games in the classic era that you really liked?*

**EJ:** There was Reactor, a really cool and bizarre Tim Skelly game. He always said that he was a jazz musician in a rock n' roll world, creating really cool acoustic bass lines, when all the world really wanted was max-distortion guitar! But my favorite off-beat game was Crazy Climber, where you climbed megastory apartment buildings avoiding flower pots, slamming windows and vulture poop. It was pure insanity!

**JWC:** *Reactor is a favorite of mine as well ...it's unfortunate that alot of these really extreme and creative games were often underacheivers when it came to earning quarters....*

**EJ:** Yeah, there's a risk that you are too far ahead of the curve, that you're too cool for the room, and nobody on the street gets it. And then there's the possibility that you're smoking crack, getting high on yourself, forgetting the basics. In the end you find out that your sh-t stinks just as much as the other guys.

**JWC:** *Hmm...well, don't you think Defender really risked this as well, though, with a control panel that was pretty much out of hand for that time...how did it avoid being, as you say, 'too cool for the room'?*

**EJ:** Well, it avoided it because it really flowed out of the stream of creativity started by Space Wars, Space Invaders, and Asteroids. Although the control panel was bafflingly complex, the right hand Thrust and Fire was the same as Space Wars and Asteroids, with the addition of the Smart Bomb. The left hand was essentially Space Invaders turned sideways. The game then stepped it up to the next level by providing the first multi-screen experience by introducing a scrolling world. And like Asteroids the world wrapped around to the beginning at the end. What made Defender really rock was the mind-blowing special effects. The first particle effect explosions of gratuitous magnitude, and really bitchin' computer synthesized sound effects ...which were largely lifted from my pinball machine Firepower, and 20 years later are still heavily sampled by rap artists like the Beastie Boys. The other thing Defender had was a simple but awesome story. Not only did you want to kill everthing, but you also wanted to save the astronauts and the planet. This tension between killing and saving creates a complex and rich play mechanic. The last element of the Defender recipe was the fascinating AI of the enemy ships. They all had a purpose and mission in the world, and their fighting tactics are unique and amazing.

In short, the game had a helluva a lot of stuff going for it. Designing a game is doing a thousand things right, and really botching any one of them could sink you.

**JWC:** *Ok, after-*

**EJ:** Oh yeah, and I forgot to mention the most important element of all: blind f---ing luck. [laughter].

**JWC:** [laughter] *...after the success of Defender, what led to the formation of your seperate company "Vid Kidz"?*



**EJ:** Larry DeMar and I started Vid Kidz because we hated the big corporate environment that Williams had become. Management figured that if a couple of guys in a closet could design a mega-hit on the first shot, then why not hire a hundred equally unqualified schmucks, and reap a hundred-fold profits? Basically the 'monkey and typewriter' school of design. And the place quickly turned into a massive zoo of stoners. We decided we could be a lot more productive on our own.

**JWC:** Yet you guys stayed with Williams as manufacturer...was this because of some contract clause? Or were they simply high bidder or what?

**EJ:** Well, it was just because we had a good relationship with Williams, and we wanted to concentrate on design and not marketing. So, we went with them.

**JWC:** To this day, when serious gamers, like yours truly, and especially video game creators, talk about "the greatest video game of all time" Robotron is invariably mentioned...what would mainly attribute this to?

**EJ:** Well...Defender was about the freedom of unrestricted flight, but Robotron was about confinement. It took the Space Invaders paradigm of enemies converging on you from above, and put it into two dimensions, with enemies converging on the player from all sides at once. Confining the player to a single screen arena meant there was no escape...it was kill or be killed. The four shot per second firepower of the Robotron player combined with enemy counts into the hundreds, created an intensity of action and bodycount unsurpassed twenty years later.

**JWC:** Also, that Defender killing-saving conflict was there...

**EJ:** Absolutely. That actually was the added magic...the bonus for rescuing the last human family. It created a conflicting goal structure of killing, surviving, and greed. This goal structure, massive action and body count, and the physical demands of dual joystick control basically overloaded all available neurons and adrenalin receptors, leaving the player a sweaty, helpless dishrag after a few hour session.

**JWC:** [laughter] Yeah... How did you guys settle on 2084 as the year? I'm guessing an Orwellian influence?

**EJ:** Yep, definitely. The inspiration was definitely Orwellian. Since it was pretty obvious that 1984 wasn't gonna happen, we figured the real date was 2084, and instead of man subjugating man, it would be the machines calling the shots.

**JWC:** I have seen proto marquees with just 2084 on them....in fact, looking at the cabinet, the only place it says "Robotron" is a small place on the control panel and the production marquee of course...was it originally 2084? and the Robotron was added later?

**EJ:** Well, the name was originally 2084: Robotron. But then everybody just called it Robotron, so we changed it to Robotron: 2084.

**JWC:** There were primordial elements of Robotron in Stern's Berzerk. Were you a fan of Berzerk and yet frustrated with the lack of freedom of movement and game pace like alot of us were?

**EJ:** Berzerk was an awesome game, and yes, it was plagued by a balky optical joystick control. The great frustration of the game was that to kill an enemy, you had to move toward it in order to fire at it. Unfortunately, moving toward an enemy put you in greater and greater danger. This was a bummer. The lethargic player speed also led to frustration and many premature deaths. Despite my love of Berzerk, Robotron was originally designed to be a non-violent game. The basic elements were the player, a series of deadly obstacles, the electrodes, and the enemy robots: the Grunts. The idea was to cause the robots to self destruct by running into the electrodes.

**JWC:** With no firepower?

**EJ:** [laughs] Yeah, exactly. That was a fun... for about 15 minutes. But then it was time to blow stuff up!

**JWC:** I think the coolest improvement Robotron made was the duel joystick controls. Stern tipped the hat back at you and borrowed it for Berzerk's 3rd incarnation: Lost Tomb. What led you to do what would, at that time,

seem like heresy and make a shoot-em-up game with no fire button?

**EJ:** Well, I wanted to capture the intensity of Berzerk, and then square it. So I needed a firing control to make it happen. I had a broken hand from wrecking my MGB and I couldn't operate a button, but I found I could tape my cast to a joystick, and as a side effect, I could fire in any direction. I could move and fire with complete independence. The ultimate video game control was born!

**JWC:** OK, now what about working with Larry DeMar at Vid Kidz...?

**EJ:** Larry, at his peak level of testosterone, was perhaps the greatest programmer I have ever known. He did the heavy lifting at the systems level, and was the genius behind the awesome special effects in Stargate and Robotron.

**JWC:** Any particular areas one or the other of you specialized in?

**EJ:** I concentrated on game design, level design, art direction, and character AI. But there were no hard and fast rules, and at times I'd find myself geeking out on systems code, and Larry would do some artwork or character design. For example, in the game Stargate, DeMar did a lot of the character and level design, while I tweaked the system code to boost real-time performance. We got along really well and were like two halves of the same person, often finishing each others sentences.

**JWC:** Blockbuster games spawn sequels. But unlike alot of sequels which seemed to be capitalist ventures, Stargate pretty much lived up to the hype...what were the aspects of Defender you wanted to improve upon when you started designing Stargate?



**EJ:** Yeah, like most sequels, Stargate actually was a child of economic necessity. After Defender hit, the company was so dum-founded that basically everyone at Williams just screwed around for a year, except the production staff. Larry and I had quit to form Vid Kidz, and management came to us desperate for a game. DeMar came up with the idea of a sequel game. We had four months to do it in. But, being young and idealistic and naive, we actually wanted to make it cool and innovative.

**JWC:** *Defender psychopaths could ruin quarter intakes by playing for hours and monopolizing the machine....did you guys target these players in development? I don't remember anyone claiming to have an all-day-long Stargate game.*

**EJ:** Right, by that time good Defender players could do about 72 hours on a quarter non-stop, so we knew we had to up the challenge level. So we tweaked the system code to double the capacity of enemies and explosions on screen, still maintaining a silky smooth 60hz frame rate. We added the Inviso button, the Stargate transporter, the warp effect and a whole bunch of new enemies and all new graphics. But we kept the story and the wave structure, dialing the action and effects up to 11.

**JWC:** *Why isn't it called Stargate on the update cds? Because of the Stargate movie with MacGyver or whatever?*

**EJ:** I'm not positive. I do know the company got sued by some lawyer and somehow lost the rights to the name Stargate. That's why it is now just called Defender II.

**JWC:** *What about Blaster? It was the least known of the Vid Kidz production games....why didn't it achieve success? As simple as 'the crash'?*

**EJ:** Blaster was an experiment in bringing Defender style action into a 3-D world. The game was a cult hit, but yeah, it was sucked into the black hole of the crash before anyone noticed it.

**JWC:** *It is rumored you have the only Blaster cockpit cabinet in existence...?*



# JARVIS DEMAR

in 2004

*Let the campaign begin...*

Eugene at the 1981 AMOA show, where Stargate was first unveiled. Courtesy Eugene Jarvis.

**EJ:** Yeah...well, there were three cockpits made. One is in my dad's basement, one went into a crusher, and one was reportedly seen in Iowa somewhere.

**JWC:** *What about the duramold? Who designed that?*

**EJ:** The duramold cabinet was designed by Jerry Hendrix, the lead mechanical guy at the time. It was a single piece of rotationally molded plastic cabinet, and it resulted in tremendous cost savings.

**JWC:** *Why was it then never heard from again after Bubbles and Blaster?*

**EJ:** Well, the problem was that the plastic was not dimensionally stable and would tend to shrink over time. So it was hard to fit the coin doors or monitors in without cramming them in with tremen-

dous pressure. During the rush of production, bolts and nuts were sometimes omitted. There was once a freak accident in an arcade, where such a monitor, improperly secured was ejected from the duramold and blown across the room by the pressure buildup. Thankfully, only the Tempest game across from it was destroyed.

**JWC:** *Oh, a Tempest? [laughter] I hear ya... What games were left in development and only prototyped around that time? I know there was some baseball game that you guys did...*

**EJ:** Hmm, there were a lot of games that were lost during the crash. Play Ball was the baseball game. And also a John Newcomer shooting game called Turkey Shoot, which used a fan to blow real turkey feathers, saw very limited production. And some others...



JWC pulling a Blaster duramold from a warehouse earlier this year.



**JWC:** OK, let's move on to NARC... 'Just say NO' was being pounded into the skulls of all youths in America at this time....was this the major influence to the game's theme?

**EJ:** Narc was a really fun project. Yeah, the whole anti-drug thing was going in full swing and I wanted to do a game about drugs, because everybody was fascinated with it. But also, I had some people very close to me that had gotten their lives screwed up by drugs, and I wanted to make a statement. Being Max Force the vigilante cop made it all work. You could collect a drug stash as evidence, bust bad guys or, better yet, blow them to bits with a rocket launcher. The game's motto was "Say No or Die!" I had a lot of fun working with legends such as Newcomer and Jack Haeger as art director.

**JWC:** I remember hearing about its hardware being somewhat revolutionary... what were the advancements that were made in hardware with the digitization and all?

**EJ:** The NARC hardware was probably the most complicated 2-D board ever, having a total of 72 ROM chips. The hardware system was designed by Mark Loffredo and was the first to use color digitized live action animation. All characters were filmed and motion captured from real actors. It was probably the most powerful 2-D hardware ever created, and this same system went on to fame in the Mortal Kombat series, and the megahit NBA Jam.

**JWC:** More recently...Cruis'n USA and World were huge successes. What was the goal when you guys set out to create it? Along with Daytona USA, it really upped the standard that all future driving games now have to meet...

**EJ:** The Cruis'n series introduced the realistic 3-D driving game genre in 1994. Cruis'n USA and Cruis'n World created the biggest selling driving series in arcade history...over 50,000 machines sold. The key to the games success is the very tight and realistic driving feel, the tracks based on the digitized 3-D modeling of real-world scenes and real cars, (not computer generated), and the exciting dynamic of oncoming traffic. The traffic AI creates ever changing and exciting play. The inspiration for the Cruis'n series was to create a car that was actually fun to drive, just like most real automobiles. When you turn the wheel left the car turns left, instead of going into an uncontrollable skid as in most so-called driving simulators. The challenge is not to master a balky, awkward vehicle with bad controls, but to match wits against race competitors both human and AI. We added some great crash effects, and a spectacular sound track by Vince Pontarelli.

**JWC:** What about this newest Cruis'n sequel, Exotica...what kind of advancements did you guys look to make with it?

**EJ:** Cruis'n Exotica takes the game to the next level. Using the proprietary Zeus 2 hardware system, which has over twice the power of the PS2, Exotica displays a level of realism never seen before. Locations like neon drenched Hong Kong at night, the glitz of Vegas, Alaska, Atlantis, Tibet, the Amazon jungle, and more. 3-D animations of blue whales, elephants, Great White sharks, dinosaurs, and a drive down the runway of the Hong Kong airport, are mindblowing. Options include choice of car, drivers, paint jobs, and so on.



Cruis'n Exotica: Who says you can't drive 'round the world?

**JWC:** Let's talk about classic updates, since there have been quite a few based on your creations. In general, what's your opinion of them?

**EJ:** Well, classic sequels are always a problematic area. And generally in the end they are lousy games, although they may be commercial successes. The best sequels tend to be those done by the original artists, soon after the initial hit. These games share the same artistic vision and better capture the spirit of the game. When there is a large time and creative gap the results are very spotty. And then there are those games that were so perfect in their initial form such as PacMan, Tetris, Robotron, Defender, Space Invaders, and so on, that it is really hard just to make something as good as the original. The truly great games have a simplicity of format, yet allow a complexity and richness of play that is incredible. Anyone for a chess sequel?

**JWC:** Do they bother you at all when they are designing them? Do you have any input?

**EJ:** Not really. With the exception of Stargate and Smash TV, I've preferred the distinction of uninvolved. My philosophy is either you have creative control or you don't. If you don't, then don't waste your time.

**JWC:** Before I bring up this painful subject, let me first say, "God bless the Yak." I really love his work, and Tempest 2000 will always be one of the greatest games in existence. But I really, really had issues with Defender 2000. What did you think of it?

**EJ:** Minter is a wacko genius...and sometimes he goes off the deep-end, as in the case of D2K.

**JWC:** What do you think its main problem was? I loved the music, and the special effects, but I thought the ship was simply too big and bulky...

**EJ:** Certainly one problem, and also that it was just...just insanely difficult.



The original Cruis'n USA team!



From left to right : Eric Pribyl, John Watson, Xion Cooper, Ted Barber (rear), Carl Mey and Eugene Jarvis.

**JWC:** Any ideas for dusting it off yourself? Now is the time...every 80's update of a classic seems to be selling big...

**EJ:** Hmm...well, I've thought of going back and revisiting some of these classics, but I've just got too many cool new ideas to jump at first.

**JWC:** OK, I know you're busy so...well, in the spirit of "cool new ideas" I guess I'll wrap it up with an obligatory question: 'where do you see the future of video games going?'

**EJ:** Well, the video game field is just blowing wide open these days with advances in graphics and Web communications. This is spawning a new generation of hollywood games with big budget graphics; at the same time introducing the social dynamic of Internet play. An entire artificial reality playground has been born, where players can live multiple fantasy lives online. At the same time traditional single player games are more ubiquitous then ever with a massive proliferation of console and hand-held game boy like devices. The Web is introducing new paradigms like advertiser supported play and so on. Genres have multiplied like rabbits: action, simulation, RPG, real time strategy, god games, sports, platform, first person shooters, and more. It seems every possible game has already been done. But of course thats nonsense. This supernova of creativity has created a battle royal for mindshare, for the attention of the player, providing more choices, more entertainment than ever before. Game designers are peddling spiritual dope, hoping to hook the masses before the next great thing comes along. Its a great time to be a gamer.

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*Cruis'n*  
**EXOTICA**

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# REMAIN SILENT...



Greetings, fair gamers. You made it once again, I see. Well, you're in for a treat. I must say, this issue rocks like an ox. Yes, that's my new saying. No, I didn't invent it, but I do feel like I'm in on its first wave of popularity. I had to have something to steer me away from "sucks ass" because I was saying that far too much, and I think it has gone out of style already, actually. And I definitely don't want to be like those poor bastards who were walking around in 1992 saying "NOT!" The cool thing is that you can do little additions to the "Rocks like an ox" saying, depending on *how much* something rocks. "Rocks like an ox in a box" or "Rocks like an ox in a box of rocks" are examples. And if you want to get completely out of hand, you can say "JWC rocks like an ox in a box of *Pop Rocks*." Then people will know you are totally hardcore.

So, here we are. Are we still eclectic and hardcore? Of course, Fredo. *"I'm smart! Not like people say! And I want respect!"* Settle down. It's now time for *Syzygy*...we can give you some great video game features and still handle the Mickey Mouse nightclubs! We're eclectic like that.

Robotron: 2084. It is possibly, pound-for-pound, the greatest video game of all time. It's a shame that few can play it with the controls as they were meant. It's a completely different game on a keyboard or gamepad. You owe it to yourself to play the real thing...just once in your life. Defender, Blaster, Stargate, Cruis'n....in the pages ahead JWC discusses them all with their creator, and little-known beneficiary of the butterfly ballot, Eugene Jarvis.

Playstation 2. What a bunch of hype. And we all knew it would be, but we didn't know it would be *all* hype. They still haven't released a "killer app" for it. Just a bunch of PSX sequels that are graphically enhanced. And maybe one or two, like SSX, which one could argue to be worth \$50. I was *more than fair* with my reviews later in the issue. They had better do something quick. Because the clock is ticking. If they don't have a dominant user base by the time X-Box and Gamecube hit, then it's adios.

Nuon. I bought one. I was supposed to review the games this issue, but I was unable to get any games from the company (a company that is very uncooperative with the video game press...and we all know why). The games I ordered still hadn't come in at press time. As a matter of fact, I checked the mail just this morning, one last shot at reviewing them. Oh well, next month maybe. Still very excited about Tempest 3000. We'll see how it pans out. The demos of Tempest 3000 and Freefall were very promising. They look to be really the only two Nuon games worthy of attenti on anytime soon. Amaze possibly being another.

CA Extreme was held recently in ....uh...California, showcasing some uncanny video game rarities, including the military version of Atari Battlezone, called the "Bradley Trainer." Not one month after I finish an interview with Ed Rotberg, discussing the military version of Battlezone, and the Bradley Trainer is uncovered, one of only two that were ever made, and this particular one was thought to have been destroyed! And so included in the pages ahead is quite an elite pictorial for your viewing pleasure. *JWC naked on a bearskin rug?* Oh, no. That's next issue. Later in *this* issue, you'll find the Bradley Trainer itself, along with the promised interview with its creator. Enjoy!

OK, quickly running out of room, so let me get to the "editorial" part. The state of video games is a bizarre scene right now. There are so many systems, so many software companies, so many (ahem) magazines. It seems like the motors are running above capacity. The oil change is long overdue. The markets are stretched. Yet, we pull them again and again, each time finding a new threshold. Classic gamers all remember **the crash**, which literally seemed to come out of nowhere and take video games from us like a thief in the night. Some of them are whispering of a repeat, but I think not. The crash was just inexperience, and a result of many companies dropping the "fad" when it took a dip. The industry is far too entrenched now to let such a thing happen. It's so big, it could take a catastrophic "crash" and call it a "recession." That said, it seems like some companies are taking advantage of this. Pumping out rotten game after rotten game, with no incentive for ingenuity, because the market is so large that sales from a mediocre game can still be profitable. No motivation. Genres are getting flooded. The cart genre. The FPS genre. The new Xtreme sports genre. It seems like marketing is playing a far bigger role in the development of games than creativity is. This is a problem I see growing. The monster has grown large. It is growing out of control. Dare I say, we need a mini-crash? We need a cleansing. We need to lose some of these fringe development companies who are laughing right along with us at their games. We are laughing because the games are so lame, and they are laughing because they got paid like a mofo for a pathetic game. We shouldn't be laughing. We should be going off. Let this be a warning. If I don't see a decidedly different trend by the next issue of *Syzygy*, then when you see this page next time, there are gonna be some brand-new shiny ones torn. And all you software companies reaping the benefits of crappy games, I will call out your name. And I will make you cry like a little girl. And you will shape up. Or else. -JWC



## Jet Grind Radio

Where is Leiberman when you need him? If he wanted to stop video games leading to real-world violence, then he should have been at work stopping the stateside release of *Jet Grind Radio*. Because after playing this game for about 15 minutes, you know what I wanted to do? Go outside, find the nearest hip-hop rollerblader and crack him over the head with my one-tailed Vision Gator skateboard.



The demon of rollerblading tried to get JWC, but it was repelled. When JWC thinks about rollerbladers his hands shake and long for a neck to squeeze the air out of. JWC doesn't go along with the Japanese "fun" phenomenon of pressing a button exactly when you are prompted to in order to accomplish something (Graffiti painting).

Now, that said, when the game gets down to brass tracks with its freedom to skate the city (Tokoyito or something), it has nice controls, nice visuals, and can be slightly fun for a second (yet, still inferior to *Tony Hawk* on any system). Then they start posing out and talking hip-hop and they lose me. If you are 12 years-old and own an *N'SYNC* album and think the kid on *The Real World* with spiked blonde hair is cool, then this is your game. The rest of us? Keep your blood pressure low and your assault and battery record clean. Stay away from *Jet Grind Radio*! **Rating: Hootie and the Blowfish "Hold my Hand"**

Developer/ Publisher: Sega

## Virtual Tennis

You know how you watch a tennis game on TV and play along with the player in your head? *Move there. Run back to this side before he can hit it there!* Well, with VT you are given a remarkably similar perspective and the ability to interact. It is, fair gamers, an absolute hoot n' hollar to play.



The best tennis game ever? I would say so, yes. I love *Mario Tennis*, too, but I keep running back to this one over and over again. I like the realism more, I suppose. It just has better replay value for me. The tournaments get insanely difficult, as do your opponents. It's the second best sports game released this year, behind *NFL2K1*.

Actually being able to refer to the tournaments by name would have been nice. There also should have been a better selection of Pros, but there's always (and certain to be) *Virtual Tennis 2*.

The controls are perfect. The gameplay break-down, with the training sessions between matches, is flawless. And the graphics look great (even if the Jim Courier does look a little like a zombie in his close-ups). I don't like the annoying player reactions, like punping their fists and what-not, but that isn't the fault of the game...that's just lame tennis players for you. What I love is when they show-out like that during a match (in real life) they usually lose the very next point. And then JWC laffs.

Anyways, if you are up for some fun, go buy this game...yesterday. Still one of the top 10 DC games to own. **Rating: Motorhead, "Ace of Spades"**

Developer/Publisher: Sega



# DREAMCAST REVIEWS

## Ultimate Fighting Championship

I have loved this No Holds Barred pay-per-view event nearly since its inception. You won't find the old Royce Gracie's or Ken Shamrock's in here, but you will find some of the best fighters of the past few years.



The Huntington Beach Bad Boy, who everyone used to love to hate and now loves to love, greets you with his ugly mug on the cover as soon as you pick up the case. I have two words for Tito Ortiz: *Frank Shamrock*.

"But how's the game, JWC?" Stunning! Friend vs. Friend, it's maybe the best yet, but against the computer AI, it can be very frustrating. It is one of the most unique fighting games since *SF2* first came out. It adds "submission" and "anything goes" elements, and all of the other tactics that are actually employed in all the Mixed Martial Arts events like *UFC*. (*Pride* is the other big one).

If you are a fan of 2D fighters, you may or may not like this one. It takes a lot of practice to learn the moves, and the camera definitely takes some getting used to. Fans of the latest wrestling games will surely like this one when having a video game party, but as for playing it by yourself on a rainy day? Very challenging, and not easy to jump right into. Nothing beats these actual PPV events, however, and I am guessing a lot more people will get into *UFC* and *Pride*, now, after being exposed to this game. Both events make Heavyweight Boxing look about as exciting as a shuffleboard match. It's the evolution of fighting. Boxing is now officially obsolete. **Rating: The Beatles, "Revolution"**

Developer/Publisher: Crave Entertainment

## NFL 2K1

I will always love the original *Tecmo Super Bowl* on the SNES better than any man-made football game. I just had too much fun with it and the old players (Bo Jackson, Mark Duper, Mark Clayton, etc.). But if there was ever a game that had a chance of dethroning it, this is it. It's above and beyond any other football game on the market right now. Yes, even *Madden*. The ability to call plays secretly on your VMU is one of the most brilliant revolutions to multiplayer video game football.



Fans of *2K* are cheering because you can actually *gain yardage* with a *running play* now, and the AI doesn't cheat like a married politician anymore. Every element of the phenomenal *2K* version is here, only better. And, oh yeah, it's **MULTIPLAYER!** Sega.Net offers players the ability to play each other over a modem connection (no broadband just yet) that is remarkably smooth. There must be some outstanding network code for this game, because when I saw what it was going to look like, and heard it was going to be played over a 56K connection, I thought one thing: **LAG!** But it isn't bad at all. Sega.Net rates the PING so you can choose other players with optimal connections, and then go wild. About 4 times, when I played over the net, there was a hitch, and each time only for about 2 seconds. That's about 10 seconds of error in a 30 minute game. Not bad at all! You will be pleasantly surprised, all you cable modem freaks. Don't let the 56K scare you off.

I still wish a good side-view football game could be made, with this type of multiplayer support, playability and graphics. But until then, this is the best one out there. **Rating: Van Halen, "Runnin' with the Devil"**

Developer: Visual Concepts Publisher: Sega



## Sega Marine Fishing

You can only do so much with a fishing game.

And this one does about as much as you can hope for. The fishing controller is great fun and the only way to get the most out of this game. Each fish acts differently and requires slightly different methods to land. However, it's still pretty darn easy to land any of the fish. They could have made it harder. Much harder. And that would have made it better.

The scenery is amazing. The details of all the fish are done nearly to perfection. Certainly as good as has been done thus far in the genre. But a video game still comes down to interaction and skill. And the difficulty ramp is just non-existent. Even with the setting on "very hard," it's still not challenging enough. There should be a "drag" switch that you have to twist while you are reeling (which is what you have to do when you really fish).

You know what I want out of a fishing game next time? *The Old Man and the Sea*. I want to hook a fish and it take me the better part of the day to land it...in real time. That would be hardcore. That would make a spectacular grand finale to the game. Sega, make it so.

**Rating:** Linda Ronstadt "It's So Easy."

Developer/ Publisher: Sega



## KISS: Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child

The game plays about as good as the band: like crap. I love FPS's but this one is lame.

Visually it pretty well rocks, and it, at times, is a DC showcase visually. But the enemy-boss level strategy is tired. The enemies and bosses are supposed to be really intimidating and scary...and they are, right up to the point where you engage them. Then you destroy them with ease. Nothing really fun or unique about it. Move back and forth and hit fire. They all die. The end.

I think the band itself is extremely overrated and a big media hyped turd. But the fact that they lend their name to this and never even really show up or make an appearance is just dorky. At least if they did this game would then have that sort of off-the-wall hardcore fell that the extreme movie they did had. You know, the one where they have super powers and shot beams from their hands. I forget the name of it. It's goofy but it sort of rocks. This game on the other hand is just plain goofy. And doesn't make the top 5 FPS's of this year (not even close). Forget buying it unless you are just totally hard up for a new FPS. **Rating:** KISS (any of their non-makeup songs except "Lick It Up.")

Developer: Tremor Publisher: Gathering of Developers



# DREAMCAST REVIEWS

## NBA 2K1

As with NFL2K1, nice improvements are made on the 2K version. But with NBA 2K1 it's a case of making a good game very good (not a great game into a phenomenal one, like NFL 2K1).

Basketball just doesn't lend itself into great video game competition like football does. This version does offer online play and better AI over the 2K version (once again, just like NFL 2K1). But there aren't all the guessing your opponents gameplan aspects in this one...you just go for the hoop. If someone is open, you pass it to him. Then he goes for the hoop. It's alot like UFC in that it totally relies on 2-player head-to-head for it's fun factor. Playing against the computer is still lame, even with the AI's skill level significantly raised and its going-for-the-fake lameness is decreased significantly.

One thing is for sure. Sega has really raised the bar with its sports games releases, and this one doesn't disappoint. If it can make some magic out of a baseball game, then I will bow down and pray to the god of Sega and Visual Concepts, offering sacrifices and vector flybacks and Ms. Pac daughter boards as a testimony of my faith.

**Rating:** AC/DC "Big Balls"

Developer/ Publisher: Sega



## Star Wars: Demolition

Ugh. When are they going to make an elite Star Wars game again? There have been 3 good Star Wars consumer video games: Star Wars, The Arcade Game (Atari 2600), TIE Fighter (PC), and SOTE (N64). [Yeah, I know most people didn't like SOTE, but I did. Ptooeey on you!] And so, after playing Demolition, my assesment remains the same. Still looking for the 4th really good Star Wars game.

You do forgive a little more, because it's the Star Wars universe that we all grew up in love with, but the handling of Boba Fett is totally unforgivable. He is approximately 10x normal Boba Fett proportions in one battle scene. WTF? Get with it, you quality control play-testing, sweaty-handed dorks. That can't be allowed to happen.

The game is just bland. It takes forever to kill someone, and not that this killing is even challenging throughout, it takes on the air of doing reps in the weight room, i.e. "Am I done yet?"). It's got all sorts of other problems, but after *The Phantom Menace* movie, I don't want to kick Lucas so much while he's down. So, I'll leave it there. **Rating:** Pearl Jam "Jeremy"

Developer: Activision Publisher: Lucas Arts





# PS2 reviews: The most over-hyped video game product of all time?



JWC gives his unbridled opinion on the launch games...um...if you developed a PS2 launch game, you might not want to read...

## Madden NFL 2001

Pub/Dev: EA



No, I don't know what IGN.com is smoking when they rate this "the greatest football game of all time." Stop smooching, posers. This is a nice game, but it isn't as good as NFL2K1. Sorry. Multiplayer lackings exist (Sega.Net and secret VMU play-calling), and it doesn't control as smoothly as NFL2K1 during gameplay. Beats it in commentary, but not much else. This is the best football game you can buy, but only if you don't own a Dreamcast.

OK, if you want to crow about one PS2 launch title, this is the one. And if you only have the funds to buy one, then this is it. The best snowboarding game I've seen. Stunning visuals, superfast gameplay, and all kinds of shortcuts and tricks. This is really a "racing" game, not a skiing/snowboarding type of game. It has a style all its own. You just have to trust JWC and play it. He is tough to impress, and he was deeply impressed by this relatively un-hyped title.

## SSX

Pub/Dev: EA



Those of you who know JWC know he doesn't like these slow RPG's. This one is pretty bland. I snored when I played it. But, then again, I snored on the rare occasions that I was tricked into playing the lame *Final Fantasy* series. I will say that the visuals aren't as impressive as the *FF* games and that there seems to be something missing, because, after all, this is a game played on the "emotional engine" right? JWC yawns. This could have been an N64 expansion pack game.

## Eternal Ring

Pub: Agetec

Dev: From Software



Sony should be embarrassed for trying to sell this thing for \$50. Give JWC a break. It looks nice, but I have something called a Virtual Light Machine built into 2 game machines I already own. Don't try to con JWC into buying something that's going to attempt to "wow" him with purty colors. They try to pawn it off as a "puzzle" game, but that's trying to call a pizza a potato. There's no real challenge, and no real fun. "It shore is purty, though, JWC." Blah.

## FantaVision

Pub/Dev: SCEA



## Ridge Racer V

Pub/Dev: Namco



This is, again, a case of "nothing new." A lame *Ridge Racer* sequel, because there's nothing that really separates this from the others in the series. It has graphics that will make Dreamcast owners point and giggle. Rough edges and ugly chics. It does have nice handling and is a worthy racer, but if you have a PSX *RR*, then that's that. Save your \$\$ and wait for *Gran Turismo 3*.

Not the game that *SSX* is, not that it's that much worse, but that much different. It's a beautiful looking game, but controls take some getting used to. It isn't the raw-adrenaline-rush-speed-fest that *SSX* is. It is more realistic, yet I wasn't immersed. But then again, I went right back to playing *SSX* as soon as I saw this wasn't going to be as good. Hehe. Not worth \$50 to JWC, but you might like it. Nice rental.

## ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding

Publisher: Konami

Developer: KCE Osaka



## Summoner

Publisher: THQ

Developer: Volition



Blah. This is worse than *Eternal Ring*. So, I think you get the idear. This is a pain in the bum to get into and really play. I understand everything can't be too Simple Simon, but c'mon. This game is annoying and makes my head hurt. It does the little mini-movie thing that so many of these RPG's are so proud of and yet puts JWC to sleep faster than watching a Meg Ryan film festival on tryptophan. Big pooh.

Hmm. I really liked this game when I first popped it in. And I really wanted to love it, but couldn't do it. It's a beautiful game, and I did have some fun with it. But during the battles, you engage one guy that you picked out? Weird. And doesn't affect anything more than defeating the next guy, usually. Awesome visuals, but it's a good idea that could have been better. Maybe *DW3*?

## Dynasty Warriors 2

Pub/Dev: Koei





## Unreal Tournament

Publisher: Infogrames

Developer: Epic Games



Lame. UT is an online, multiplayer game, and the PS2 version doesn't offer that. The End. Go away. OK, no it isn't a bad port. It looks great. But you can only play against bots or that disgusting thing known as "split-screen" AGH! Sucks. They have omitted a couple of phrases ("Die, bitch!") for the sake of the kiddies, but most the gore remains. Yeah, makes sense to me. (Yawn). Get back to JWC when you have made a real console version of this game. Cause this one is a joke to me.

## Smuggler's Run

Publisher: Rockstar

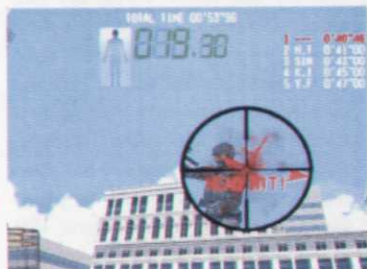
Developer: Angel Studios



This game is OK. But I wanted more speed. I wanted more control over my vehicle. You don't have the control that the AI vehicles have. It's annoying. It is a neat concept, but it didn't draw me in. Also, and I never thought I'd say this, but it needs more story. What does the drug-lord look like whose contraband I snagged? Why am I intercepting it? What's my motivation? Usually when this is omitted, it doesn't matter, but I wanted to know. A so-so game, at best.

## Silent Scope

Pub/Dev: Konami



This game has been rendered obsolete by every FPS now implementing "sniping" into its gameplay. It's still a fun game to play. It's always fun to see where you can drill someone, and what happens differently with each shot. But give me "Facing Worlds" any day of the week over this game. The arcade version is awesome because of the actual scope you look through. Playing with a controller blows.

Hmm. It was actually kind of fun. The best way to play golf games is with a trackball, as with the infamous Golden Tee arcade games, but this was still fun. There is the conflict of realistic backgrounds and environments and the kooky cartoon look of the players, but it's still kind of fun. Is it worth \$50? Not to me. I rented it, had a couple hours of fun with it and was done. But if you aren't bent on trackball control it might just draw you in. Check it out.

## Swing Away Golf

Pub/Dev: EA



## X-Squad

Pub/Dev: EA



No. No, no, no. It doesn't work. Go home. It's so bland style-wise, and your squad is a group of retards...err, retardly-challenged, I mean. The same could be said for the level-designers and quality control testers at EA, simply for letting this game come out like this. The game is easy to pick-up. That's about the only nice thing I can say about it, sadly.

## NASCAR 2001

Pub/Dev: EA



Love it! I know driving game purists don't like this one, but it is what it claims. It's NASCAR to the bone! Finally the world's most famous speedway is represented (Daytona)...and the realism is just plain awesome. Your car gets damaged, it affects its performance, its handling, etc. Love it. The most elite racer so far on the system. I'm a mild NASCAR fan, though, remember.

## Gun Griffon Blaze

Publisher: Working Designs

Developer: Game Arts



I would say only buy this game if you are addicted to the "Iron Soldier" genre. Anybody remember that one? And also Krazy Ivan on the PSX. Well, that's basically what you have here, with graphical enhancement and some tinkering. It's so-so. Nothing to yell about. But nothing JWC can really rip on either (shucks).

This is far better than Gun Griffon. It looks much nicer, anyway, and it has far better control right off the bat. Some elite detailing in this game, like when you see replays of explosions. These games always frustrate me though, because of the slowness and bulkiness of the robot. I have been playing too much UT, I think. I just can't tolerate the slowness... you turn around so slow, you can go have a bite to eat and come back just in time to see what's behind you. Ugh.

## Armored Core 2

Publisher: Agetec

Developer: From Software





# The Cube unveiled...

Nintendo finally releases glimpses of their new system. This is always an event. But one thing about it which nobody is talking about is that, excluding handhelds, this is the end of "the cartridge" as we know it. That is really sad, when you think about it. Those of you who started like a lot of us did, by plugging cartridges into your Atari 2600, know what I mean. Certain things tell your age. It seems ever since I was a kid, Dan Marino has been the QB of

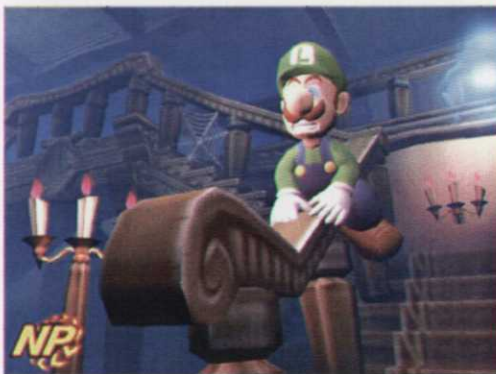


**WHO CARES  
WHAT  
IT LOOKS  
LIKE?**

the Dolphins, when you wanted a candy bar you bought a Clark bar, and if you wanted to play a video game on your TV, then you plugged in a cartridge. Great, now I really feel old.

That's really what people should be talking about. Not what the system looks like. Not how they copied the Macs. But that we just lost cartridges. You know how in Apollo 13 Tom Hanks says, "We just lost the moon." Well, that's like what I said when they unveiled those small, weird-looking cds. "We just lost cartridges." I know it's a technological necessity, but I want to blow the dust out of them before I play them. I want to reposition them just right, so they work. I want to not have to worry about my games getting scratches. I tolerated PSX and DC cds, because I had my N64 sitting right beside them. And yes, maybe I am going a little overboard. But I digress. And, alas, I must move on. Fairwell cartridges. We will miss you.

NINTENDO  
GAMECUBE



## Majora's Mask



I'm not gonna say anything about this game...other than, if you liked the Ocarina, then you'll love this one. I have only played it the first day I got it for about an hour and I loved it. I am looking forward to finishing writing this mag so I can pick it up again! It's one of those games that makes your stomach hurt its so good. Am I making this up? No way, Fredo. JWC gets emotional with some of these really good games. I had a tear in my eye when I finally finished the Ocarina. And the legend lives on!





# Sickness and Hardcoreness



Need to exorcise a Jet Grind Radio demon from a friend? Purple stones and holy water are useless. You'll need one of these.



Good ol' vanity plates. This one is particularly hardcore because BattleSphere was released for the Jaguar only this year...4 years after Atari dropped the system. It belongs to proud Jag fanatic Randy Femrite.



Do you play online games with one finger on the F9 key...just in case something cool happens? Well, [MI]DividebyZero does. He took this shot of Syzygy's own cartoonist's "Godlike" reign.



Do classic video games get your chic turned on? Oh... then... um. Nevermind.



You aren't a true Castlevania fan unless you have this game. And no, copies don't count.



Let's see. A Jaguar banner. Someone playing Reactor in a high score contest. It doesn't get much more hardcore and sick than that. I give you Classic Gaming Expo 2000, the debut of Syzygy Magazine! Better see more of you there next year if you want to be un-pose.



# Some Current Rags...

In this case, 'PC' = Posing Codknockers

I'm quite certain you aren't supposed to do this, but since when did Syzygy shy away from the taboo? JWC is now going to talk about other video game magazines. I know the professional approach in these situations is to pretend that you don't know other magazines exist. Oh, some might vaguely refer to a competitor's zine or allude to their existence in passing from time to time! Well, how's this for alluding? JWC, as it turns out, isn't all that professional...and he hopes the rags mentioned have a sense of humor...and a pen ready... to take notes...

PC Gamer: (58% ads) Seeing this cover inspired this whole piece. (I figured I couldn't just rip on one mag, so I pick on a couple others below, in a generic sort of way). OK, this PC Gamer has just way too much posing on the cover, and I don't care if they do mean it to be tongue-n-cheek...which I'm still not sure if they do...which makes it kind of a lame attempt at tongue-n-cheek. I think they believe they are that cool, sadly. Cliff Bleszinski, who is that cool and is pictured far right, led the Unreal Tournament design team, so basically he can pose all he wants. He could pose in a your mom's lingerie and I say, "You will like it." The two guys to the left, however, look like they got their faced bashed with a shovel and got lost at an Everclear concert, and they are agonizingly boring with their comments (which may or may not be their fault or the editors). The chic is named Stevie, so, right there, you know there're some issues, not too mention the gratuitous 'Please look at my chest!' boob action (But JWC, how can boob action be gratuitous? Good point, it can't). I don't know. I'm all for giving creators credit. For example, I want at least one creator interview in every issue of Syzygy. But let's not get too full of ourselves. And please refrain from all the complain-bragging. One of the shovel-faces says something to the effect of "I had to get my number unlisted because people called me all the time" (in other words: "Yay! People actually know who I am!"). And the one guy in the whole feature who seemed cool and went off fairly hardcore was Ken Levine. Why not let him on the cover? Or the C&C dude? The most revealing of all is that just because someone makes a cool game (or not so cool, in the case of a few) doesn't mean they are very interesting, and this feature put me to sleep. If they weren't complain-bragging, then they were pontificating and giving their wordy MTV philosophy of why people like games. Hello? People only like it when JWC does that. Everyone else is lame when they try it. So just chill. Incidentally, taken all around, it's not a bad magazine. I like Incite better for PC gaming, but PC Gamer is tolerable. Just take it easy with the pose. If you'll flip to the first page in his interview in this issue of Syzygy, Uncle Eugene will show you how to pose elitely.



Electronics Gaming Monthly: (61% ads) OK, this magazine has its ups and downs. It gets alot of hardcore gamers bashing on it for being so sickeningly "corporate" at times, and then out of nowhere they will pull off a cool feature that, begrudgingly, JWC must give props to. But my biggest problem is the bum-smooching. They absolutely love Sony and Squaresoft and a few others, and they get a way too happy about their product reviews sometimes (alot of times?). A game might get a phenomenal rating, be released, tank, and mysteriously disappear from their magazine or quick reviews at the end forevermore. It's like, wait a sec! This game got a phenomenal rating...then where's it at? Don't wee-wee on JWC and tell him its the weather, fellas. I can't abide the bum-smooching. The only place you'll ever see JWC bum-smooching is a Fast Food drive-thru. [Ever see people go through the drive-thru in front of you and start cracking wise? Do they realize they are about to eat boogers and urine? JWC does some serious bum-smooching there, in order to ensure uncontaminated food.] Other than that, you gotta shoot straight. Even if it means saying a game blows, or sucks, or could be better. They say "World Series 2K1 sucks" Ohhhh, watch out, you rebels you. Of course that game sucks. But say "Final Fantasy VII sucks" (which it does). Then you're actually saying something, instead of simply doing more advertising for your fav companies. But does EGM deserve all the criticism it gets on the Net and at campfire gatherings? Not all the time. But most times. And with the resources at their disposal, the raw media power they posses, this should be the most aggressive, new-bum-tearing mag out there. And it ranks last in that department, in my humble opinion. Testosterone, guys. You need a little more, says JWC. Please, get right on that. And when Sony or Squaresoft get ready to release anything, don't pucker up like a politician in a baby ward.

GameFan: (36% ads) I would like to take the "Anime" section and crush it into a big ball and roll it to the bottom of the Red River Valley. But apart from that, this is the best mag out there. Their reviews are usually right-on. They are personable and don't try and be witty with every sentence. Sometimes you have to leave the wittiness alone for 5 seconds (the guys at ESPN could take lessons from them). They do pose, but they do it elitely, as they're own comic book characters. Neat approach. I also like the "one subject per page" approach, which I try to use with Syzygy. EGM has far too many little sidebars and blurbs jutting out of every little crack and crevice. You can do that a little, but it is exhausting for the reader after a few pages. GameFan is smooth to read and has beautiful page artwork and layouts. There are usually 10 "Hocus Pocus" pages in the back which JWC can do without, but really all complaints are minor. Once again, it's the best all-around game mag out there. (Excluding Syzygy, OF COURSE). Hehe.

Next-Gen: (44% ads) Just because you guys went to Classic Gaming Expo 2000 (where Syzygy debuted, by the way) doesn't mean you are now Retro experts. Atari's coin-op Asteroids was most certainly not the first game to save high scores. Starfire, by Exidy, was the first. And speaking of CGE, what was up with that Daily Rader booth and all the rope jumping? Weak! They seem to think they're about 3 notches more elite than they are. And it's extra wide pages scream vanity, from where JWC is sitting. Leave the Retro-historical subjects to the masters here at Syzygy. And give that magazine a proper shape. It won't fit in normal note-books, in magazine racks, etc. Don't be fashionably wide to try and call attention to yourself. Bonus points for taking the time to make an appearance at CGE, but next year if you have a bunch of lame bastards jumping rope again, JWC is gonna corral a possee and turn a couple of those jump ropes into nooses. JWC wants to be a cowboy, too.





# Unreal Tournament

Unreal Tournament may very well be the best multiplayer game of all time. Although not nearly as ground breaking as Wolfenstein 3D, Doom, or the original Quake, it takes everything that made all of them fun and innovating....and made it better. Fans of FPS's have flocked to this game in droves since its release. The online dedicated servers for UT consistently number 1,000 at any given time. Compare this to 400 or less for Q3 Arena. The fans have spoken.

The map designs for UT are incredible, especially in Capture the Flag mode. Facing Worlds is an huge Asteroid with two bases facing each other, mirrored, like two Towers of Babel. Snipers perch atop the roof and attempt to nick you in your journey between bases. November and Niven Experimental have the option of going through water between bases or on land.

The weapons are modeled after the basic formula set forth by id, but with the addition of a second mode of fire for each weapon the bar has been raised. The rocket firing power is phenomenal, giving you the option to release as many as 5 at once, obliterating anything in your path! Built into each player's arsenal is also the unique Transporter, allowing players to throw the Transporter and teleport ahead to its location. You can also throw this transport device over another player and TeleFrag them. A sweet, clean killing device that is brilliant.

Assault, Domination, Last Man Standing are all additional variations included for online play. LMS is phenomenal, players each starting with a certain number of lives, and the last one with any lives left wins. As the players get eliminated a peanut gallery begins to form, and the eliminated players can follow the ones still playing and comment. "JWC is upstairs behind the pillars! Get him!" and so on. Beautiful.

Net stats are also built into most servers, recording everything you do down to the most excruciating, glorious detail. Don't believe me? Visit [ut.ngwordstats.com](http://ut.ngwordstats.com) and look up |sZ|JWC, ngUID:2485550 and see how many minutes I've played this week, and how many times I have blown myself up with the rocket launcher, something I am notorious for doing (But I always take a couple of the opposition with me!).

So, if you dare, I will see you on [unreal.cfl.rr.com](http://unreal.cfl.rr.com). And if you are a Sniper or a Camper, BEWARE. And if you take my Flag, I will be coming for you, and you will be giving it up. I used to be Madcap, but there were too many Madcaps. Then I was JWC. And someone on the [cfl.rr.com](http://cfl.rr.com) server got mad at me (I suspect a ^CNU^ clan member) and made a bunch of fake JWC names and killed themselves, trying to ruin my stats. Hehe. Put me in a LMS with your whole clan, and I'll outlast you all. ^CNU^ loser punkass hoers.

*Poll: Do you think this is a real "Chic Clan"?*

[www.geocities.com/unrealgirls](http://www.geocities.com/unrealgirls)



V



# Quake 3 <sup>Team?</sup> Arena



Well, fair gamers, it's time to play catch-up, something id has never had to do in its history, having been the creator of the FPS genre and the most innovative and leading force behind its progression...and let's not mix words, here...id just got beat like a red-headed stepchild at a family reunion. And now it's coming out with "Quake 3 Team Arena," virtually copying UT's built in multiplayer aspects by making its own derivatives...with a few changes.

The question I wanted to scream after comparing the original Quake 3 Arena with UT [see Charts] is this: "Why abandon the mod scene that was so successful with Quake 2 and release a Quake 3 Arena game which seems like an early beta release, with only part of the game features integrated?" Quake 3 has incredible network code. Flawless character design. A beautiful 3D engine. But a huge gaping hole exists where built-in multiplayer features should have been. Did id just get lazy? Get spoiled? Well, thank the Unreal team for keeping them honest and giving them a hearty kick in the bum, because Quake 3 Team Arena sounds like it is gonna rock the house down.

The Harvester game is what really makes me drool. Everytime you kill someone, their soul appears as a floating skull. You have to collect the souls (floating skulls) of the other team for points. Folks, that is gonna rock!

id is brilliant, and my personal opinion is they will fight tooth and nail to prevent Epic from stealing this genre from them. The fact that they are rushing out this "team" update says to JWC, "Yes, we (id) know we got stomped like little girls. We are trying to make up for it. Give us a break!"

We hear you, guys. Just don't let us down again!

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Map Design</b>             |          |
| <b>Character Design</b>       | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Weapons</b>                |          |
| <b>Multiplayer support</b>    |          |
| <b>Narrator</b>               | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Variation</b>              |          |
| <b>Multiplayer Experience</b> |          |
| <b>3D Engine</b>              | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Theme</b>                  |          |

## >The new Q3 Team Arena



## >The beautifully hollow, original Q3 Arena



# {SNR}Lieber

*The opponent of violent video games tries to double punch his way into office. Not very non-violent of him! The Elmer Fudd of politics' video game opposition is traced by a bipartisan committee to sour grapes from an inter-clan squabble. The truth revealed at last.\*\**

Joe Lieberman has been the most vocal and out-spoken in this campaign against violence in video games, one which may have begun with good intentions, but let's face it...it's just all around dorky. Kids will get their paws on a violent video game no matter what the rating. And actually, a game with a "Mature" rating is usually more alluring to an impressionable youth, causing him to fixate and dwell upon acquiring it, whereas without the hardcore rating, he may have overlooked it completely and bought Mr. Driller instead. Add to this the fact that Lieberman is a public servant, his salary and operating expenses paid for with taxpayer's money, and well, I'm envisioning far better uses of those resources than trying to pass Bills in the U.S. Senate which would make the ratings on game packages larger (or whatever it is now).

Yeah, you go, Joe! I hope all those kids who would have normally been inside eating cookies and milk and safely venting energy by playing the latest 3D shooter (not to mention utilizing problem solving techniques and analytical thinking) will now resign to delinquently roaming the streets of your neighborhood in boredom, throwing rocks at your Mercedes to get their kicks.

A very intelligent, observant individual once said "80% of all popular music deals with the subject of 'love,' so if as a culture we were so influenced by music, then we would all love each other."

A troubled, psychotic kid, one who will eventually bring a gun to school and plug Fred the guidance counsellor, is going to do that not because he wants to be like the Schwarznegger movie, or the guy in Quake, he's going to do it because he is a FREAKIN PSYCHOPATH. Period. Give the kid nothing to watch but The Sound of Music and no games to play except Pokemon, and Fred is still a dead man. And probably sooner, at that. I mean, if you sat me in a room with Pokemon games all day, I'd probably be on the grassy knoll with a sniper rifle, too.

Politics is politics. The nomination of Lieberman seems to have been be nothing more than a ploy for Democrats to appeal to some conservative voters. Kids love video games, and kids don't vote. And a greater percentage of the anal population which criticizes violent action movies rather than go and see

**\*\*I have to say for the humor impaired and not to ruffle too many Washington feathers, that the quotes above right are obviously a joke and not real. Well actually, in true Washinton form, I should say, "I can't confirm or deny the validity of those quotes...."**

**"Frankly, Joe's just mad because his Frag count was always anemic," Hatch testified before the committee. "He was a camper. I mean, he played like a wuss. We kicked him out of the clan, so now he doesn't want anyone to play. He has some photos of me with the maid, so I have to go along with him."**



**"Orin is being very typical," Lieberman said in response. "He's being untruthful. I may not have had the most flag captures, or Frags, but I was an integral part of the clan. I played good defense. I protected the flag carrier. I was shocked they would dismiss me. If Senator Hatch wants to talk about camping, maybe you should ask him about his hoarding of the rockets. But the bottom line is since the loss of '{SNR}Lieber' the clan's record has been dismal. So, you tell me. I'll let the stats speak for themselves. And if Orin would like to DM 1-on-1, I'm there."**

them (even though they would like nothing more than to go and see them) are the people who never, ever, ever miss a chance to vote. Politics, folks.

Young girls play house and dress up dolls. Young boys play at killing each other. Any questions? Those are the facts. Move on.

Jack Kemp once said "Politics is about finding out where people want to go, and getting them there."

Well, Jack, I want to pay \$1.00 per gallon for gasoline. Get me there. I would like video games to be tax-deductable. Get me there. I'd like my Senator to work for finding less ways for the Federal govt. to get involved in my life, not more. I'd like politicians to figure out better things to do with their time in office than to pander for votes and waste time arguing over ratings on video games. I want EGM to stop being posers and telling me a game is 38% completed and showing that lame, malnutrient-Leonard Lawrence picture of Andrew Pfister in their masthead, a guy that won't get laid before age 35\*. Get me there!

Also, I must say, I honestly may not be the right person to be commenting on this political debate, because I've been pretty burned out on politics ever since my 1996 campaign to become the world's first Global Dictator failed miserably.

*\*without paying for it*



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## this issue's **Hardcore Gamer:**

**Steve Wallace of Ft. Lauderdale, FL**

Each issue will feature a piece on a gamer that through his fanaticism, is viewed by his family, mates and acquaintances as strange, sick and in need of some sort of an intervention to prevent further squandering of time and resource on the useless video game addiction to which he has fallen prey. Evil Exidy found the first of our sick brethren in Ft. Lauderdale, FL... Enjoy!

### **Exidy: Steve, tell us about the first game you purchased?**

**SW:** My first real purchase was a Joust2, 1200 miles from home. I was a Joust addict as a kid so I got curious when I heard there was a Joust2 up for sale. I thought 1200 miles was a bit far for one game so I planned an extra stop along the way to make it worth while. I flew from Fort Lauderdale to Philadelphia where I was picked up by fellow collector Rob Rhodes. We hung out at Rob's place for a couple of hours before I started the long haul back to south Florida. The second stop didn't go quite as smooth. The next morning I was scheduled to pick up a Joust, Tempest, Defender, Robotron, and Asteroids Deluxe from Dave Vegro in North Carolina (we all know where this is going). I had already prepaid Dave for the games so it was supposed to be a simple deal. As it turns out I was stuck in a hotel for one and a half days waiting to Dave to re-emerge. When we finally met, the games were either half assembled or a bit rough. Dave felt bad so he introduced me to an operator in the area to make amends. Turns out the operator was not only a real nice guy but had several hundred classics in real nice shape stuffed into a warehouse nearby. My first week of collecting and I was already in the middle of my first warehouse raid. I was drooling the entire time I was there. Two hours later I was on my way back to Fort Lauderdale in a 15' Ryder truck filled to the rim with classics. So to answer your question, my first purchase was a Joust 2, Joust, Asteroids Deluxe, Satan's Hollow, Sinistar, Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jr., Kangaroo, Make Trax, Qbert, Space Duel, and Moon Patrol. Kind of dove right in.

### **What turned you onto collecting?**

I picked up a java programming project with one of the phone companies a few years back. This was to be my first java project so I figured I'd hit the Internet for some code samples. After a bit of searching I found a java version of Asteroids with full source code. One thing lead to another and I stumble across a news group full of arcade freaks. At the time I'm thinking these guys are nuts. They've got games in the living room, kitchen, bedrooms, every spare nook and cranny just to fit one more game. Funny how your perception changes in such a short period of time

### **How many machines do you own?**

Like most collectors, I went berzerk at first. I'm now down to a manageable twenty five to thirty, depending mostly on how much time I have to keep them working. Anything past that point and I can't fix them as fast as they go down. Power supplies are the big thing in my house. I can't go a month without losing a power supply. I think I've got bad mojo in the pipes.



### **Do you collect games because of thier gameplay, rarity, or..?**

A little of both. I love the trophy games (Warrior, Reactor, Joust2, Pooyan, etc.) for their rarity but they still have to be decent games since I don't have unlimited space. For the most part I stick to games I was into as a kid. I haven't figured out the whole psychology behind it but I think I'm buying the games that kicked my ass as a kid. Sad part is, I'm even worse now.

### **Which of the games you now own is your favorite?**

Rip Off or Armor Attack. I love how such a simple game can make you bust out in a sweat. Great cooperative play too. A real close third goes to Joust. One of the few games I can really slip into a zone on a regular basis. I liked Joust so much that one of my side projects for the last year has been building an internet playable version of the game. The plan is to host a small site where we can hook up and play some mean cut-throat Joust. It will be my little way of paying homage to one of the most original games of all times.

### **Why did you start collecting?**

I thought it would be cool to have one or two games to help ditch the stress of a work day. If only I knew...





### Why not just play games in a gameroom or arcade?

It's cool to have them all to yourself and friends. No smoke, only the tunes you like, and you don't have to worry about Dragon's Lair taking fifty bucks in quarters from you.

### Has there been a specific game that you have been looking for, that you cant find?

I've had all of my favorites at one time or another with only a few exceptions. I've been looking for a real nice Space Panic, Blue Print, and The Pit for probably two or three years with no luck. I've even put a \$1,000 bounty on their heads but to no avail. I think my next strategy will be to pick up a trophy game to use for trade bait.

### I hear that you are looking for a Pooyan, and chance on getting one anytime soon?

It's on the way from Canada, ehh. The dude I bought it from is hilarious to listen to, ehh. Straight out of the movie 'Strange Brew.' And of course I have to mention the ever evil yet ever connected, Jon "aka Indiana Jones" Exidy hooked me up in a big way. I'm finally getting that near mint FrontLine I've been looking for too, courtesy of my new Canadian connection.

\*If you can help this sick, strange collector find a Blue Print, Space Panic or The Pit, email him at [horizon@mediaone.net](mailto:horizon@mediaone.net).



Above: A pair of video game masterpieces bookend the first video game to insult and pick on you, and a lame Tempest-Galaxian rip-off (just kidding. Well, not really).

Below: As with most extreme arcade collectors, a storage unit is usually inevitable. Check out the sick, elite game right in the middle. None other than Pooyan. (And JWC wept).

Want to be in a Hardcore Gamer feature? Send us pics and descriptions of your way-out, extreme video game possessions.

# WANTED

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Humble and gracious almost to a fault, Ed would never say this, so I must. Battlezone's creation, given the explosion of the First Person Shooter genre, is one of the top 2 or 3 most important video game hurdles which will ever be...well, hurdled. Some credit Ed Logg's Xybots as being the great-grandfather of Doom, but Battlezone is no less important. It was the very first game where you could move around a 3-D world, without constraints, at your leisure, from a first-person point-of-view. After some consideration, I went ahead and left this interview basically unedited, and a straight dump off the tape (something I have never done before). Everyone who read the rough draft agreed it was smooth and flowed like wine, so here ya go. On his days at Atari, Bally-Sente, 3DO, and more. Ed Rotberg: Raw! Exposed! Hehe. Enjoy!



Above: Recently, sans mustache, at his California home. Courtesy Ed Rotberg.  
Below: Atari flyer from 1980,



**JWC:** Ok, Ed, starting off...what was your first, real video game experience...as early as you can remember?

**Ed Rotberg:** Let's see. It's one of two things...it depends if you're talking computer or...Well, I guess it's the same in either event. When I was in college, my senior year, I was taking an independent study course in computer graphics, and for my project, I wrote a Lunar Lander program. We had to do a project that used a light pen on a PDP-9 with a 339 CRT. And it was sort of a game, if you could land it. There were no points or anything, but it was fun to try and land. Now the interesting thing was that the teacher for the course was none other than Jim Blinn, so...

**JWC:** Ah, the Microsoft graphics guy?

**Ed:** Yeah, so that's historically interesting. And a short time thereafter, I played Pong in a bar in Chicago. And there you have it.

**JWC:** How did you get your start at Atari?

**Ed:** Well, I was working at G. D. Searle Pharmaceuticals, just outside of Chicago in a little town called Skokie. I was interfacing microcomputers to lab equipment at the time, and I was always screwing around, writing a mastermind game or something in my spare time...I would always play them on the computer. At this time I had a very good friend who was reading Infoworld, and she handed it to me and said "This looks like a job for you." It was a position at Atari, so I decided to apply for it.

**JWC:** About what time was this?

**Ed:** This was early or mid 1978.

**JWC:** What was your first game at Atari? Was it Battlezone?

**Ed:** No, that was my second game. My first game was called Atari Baseball.

**JWC:** Ah yes...

**Ed:** Yeah, there had been an Atari Football game, which was a big winner. And they wanted to use the same cabinet, and do the same form factor, and do a baseball game. So it was a 3 or 4 month project kind of thing, and it got my feet wet. And I got to learn the ropes a little bit.

**JWC:** Yeah, and doesn't it appear in some Michael Douglas movie?

**Ed:** Yes. It was in a Michael Douglas movie with, more importantly, Jill Clayburg. So, you know, I figured it was always nice to have Jill Clayburg rolling my balls.

**JWC:** [laughter]

**Ed:** Wha? No! My trak-balls! [laughter] Trak-balls!

**JWC:** [laughter] OK, now Battlezone. How long did this take? And how hard was it implementing the first 3D game?

**Ed:** No, no. It wasn't the first 3D game.

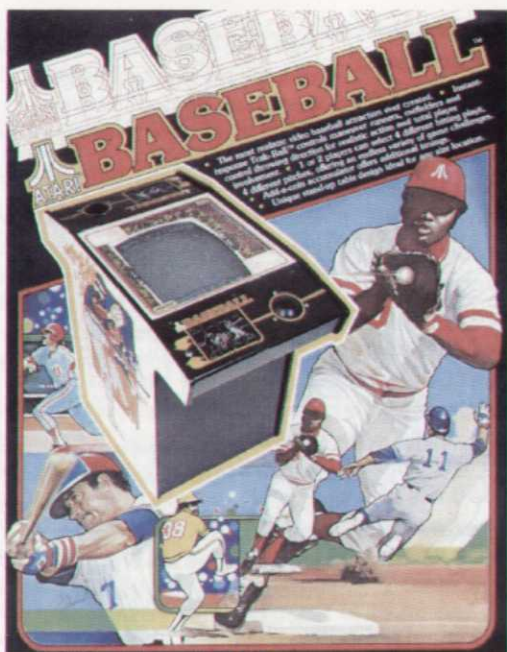
**JWC:** OK, well...the first true 3D environment, how about that?

**Ed:** Yeah, OK, I would say that is true. But Tim Skelly did a very interesting thing with a 3D game called Tailgunner around that time...

**JWC:** Ah, yeah...the starfield did move in that...

**Ed:** The starfield moved, and the vehicles, while they weren't true solid form models, were 3D in aspect. And he was very clever about minimizing the amount of vectors he had to draw. I was very impressed with that game. But how long did Battlezone take? Um...I'm guessing 9 months. It's been a long time. We did games a lot faster back then. A lot smaller. A lot less code to write.





**JWC:** Speaking of Tim, he tells a funny story about Battlezone...

**Ed:** A great guy.

**JWC:** Definitely...and way back when he was working on Armor Attack, management rushed in with the news that Atari was testing a tank game, which was Battlezone. And so they wouldn't let him finish Armor Attack until he found out what Atari's tank game was exactly. So he explains how he had to call all over the place, with this like hick accent, to finally find it, and since Battlezone and Armor Attack were completely different, he went ahead and finished Armor Attack...

**Ed:** [laughter] I didn't know about that...

**JWC:** I guess that leads to the question, how much attention did you guys pay to Cinematronics and their vectors?

**Ed:** A ton! We paid a lot of attention. Management would get the other games, the hot games for us to see. Our distributors would buy the Cinematronics games and send them to us. So, yeah, we paid a lot of attention.

**JWC:** Ok, and while we're in the middle of talking about Battlezone, what do you think of the new PC games Activision is putting out?

**Ed:** I've been very impressed. I thought they did a good job. They used the name. And that doesn't have a whole lot of relation to my game, but I'm not offended by that. That's done all over the place. It's easy to get all in a tizzy about something like that, but if it helps them better sell a good product, then more power to them. It's not like I'm lending my name to it or anything.

**JWC:** OK, and I did want to ask you about the name of Battlezone. I have seen the proto marquee with the name "Future Tank." What's the story behind settling on Battlezone as the title?

**Ed:** I remember us tossing around a whole bunch of names and I believe either Marketing or Morgan Hoff, the project leader on Battlezone, liked the name "Future Tank." I personally hated it. I honestly don't remember what the forces were that lead to the final name of Battlezone; however, in my estimation, it was clearly superior to Future Tank. I also recall that my personal suggestion

and favorite choice was Juggernaut, but I may have been a minority of one on that. Beyond that it was too many years and too many names ago and I'm afraid I suffer from CRS these days. [laughter].

**JWC:** OK, now what about Red Baron? Kind of a sibling to Battlezone...same cabinet, same hardware, and came out right after. Did you have anything to do with it?

**Ed:** Well, Red Baron was done by another guy, and we started at the same time. And he was real excited about getting stuff up on the screen real quick. And I was much slower to get stuff up on the screen—

**JWC:** What was his name? Do you remember?

**Ed:** Oh yeah, I know. But do we really have to go there? Cause you know...

**JWC:** [laughter] I see...

**Ed:** What I did was I took my time and worked out math routines, and more importantly I worked out the data structures, and how to organize the data, so that I could represent the objects and then process them in an efficient manner. I mean, video games up to then were, you know, just get them to work and slop together the code. Different people did them differently, and you could do them pretty sloppily and get away with it. But once you got into 3D, you'd run into a wall if you did it that way. And he ran into a wall. He had video up on his screen well before I did - I give him credit for that. But I got my game done before he did, and towards the end, he used some of the same techniques I used...because it was the right way to do it.

**JWC:** Since he is remaining anonymous, I'll go ahead and say it really wasn't all that fun...

**Ed:** Yeah, but it's also very hard to do a good flying game. For any number of reasons, one of which is ...well, most people just don't know how to fly.

**JWC:** OK, and I know you don't like the subject, but I have to ask about Army Battlezone...if not, the other fans wouldn't forgive me!

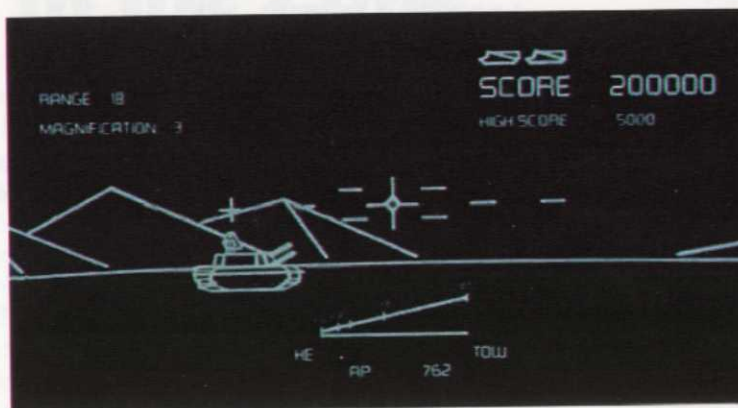
**Ed:** [sigh] Yeah. [laughter]

**JWC:** What stage did it get to? And did the Army ever use it?

**Ed:** I don't believe the Army ever manufactured it. What it was all about was...there was a guy named Rick Moncreif, who I've actually been working with recently. He's a good guy. He had this idea like, "We have Battlezone. We have this technology, and I bet the Army could use it." Well, I don't know if he had the idea so much as there was a group of retired Army generals who had formed this company, and they came to us and asked about the feasibility of doing it. And they talked to Rick, and he said "Sure we can do this....blah blah." And they were having a satellite conference with all of Army's training people, and asked Rick if we could do a prototype of the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle. And "Could you get it ready for the conference?" And Rick said "Sure we can!" Then he came to me and asked if we could get it done. And I said "Oh, my God..." *cont. next page.*







This screenshot of 'Army Battlzone' floated over the Web for years now, with a constant debate over its validity. When the Bradley Trainer was recently found, it proved this shot authentic at last! But...but...why isn't the volcano erupting?

there were a million different theories about what the bug was, but that you could get inside the volcano, and you'd be driving around inside the volcano...do you have any idea where that started?

**Ed:** Ah, we actually got a lot of mail concerning that. And we were rolling on the floor. And this was pretty much before Easter Eggs became a big thing. But there was nothing like that put into the game, and it was a rumor, you know? We heard them, too.

**JWC:** The most popular one I heard was the 'guided missile' theory, being if you could hit them right at the exact moment they first make contact with the ground, then you would be, like, warped inside the volcano. And then you'd be all hanging out inside the volcano and everything.

**Ed:** [laughter] Well, it could have been something like—and I can't confirm or deny this—but there may have been some bizarre bug, that if you did something just right, then the game would freak out and put you in a strange place and "Hey, I must be inside the volcano." [laughter]. I don't know. It was probably simply a rumor. I only know of one bug in the released version.

**JWC:** What was that?

**Ed:** When the game was left on for a long time, and played for a long time, every now and then it would put up a bizarre score in hex. And it didn't hurt the game at all. And we didn't find out until we had shipped them all. It was just that you would have a score up there that was... really weird [laughter].

**JWC:** [laughter] Right...

**Ed:** First of all, I said "I don't want to be working on Army stuff, I could have done that when I was at Texas Instruments." [laughter] You know, I'm a pacifist. I didn't want to get involved in this stuff. And he said "Well, we promised..." So I said, "Well, look. I'll make you a deal. If I do this, if I get this done on time, then I don't have to have anything to do with anything involving the government or the Army from here on out!" And they promised, promised, promised. So I lost 3 or 4 months of my life living there. My wife would see me only in the morning and the evenings. And I got the thing done. It was a prototype. It worked. It was reasonably bug-free. And the idea was that it would train the gunners about the weapons system and about identifying silhouettes of friendly versus enemy vehicles and that type of thing.

**JWC:** As far as the prototype cabinet... was it a cockpit style?

**Ed:** It was similar to a standard upright cabinet.

**JWC:** Oh, an upright...?

**Ed:** Yeah, it was an upright. And it had some interesting features. We did the simple code to do the 1x, 3x, 12x magnifiers and that was kind of cool. I wished I had put that in the original game, actually. And the weapons were definitely cool. We were using real trajectories ...as opposed to the gravity-less trajectories in the original. So...

**JWC:** What about where it's at now?

**Ed:** Well, it's interesting. Rick kept one of them. There were two of them and he said when he left Atari about 5 or 6 years ago, he just left it out by the dumpster. (see page 34)

**JWC:** Whoah. What?

**Ed:** [laughter] Yeah, I was kind of floored by that. Yeah, he says now he wishes he hadn't.

**JWC:** Actually I heard that Videotopia....I don't know if you know who they are...

**Ed:** I think I've heard of them...

**JWC:** They're traveling video game exhibit that goes around to science museums. And they said they secured rights to display...well the other one, since there were only two... but they said only the Army could transport it.

**Ed:** So the Army still has it, OK....

**JWC:** So yeah, I guess it's languishing in some Army base somewhere.

**Ed:** Well, there ya go. They deserve it. They own it. That's just fine with me. [laughter] They can have it.

**JWC:** OK, last Battlezone question...and everyone seems to have a similar memory...in every arcade when Battlezone was big, there was the rumor, and

Atari Collector Pins, circa 1982.



Battlezone on the cover of Atari's Coin Connection in October of 1980.



The reader screen displays the location of enemy tanks... "Bomber" is ready to appear on the screen... the player positions his tank, aims, fires and the enemy tanks are blown away! This is Battlezone!... over a year in development, the latest in Atari's line of ultra-realistic arcade video games. It's a battle of wit and skill between the player and computer-controlled enemy tanks and missiles. It's a new picture in a world beyond the stars. Battlezone is a truly new, one-player, fast-paced game, with the player in control of a...  
The player must maneuver his tank to dodge enemy tank fire, enemy missiles and missiles also appear to be shot down for added points.  
The game features Atari's exclusive quadra-scan™ display system, along with spectacular "3-D" moving graphics and exciting sound effects. The 3-D interface is played at special bonus levels. There are four operation-adjustable game times, four speed-adjustable bonus levels, and over ten thousand only options.  
VOLUME 4 NUMBER 10 © ATARI INC. 1980 OCTOBER 1980



**JWC:** OK, now...let's talk about *Fire Beast* at Atari. What kind of game was this?

**Ed:** Ok, there's a lot of things about *Fire Beast*. I didn't stay there to finish the game. I was working on the game with Peter Lipson, who's a great guy. First of all, I think it was the first game we tried to do entirely in Forth. I had come up with an algorithm - and I don't know if anybody ever came up with it before that, but I'm not going to claim I was the first. It was the worm algorithm. It was used in *Snake Pit*, when I was at Sente. By erasing the tail and writing a new head, you basically get a snake or a worm moving around on the screen. And by messing around and using some fun and weird hacks, you could make it hunt and seek at different speeds and intelligence rates. This game was originally supposed to be *Dragonriders of Pern*, and I begged them to sign the deal with Anne McCaffrey to use *Dragonriders of Pern* and model the game after the book. We had a thing in the game where you were flying around on a dragon and you could breath out flames and burn things up. But it never went into production. I didn't stay to finish it and they decided they didn't want to pay her the money to license the name, so they called it *Fire Beast*. It didn't do very well on test. I'm not saying my final version would have, but it didn't do very well so...

**JWC:** Well, you'll never know..

**Ed:** Yeah, by the same token, another game I was working on at the same time, a game I was project leading, was a game called "Warp Speed." Now, I will take no credit for this. Just an interesting point of fact

**JWC:** It became *Star Wars*, right?

**Ed:** It became *Star Wars*. I had spec'd the controller on it. And it was originally to be a split screen, two players fighting each other in first person kind of game.

**JWC:** Oh, really? I didn't know that.

**Ed:** Yeah, which would have been...just hellaciously difficult: two people fighting in 3D on half a screen. But that's where it was headed. Then they got the deal with Lucas after I left. They turned it into *Star Wars*, and they did a great job. Mike Hally, Greg Rivera, Norm Avellar. I was working with Greg and Norm, and then Mike took over and I think he did a fabulous job. My hat's off to him.

**JWC:** Everyone's is. One of the best video games of all time. Going back to *Fire Beast* for a sec, any source code or ROMs around for it?

**Ed:** Hmm. I'm not sure. Someone may have the prototype for that. Peter Lipson, maybe. I don't recall for sure. It had trak-ball controls, by the way.

**JWC:** Ok, now over to Sente. It seems before it got rolling big, the crash hit. How was it being involved there?

**Ed:** Well, a lot of things went on with Sente. If you go back to the beginning...Howard Delman, Roger Hector, and I left Atari to form our own company, Videia, and we went out and got a contract with Gottleib. Howard Rubin was there and we knew him from the Atari days. He gave us a contract to do a video game for them. We handed them a few ideas, one of which was *Snake Pit*, which they rejected. And another one was *Gridley*, which they chose. It fell in with the cutsie, Q\*Bert thing they were doing. Gridley did Ok on test. It didn't do great. It was a 3D perception problem thing. Just stamp-based hardware. A pseudo-3D thing. Pseudo scale them as you drew them. And visually a very cool game, but more difficult to

play than we would have hoped. Then Nolan Bushnell's non-compete ran out with Atari., and he made us an offer we couldn't refuse. He bought Videia and made it Sente, as a division of Pizza Time Theater. Oh, we also had some VCS games we were working on, but the crash happened and they never came out.

**JWC:** Still have any of them?

**Ed:** Nah, I don't. In fact, I just sold off two of my arcade games. We're getting ready to move, so I have to cut down here. I'm down to 3 arcade games now, so...

**JWC:** Which 3?

**Ed:** Atari Baseball, for sentimental reasons. Battlezone - obvious reasons. And a game called Shuuz that I did for Atari. It was a prototype that was in a bar-top unit and it's so small I figured I'd just keep it. It's just a great, great drinking game. It's a little horseshoe game. I've always liked that game and thought it was great.

**JWC:** OK, now what was the timeline like for going back to Atari after Sente?...it was then Atari Games...

**Ed:** Yes, they talked to me and wanted me back there. And I still knew most of the people there, and it was still one of the best groups of people I had ever worked with. I began work on *Blasteroids* at that point. That was the first game I did there, and once again that was with Peter Lipson and Mike Hally. A good group. And Dan van Eldren, who was largely in charge at that point, said he wanted to do a retrospective on *Asteroids*. So we talked about it, and I had had this idea that I wanted to push, which was a rock-paper-scissors kind of game. It had that element to it, and it was a different game entirely. And we ended up working that in a little bit with the 3 ship styles you could choose from. You know, "What do I do? What is the best thing to do at this point?" And we got into doing digitizing, aside from the *Journey* game where they digitized the heads of the *Journey* guys, this was one of the first game that used digitized models. We had digitized models built of the ships, by Bill George of Lucas Films modeling group. And we came up with the models for the asteroids by going out and buying lava rocks and painting them. You know, that kind of stuff. So that was a cool thing we did. And it wasn't a huge game, but it did OK and was profitable.

**JWC:** Was *Stun Runner* next?

**Ed:** Um, after *Blasteroids*, let's see....yeah, next was *Stun Runner*.

**JWC:** How did that start? I was told that it started out as a wacky racing game... and then evolved...

**Ed:** Yeah, there was a concept. It was not mine. A gal named Carol Cameron proposed a concept at a brainstorming session, which was to have this racing through high-speed tubes through a cityscape. And you'd see the city on the outside and you'd see your opponent going in the tube next you. And that actually got kind of hard, because you can't really look next to you. It's the old peripheral vision on a single monitor problem. You just cant do it. You can't do it well, I should say. So the concept became *Stun Runner* as we worked on it. And most games change as you work on them. If you do them right, you find out what is and isn't fun about them, and you let the game tell you where to go. And thing's are different now too. This is more a coin-operated approach. With a consumer audience you have to capture your audience for a much more extended period of time.

**JWC:** Your motivation as a designer is completely different with coin-op versus home games...

**Ed:** Right. With coin-op you have to have the instant gratification. If you put your quarter in, and you have to invest \$50 before you get fun out of it, then you have failed as a designer. And we deviated from Carol's original idea a bit, but still kept a lot of it.



**JWC:** And the cabinet design was unique, one of the only non-motorcycle games where you sit forward like that...

**Ed:** That was a Pete Takaichi design. It was a great idea.

**JWC:** So looking back on the coin-op era, what is your biggest regret...any ideas you wish you had followed up on?

**Ed:** Well, we had a few ideas of what to do with Battlezone at the time, to do a Battlezone 2, that I would have liked to have followed up on.

**JWC:** Yeah, that seems weird. Most really big games had sequels...like Asteroids Deluxe and Space Invaders Deluxe...and Stargate...

**Ed:** Yeah, true. But it was more that I left before we got around to doing it, and nobody else wanted to pursue it. Plus, it was shortly after that where you start to get some real color 3D graphics, like with Dave Theurer's I, Robot. Which was a very interesting game to me, and it was using some real solid graphics.

**JWC:** If not for Army Battlezone, we may have seen a Battlezone 2, eh?

**Ed:** You would have been a lot more likely to see one, yes. [laughter]

**JWC:** Ok, now onto some of the home games you did...

**Ed:** I worked on a couple of them. I worked on an "edutainment" title for 3DO. Trip Hawkins wanted us to do an edutainment title and I got drafted to do that. It was called Station Invasion.

**JWC:** Oh, OK...that quiz game...

**Ed:** Well, yeah it was kind of like that...we were trying to hit a broad age range and subject range. And it was difficult to do because we were using a TON of full motion video, with live actors, kid actors. It was a very ambitious project. And it actually worked. Kids kind of liked it. The problem was there wasn't enough content in it. If we had DVD back then, it could have been a whole lot better. And it was done in 8 and a half months. Which is the amazing thing considering all the video and the content it did have in it. The team I had doing that were total champions.

**JWC:** Is that the only 3DO title you did?

**Ed:** Well, I did another title there, but it was for the M2, which was never released so...

**JWC:** The M2! That's a system which really intrigues me to no end. I remember all the murmuring about it in '95. The specs they were talking about were incredible. Like 3 and 4 times more powerful than the PSX.

**Ed:** Oh, it was! It was more powerful than the PSX, and more power than the N64 with the CD-ROM of the PSX. So it was a very, very cool platform.

**JWC:** What was the game you did?

**Ed:** The game I did was internally called IMSA racing - it was a car racing game and there were a lot of things that were very interesting about it. The M2 had two processors, by the way - two Power PCs. And this game was using real physics modeling. It was a variant on the same physics engine that is used by the Silicon Motor Speedway. In addition to that, you know, it was really sweet 3D graphics. There was no pop-up! To this day, it's the only consumer-grade game that would run at...I mean, we were not dropping below 30 Hz. There were a lot of things that were cool about it. We would not drop below 30 Hz. No pop-up of graphics in the background. Your backgrounds were always there. It was using real physics. I mean, this was a really sweet, killer game! I wish it could have come out. The cars were just cool and beautiful looking. Alex Werner over at 3DO still has it running on his desk!

**JWC:** Do you know exactly why the M2 never came out?

**Ed:** Not really. There were a lot of things said and a lot of things done. And 3DO ended up getting a lot of money when they sold the whole thing. So...

**JWC:** Just one of those mysteries huh?

**Ed:** Well, people know. I'm just not the right person to ask, I guess.

**JWC:** OK, now you just mentioned it. I wanted to ask you about the NASCAR Silicon Motor Speedway project.

**Ed:** Yep, just left there.

**JWC:** Ok, what is exactly is that...

**Ed:** Well, where are you located?

**JWC:** Daytona Beach, Florida.

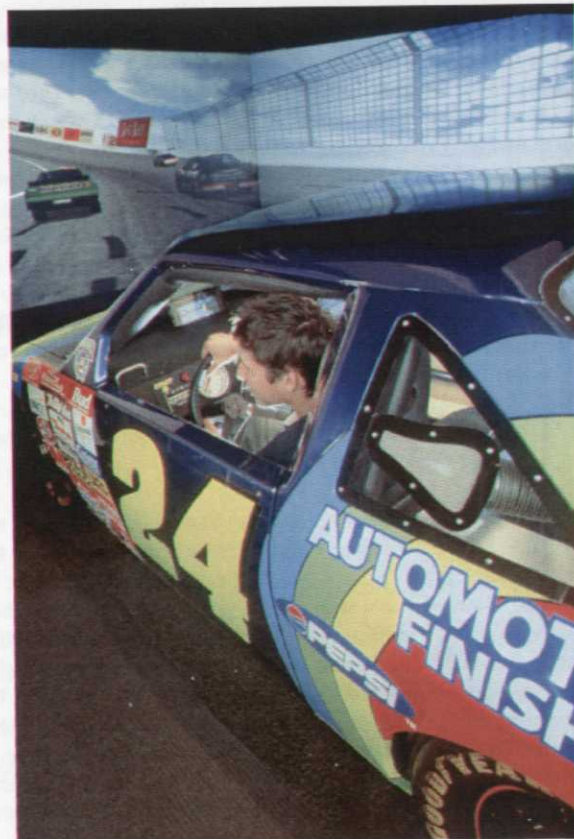
**Ed:** Ah, you're in Daytona Beach, which is unfortunate, because our company didn't put one in Florida...

**JWC:** Wait a second. It's NASCAR! And they didn't put one in Daytona?!

**Ed:** Jason, no. Stop. [laughter] I don't want to start slamming anybody. And please, you aren't going to get me to say anything bad about anybody...

**JWC:** Ok...[laughter]

.....  
How's that for racing realism? [www.sms.com](http://www.sms.com) for more info.







Panoramic view of a SMS racing center.

**Ed:** Hopefully there will be one in FL soon. Either of the two in Atlanta, I guess are the closest to you. The Concord Mills shopping center in Charlotte, NC is our biggest location. There we have 14, 7/8 sized NASCARs on full motion platforms. Each of them has 3 projection screen monitors, for front and then two 3/4 views on either side, as well as a rear-view mirror monitor inside and a crew display. Each of these cars is powered by 6 Pentium III-600 MHz processors, all networked together. You race against other cars on real NASCAR tracks, with real physics. And the guy who wrote the physics modeling stuff is the same guy who did the original Hard Drivin' at Atari. It is the closest thing you're gonna get to really racing, other than getting into a car. If you find yourself at any of our sites, I strongly urge you to go try it. It's a gas.

**JWC:** It sounds really elite...

**Ed:** Very immersive. You really, really get into it.

**JWC:** As far as you the consumer, what games do you enjoy playing nowadays?

**Ed:** Nowadays, I have gotten away from the fighting games and Duke Nukems and Quake and all that. I went through my phase with all that. And I really am more into strategy, although not real big on the real-time strategy, and RPG. I still love RPG.

**JWC:** Really?

**Ed:** Yeah, if they are well done, now. For me, it's less the graphics—although nice graphics are always nice—as it is thorough gameplay.

**JWC:** Oh, I agree. Graphics can be the least of it. I actually still prefer Warcraft II to most of the newer, supped-up real time strategies...

**Ed:** Because the game played so sweetly.

**JWC:** So what are you up to now that the NASCAR project is done?

**Ed:** Me and longtime business associate Rich Adam, who goes back to the Atari days, have a newly formed company. We are taking on other ventures now. The company we are starting is called Mine Shaft Entertainment, and we are going to be doing entertainment software for the consumer market.

**JWC:** Ah, so are you all buckled in for the big console wars coming up?

sweet machine...

**JWC:** Very sweet...

**Ed:** But Sony has a bit of a marketing edge at this point. So they will be difficult to dislodge. The Dolphin is coming along, and it's hard to count out Nintendo. But what intrigues me as far as potential goes is the X-Box. And the reason I say this is ...Everyone says, "Oh, they will never compete with the price of the Sony." And my response is "Excuse me? They should be able to blow away the price of the Sony." Because if you look at the price drop of Pentium processors over a year period, and then two years. Well, look at the history of the PSX. The price started to hit bottom after about 3 years, which was the peak of the sales, and still going strong through years 4 and 5. And that is where the bulk of the money was made! Plus the X-Box has a tremendously important advantage. There are an enormous number of individuals with PC development background. So it will make it much more accessible.

**JWC:** They can. And I agree with everything you are saying, but the market they seem to be heading towards is the hardcore PC gamer. And these guys have already built a kickass machine. They play over a cable modem. It seems like MS might be outsmarting themselves a little bit.

**Ed:** Oh, you are absolutely right. They can screw it up. There's a lot of different ways they can choose to do this. And they can win with this or lose with it. It all depends on how badly Microsoft wants to get into this market. If they want it bad enough, they can do it.

**JWC:** Yeah, and the power that it will have is phenomenal, if you believe the specs...

**Ed:** Plus, they are going to have broadband connectivity, right from the get-go. Which I think will be a big plus when it comes out. So they are doing a lot of things right in the design of the Box. And it will all come down to marketing, and software drives all these things...and all...[laughter] hey, all this other talk is bulls--t if they get the right titles.

**JWC:** But, actually that is where Nintendo might have an edge. Mario, Pokemon, Zelda, etc., will be the first generation games...

**Ed:** That's why you can never count them out. It's going to be very interesting! It will be fun to see it unwind and hopefully I will be a part of it along the way.

**JWC:** Everyone will be looking forward to it! Ed, I want to thank you alot for taking the time to chat...

**Ed:** Jason, it's been a pleasure.

**Ed:** Yep [laughter]  
Yeah...

**JWC:** How do you see it all playing out?

**Ed:** Well, Sony has a great position. I think the Dreamcast is a



# BRADLEY TRAINER FOUND!

Well, so much for everything having been found that will be found. They found a T-Rex skeleton this year that's like 25% larger than any found before. And only mere weeks ago CA resident Scott Evans discovered what was previously thought by some to maybe be nothing more than myth and lore, believed by others to have been destroyed, the military version of one of the most popular games of the classic era, none other than Battlezone.

This was found only a very short time after I sat down and conducted the interview with Rotberg. (Talk about coincidence). I was so excited that I rushed to notify Ed of the remarkable discovery. Ed, of course, was not impressed in the least, and only remarked to it bringing back bad memories.

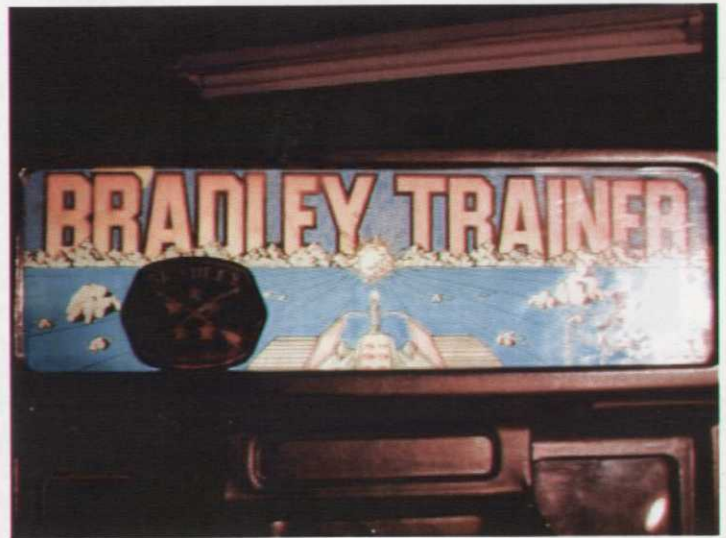
Well, the visitors to CA Extreme were impressed, as was your lovable narrator, JWC. So much so that I'm filling up these 2 pages with photos of the legendary machine. Enjoy! Thanks to Scott for the pics!

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# BRADLEY TRAINER FOUND!





# Comic Book Video Games by Scott Jacobi

## Superman on the N64. Hold your nose!



The direction of the comic book industry is a tough thing to predict. Whether you focus on the battle of the super powers of Marvel, DC, or Image, or whether you throw your support to the smaller independent publishers, the popularity of comic books seem to ebb and flow. But when they're at a marketing peek, there is one thing that you can predict with good accuracy: Video game ports. And with more and more comic book characters leaping off the pages and on to the big or small screen, the market is seeing a larger number of these licensed productions hit the shelves, be it for X-Men, or the upcoming Spider-man movie, or the success of the Batman and Superman cartoons.

Many video game aficionados are to some degree comic book readers and collectors. After all, they share common space in the creativity realm, and often deal with the woes and triumphs of good versus evil. As technology improves, games like Metal Gear Solid and the latest chapters of Final Fantasy attempt to become an interactive comic book of sorts, providing you with morsels of the story in bits and pieces as you conquer battles and puzzles.

So if the idea that comic books and video games have quite a bit in common firmly established, the question that rears its ugly little head is: Why is it so difficult to make a solid game based on a comic book character? Maybe you've thought about this in the past when you happened to play Superman on the Nintendo 64, or Spawn on the Playstation. (Let me state right now that Superman is going to be my prime example of a comic book license gone wrong. Feel free to disagree.) Maybe you've wondered why the Japanese seem to be more successful in their endeavors. Maybe you haven't thought about it at all. But if you have, I hope to shed some light on the subject from an insider's perspective. That's right, I've had the privilege to work on such a project. Since the game is not released yet, I can't go in to any specifics about which game it is, but I certainly got an interesting look at the problems that the designers faced along the way.

So let's start off with the biggest constraint, the comic book's parent company. First of all, in order to get a license to make a comic book video game, the video game company must buy the rights to use that comic book license. You might wonder why a company would be willing to shell out dough just to use a licensed character when they could easily just make another one up for free and build essentially the same game. Well, as anyone who has taken Marketing 101 in college can tell you, name recognition sells. Case in point: Superman. Despite the industry magazine reviews, it sold incredibly well on the name alone.

Now, even though a company has paid for the right to use a character in their game, it certainly doesn't mean they can do whatever they want to it. Every detail of what goes on in the game usually has to be approved by the company that owns the license. Characters must never actually die. Heroes have to stay true to their personality, and never do things that would be out of character. People can't all of a sudden develop new or modified powers that they never had in the comic series. So what does all of this mean to designers? It means that the designers are actually constrained to a smaller range of creativity than they would be with a completely originally designed character. And since every good level designer knows that a level can only be made as fun as the variety of moves a character has, the levels are also constrained to the limitations set on the character by its parent company.



**Spider-man, quirks aside, makes a valiant attempt at capturing the dynamic action of the comics.**



"But Superman can fly and do everything!" Sure, Superman can fly around the whole world, but I guarantee you, no console on earth has enough memory for a texture mapped model of the entire world. What consoles do have enough memory for is a finite 3D map with a fair amount of detail, and as the player, you have to stay well within its boundaries. For characters that fly, designers may have to design some cheesy explanation as to why you can't take a detour to Paris when flying from New York to L.A. And no one seems to enjoy being the guy stuck with that task. Sometimes the lack of an explanation works in the designers favor. When Spider-Man shoots a web up in the sky, you don't always actually see where it connects in order for him to swing across town. Since you never bothered to ask, neither did the designers of the Spider-Man game. It's accepted.

By now, you've seen some of the limitations that designers are faced with when making comic book license games. If Eidos wanted Lara to be able to do a triple backflip for some reason, they could. But if someone wanted Spiderman to gain sudden X-Ray vision, they'd have a problem. However, there's still the matter of a little country on the other side of the world that pumps out video games based on comic and cartoon characters with astonishing success. In Japan, there are a large percentage of games that are based on manga and anime. Much larger than the percentage of games produced in America based on similar licenses.

I certainly wouldn't claim to know the secret to their success with these games compared to over here. But I can propose some theories that one might or might not agree with. There have been tons of analysis reports about the differences in the Japanese market compared to our domestic market. It's one of the most analyzed aspects of our industry so I'm not about to go there, but one point in particular rings true when considering how the Japanese develop games. They take the background of characters and the history of their story in to much more consideration than most American development companies do. This is not because American companies prefer not to, but because the American market does not indicate a preference to rehash the old tales point for point. To illustrate what I mean, let's compare X-Men and Evangelion.

When making the move to the big screen, and then to the console in the form of a fighter, X-Men went through some heavy changes from its original story lines. Pick up one of the hard or soft cover reprints of the first X-Men comic book, and you'll see exactly what I mean. To drive this point home even further, pick up Ultimate X-Men #1 when it goes out on sale, and you'll see what I mean again. This seems to indicate that Americans like a good concept when they see one, and are willing to pay for it over and over again, but as long as it's updated and made fresh every time. And you can be sure that this is what Product Managers are considering when their comic book game is under development.

Now look at Evangelion on the Nintendo 64. Assuming you may not have had the chance, I can tell you it is a near exact duplicate of the series, scene for scene, translated in to a video game. If you've seen the show before, you know exactly what you're getting when you buy this game. The developers found a way to take precisely what is presented to the watcher, and turn it in to an interactive experience. They aren't so worried about how far outside the box they're allowed to step, because they don't ever really bother to. And it is my understanding that the Japanese are sticklers about such details. Good anime series go on to be more than best sellers. They go on to be myths and legends that are not to be toyed with.

Beyond this, video games and comics, or manga, are much more widely received by an older audience than they are here in the states, not that that isn't changing to some degree here. But it's been that way over there for much longer, and as a result, there is a higher regard for the quality that an adult expects compared to what a child will settle for. In addition, video game characters have a higher chance of crossing the border in the other direction and appearing in the pages of a comic book, or in an anime. Most attempts to do the same here are very short lived with the notable exceptions of Pokemon, Sonic the Hedgehog, or Tomb Raider.

So will Americans be faced with this quandary forever? Or are there brighter times on the horizon? The recently released Spider-Man has been very well received so far, and aside from the camera problems facing Capcom's new Spawn game, it may very well be that license's first successful outing on a console. Then again, as long as the market indicates that it will buy anything due to the value of name recognition alone, we may be faced with more Supermans as well.





The Indrema LG00 Entertainment System. The most developer friendly system ever is due out in the Spring of 2001. A Linux based system with surprising performance and power, developers will be able to receive the development software for free...and they will be able to distribute it as freeware, or go the way of extremely fair licensing. It may look like a flattened toaster, but it has potential. It's a rough time to be the NKOTB in the console wars, but keep an eye on this one. It's expandable. It'll have some top development. And it's certain to have a lot of sick, demented freeware games, which were rejected by major software houses. You gotta love that.



X-Box. Speaking of developer-friendly, so is the X-Box. I waver on this a little, from time to time, but honestly I am really hoping that the X-Box can establish itself. It seems to be the darling of the gaming rags and online media at the moment, so that is a little annoying. Because it has shown us nothing much except some specs and a couple cool demos and a chic and a robot. And it also seems when the ball gets rolling all the rags do is talk to you like you are a 4 year-old and start blindly singing nothing but praise. But of course, those vultures will turn on MS in a second if it shows any signs of weakness. Ridiculously enough, they were circling over Nintendo a couple months ago, pre-Spaceworld. But what happens when Nintendo releases some awesome screens and a Rogue Squadron 2 demo that makes your butt suck a lemon? Oh, well, "Nintendo will dominate, like we said all along." What a joke! It's all a wash. Be careful what you read and believe. Anyway, what was I saying? Yeah...this is the X-Box segment. Sorry. And, oh yeah, Windows ME blows. (Just thought I would quickly reiterate that).

My gut feeling is that X-Box is going to be second to Gamecube. X-Box is talking initial high-speed connectivity and massive multiplayer support. You know that rox like an ox. Now, if they can bring us more than PC games and stuff we PC gamers already have or will have, then they can really make some waves for Sony. Nintendo is rock solid. They are going nowhere. But Sony is on shaky ground, and will be vulnerable by the time the X-Box hits. Watch the sparks fly on the irc channels and newsgroups. It's gonna be a barrel of monkeys. I'll be the guy that pops in for 3 seconds before I get banned for saying "This channel blows, just like the PS2!"

X-Box sneak preview? Hehe. This guy rocks, whoever made this. It isn't the X-Box, says Microsoft, but we all knew this was coming. Spoofs and myths about the Box. Gotta love it. Good try, whoever you are. Now you can go back to making Super Sculpy renditions of your favorite action figures, complete with phony packaging. Yeah, this means you...you Wizard reading, gold-edition collecting punk you.

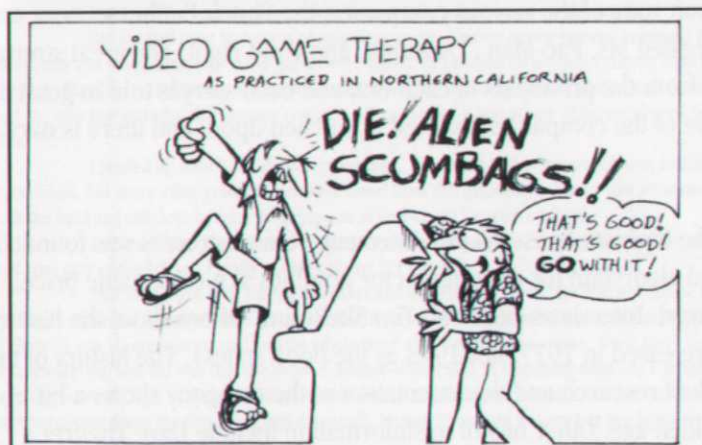
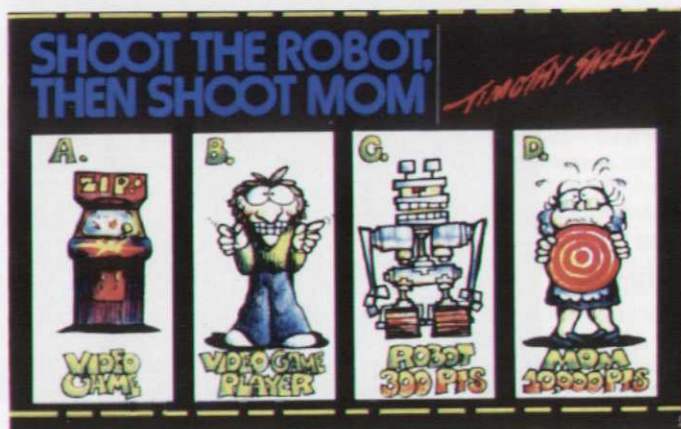




# SHOOT THE ROBOT, THEN SHOOT MOM

[a book by Tim Skelly]

A humorous look at video games, and the sub-culture created by their popularity. It's the book that never leaves Lieberman's coffee table...



Given the recent debate over violence in video games, the revisitation of a comical look at video game culture is in order.

In 1983, the video game industry was coming off of its most important 5 years before or since. There had been an infiltration into American homes at a record pace. And with this infiltration came the never-ending debate over video games and their alleged negative influence on our culture, particularly the youths of America.

As read in the title, and throughout this book of cartoons, Skelly's view of the video game world and the said influenced culture is cynical, witty and often hilarious. So, why did a video game designer/programmer do a book of cartoons?

"When I was in the middle of *Insector*, [Skelly's second game for Gottlieb, which was never released], I found out that another freelance development group was getting paid about ten times more than I was for about the same work," Skelly explains. "At that time cartoon books like B. Kliban's 'Cat' and 'Never Eat Anything Bigger Than Your Head' were very popular as were, of course, video games. I was too angry to keep working on the game, so I pitched the book to an editor friend and we got a deal."

Skelly is no stranger to the world of art, as he reveals, "I sold my first cartoon when I was eleven." And he continued being an artist after he stopped programming. Could we as gamers have never enjoyed *Star Castle*, *Rip Off*, *Warrior*, *Reactor*, etc.? Could we have lost Skelly to the art world?

"Before I joined Cinematronics I had to make a choice: go to work for them or go to Bermuda to make design T-Shirts for tourists with a friend of mine. I still wonder about that one," Skelly jokes. "Of course, I've done lots of cartoon work in my role as art director at Incredible Technologies and Sega."

Check out Amazon.com and look for this book. It's out of print, but it would be worth your while to track it down.

Also, JWC still holds out hope that Tim will design a new video game or a massive *Rip Off 2K1* project. Make it so, Tim.



# The First Quarter: A 25-Year History Of Video Games

by Steven L. Kent

Review by Brian Deuel

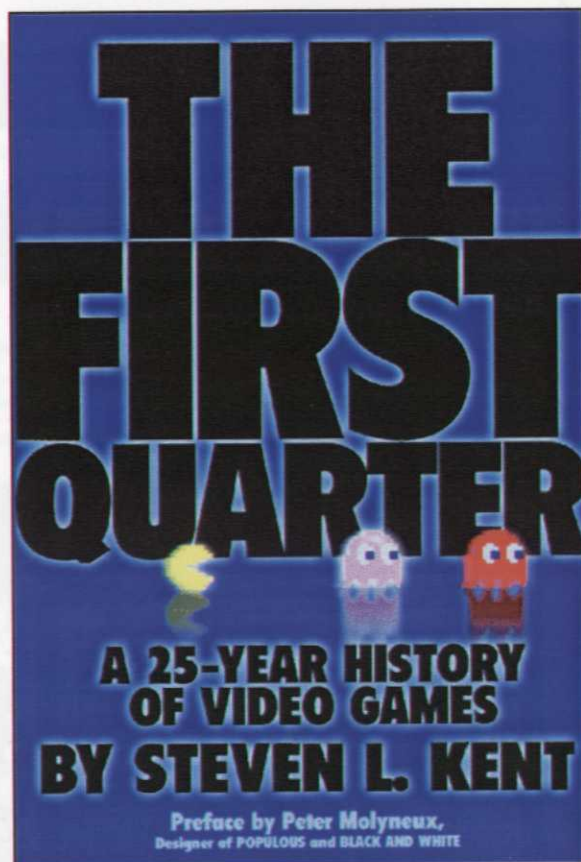
As a fan of gaming new and old, one of the first columns I turn to after receiving my copy of Next Gen Magazine is the "Retroview" column. At one time authored by Steven Kent, this column was always a great read, and I was looking forward to the "book about video game history" that was always mentioned in the caption of Kent's picture. Well, that time has arrived. The book is out, and although it's quite an engaging read, there are some glaring editorial and factual errors that dampen the experience (at least for a hardcore, slightly psychotic historian like myself).

The book covers pretty much the entire spectrum of gaming; from the beginnings of pinball to the current console war. Many of the stories are well-known to any game history buff- MIT and Spacewar, Nolan Bushnell and Atari, the Great Crash, Ralph Baer's creation of the "Black Box", the rise of Nintendo in America; these are just among the many hit upon. There are many other areas of gaming history that Kent touches upon that you won't find in any other book- the lawsuit wars of the various companies, the Chuck E. Cheese story, and my favorite: the story of General Computing, the company that created Ms. Pac-Man, Quantum, and Food Fight. The great strength of the book is that it expands on these stories by adding quotes from the principals of each era, and each story is told in great detail. Tales of just about every company, programmer, and executive of the companies involved is touched upon, and there is nary a stone unturned.

But hence, there are some problems with the book. One of the biggest offenses is the statement: "Cinematronics was founded by Larry Rosenthal, a Cal-Berkley graduate who created a special algorithm for creating vector graphics at a reasonable price." This is inexcusable, all you need to do is read the first issue of Syzygy! Interviews exist with Tim Skelly and others about the history of Cinematronics and the games they created (Space Wars was released in 1977, not 1978 as the book states). The history of the company has been well-documented, and Kent's obvious lack of research and documentation of the company shows a bit of disregard for one of the most important companies of the golden age. Other bits of misinformation include Dave Theurer's resume. Theurer created five games at Atari (Soccer, Missile Command, Tempest, I,Robot, and APB). Kent only mentions the 'big three' in the caption below Dave's picture (although there is mention of Dave's disinterest in Soccer within the text itself). Morgan Hoff and Jed Margolin's names are mangled in a quote by Ed Rothberg about the creation of Battlezone, and there are other minor inaccuracies and misspellings that mar an otherwise excellent book. And where is the Willy Higinbotham (the *true* father of video games) story?! Other than a brief footnote, this very important story is also omitted.

Notwithstanding the problems within the text, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better book about the history of video games. In fact, you can't. It really is quite an engaging read, and you'll find yourself re-reading sections of the book for years to come. If I had to give it a rating, I'd give it a 4 stars out of 5.

*The First Quarter- A 25-Year History Of Video Games* by Steven L. Kent is available only through Amazon.com. Visit [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0970475500/o/qid=974889460/sr=8-1/ref=aps\\_sr\\_b\\_1\\_3/107-3391875-0481369](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0970475500/o/qid=974889460/sr=8-1/ref=aps_sr_b_1_3/107-3391875-0481369) to purchase this book.





# In Search Of... part deux. By Kevin Phillips

Last issue featured a story I wrote awhile ago about an odyssey I embarked upon, in hopes of ultimately finding a Tempest cocktail game. The quest led me to a very fruitful contact in Louisiana and I was officially part of the game collecting hobby. And though many other great arcade games were uncovered and saved as a result of my efforts, I never found that Tempest cocktail.

Three months ago, I contacted that operator from Louisiana again and thus set a whole new quest into motion with the Tempest cocktail still the ultimate prize, looming on the proverbial horizon. Since then, I have gotten married and enrolled in college. I've had probably twenty Tempest upright games come into my possession, and I've become quite adept at getting the broken ones running, once again. Tempest has since become a sort of 'alter-ego' for me since I wrote that first article. The name is in my email address. It's my IRC nickname. I even have a Tempest vanity plate. But after all this time, I've still never had a Tempest cocktail game in my possession, nor have I ever seen one in the flesh. So when the Louisiana operator recently agreed to meet me at one of his rural warehouses and happened to mention the fleeting Tempest cocktail, I couldn't resist!

We drove four hours to a rural town in Louisiana, and I had the greatest expectations in my mind. This operator had yielded great results to me years before, and his promises were just as titillating now as they were back then. He told me about Galaga, Defender, Stargate, Pacman, Asteroids, and many other classics. He spoke of "tons of boards" as if he had a dump truck load waiting for my scrutiny. We waited for about thirty minutes at a truck-stop outside town, and the operator showed up with his entire family in tow. I hadn't seen this person for several years, so we exchanged fake pleasantries, as if we actually cared about what each other had been doing in the interim. Now it was time for the first warehouse viewing, and I was excited.

Only two or three miles away from the truck stop, the first warehouse was an easy drive. When I pulled-in, I knew something was up. The place was a run-down gas station and a few games were sitting outside in the weather, almost completely destroyed from the elements. Rain had imposed its will on the particleboard of a cockpit Pole Position game, and the wood was swollen and about to fall to pieces. Over on the far side of the building was a huge cylinder, nearly fifty feet in length, and twenty feet in diameter. The operator informed me that the cylinder held rancid grease, and that he also operated a "grease service" around town, a service that, for a price, removed nasty, stinky grease from restaurants' grease traps. Apparently, he stored that foulness in the huge cylinder.

I tried to put that image out of my head. When we walked in I knew things were not going to be as fruitful as they were the last time I dealt with this guy. Most of the games were newer "throw-away" games like Fighter's History, Violence Fight, The Simpsons, and Captain America. That warehouse did yield a nice Galaga cocktail, Atari 720, a High Speed pinball, a Pinbot pinball, and lots of misc. parts - boards, manual, joysticks and such. My wife stood there as if she had stumbled into some horrible nightmare. The games and parts were everywhere. The place was very run-down, and definitely not *clean*, by anyone's standards. Lacking the specific game-hunting drive I have, she saw the place only as a dump, and rightly so.

But there was more in store for me.

We left that place and drove some thirty miles to a whole other small town. By this time, I was having difficulty keeping my wife interested in this "little vacation" that I had so eloquently promised her with, a day before. She was certain that I liked to spend my time digging through garbage looking for gold, and I couldn't really blame her. I had told her stories about "lost warehouses" of old games just waiting for lucky plunderers, and all she saw was filthy squalor. We both hoped that the next place was much better and, more importantly, was where the Tempest cocktail was stashed.

We finally pulled into a new place, and this time, we were greeted by an severely unpleasant stench that we could not immediately identify. My wife described it best when she called it a "rancid, wet dog smell". The operator acted as it was not there at all, but strangely enough, his family was parked a few hundred feet away and all the doors to his truck were closed. The operator eagerly opened the front doors to this huge warehouse and we were all greeted by the same stench, magnified easily a hundred-fold. Turns out, this guy's grease service has a peculiar problem -- Tons of rancid, dirty restaurant grease, and no proper place to put it. So he stores the grease in the same warehouse where most of his old arcade games were stored, and I was the unlucky person who had to endure the overpowering stench.

But the foul odor had a way of subsiding as my olfactory nerves became ensnared to the aromatic assault, and I was able to bear entering the place. I was less than enthusiastic. Out of this vast warehouse, only thirty games were found, all huddled tightly into a corner, right next to another huge cylinder of putrid grease. The titles found included Stargate, Galaga, Dig Dug, Playchoice 10, Donkey Kong, Battlezone, Frontline, Operation Wolf, Pacman, and three of four others. No Tempest cocktail was found in that warehouse. We made a quick deal, and the operator included the Tempest cocktail, telling me that it was at one of his employee's houses in a storage room, and that he would get it for me immediately. This was *before* I paid him.

I loaded up what I could *after* paying him, went back to the first warehouse, loaded some more, and headed back to Memphis with mixed emotions. Tempest cocktail had not been found, but many other great classics were saved from that greasy hell. Plus, I was promised Tempest cocktail the next time I returned, which would be in two weeks. I was enthusiastic with the haul and still hopeful with the prospects of finding the Tempest cocktail.

I returned two weeks later by myself. My wife had had one rancid grease-sniffing experience and I don't think she was prepared for another. She volunteered to "stay behind and take care of the house". I really couldn't blame her one bit.

This time, I got both pinball machines and the 720 game from the first warehouse along with a few misc boardsets. I drove to the second warehouse and prepared for the onslaught of stench that awaited me. It seems that the operator's employees, underpaid as they are, aren't all that interested in hygiene, and so they generally don't care about grease spillage. It was all over the ground and the whole floor was slick with the grease. While there loading games, I spotted a huge open vat of grease, and I wondered what it would be like to accidentally trip and fall into that vile mass of disease-ridden filth. It's amazing what one's imagination can conjure when faced with such a disgusting heap of putrid nastiness, and mine was working overtime. I picked-up a small stone that was on the floor and tossed it into the vat. The layer of mess was so thick on top that the small stone simply bounced around up there and never penetrated into the disgusting liquid beneath. I wasn't even sure if there was any liquid in that thing at all until I bumped the vat and noticed the whole mass slowly undulating over the waves of the rotting liquid grease.

I had my resolve.

I found a large stone outside and carried it over to the vat. The slick, grease-covered smooth floor made this a perilous task, but I manage to get it to the vat without losing my footing. Without thinking about the consequences of my actions, I hurled the heavy stone into the air, and when it pierced the thick crust of foulness, it splashed into a thick, mucky volume of rotting grease, causing a backslash that rose some six feet into the air, to my absolute horror. Anyone who has ever watched a slow-motion sequence of an object splashing into water knows what happened next. The small secondary splash dispersed at approximately 45-degrees and a small part of it caught me across the chest, soaking my shirt with that vile mess.

Was that all? Was this the extent of my punishment for my morbid curiosity? Not quite.

When the initial splash finally lost its energy and started crashing back down, the splatter of it hitting the crusty top layer went in all directions, including all over me. I was horrified, and on the verge of sickness. Are a few lost classic video games worth this HELL? Is Tempest cocktail, of which I had not even seen yet, worth what I was then experiencing? I had a neatly-traced line of rotting restaurant grease across my chest staining my shirt, and small splatters of it in my face and hair. I stood back in horror and took stock of my hobby -- and sanity.

After that fiasco, I left the grease vats alone. I wringed out my shirt in soap and water that I had brought along to wash my hands, and then doused my face and hair. That gritty Fast Orange hand cleaner is very harsh on the face and hair but it seems to work wonders, especially because of its penetrating orange aroma. I finished loading the games and stripping the parts off a few others, and I left the warehouse for good. I tried calling the number of the person who the operator said had the Tempest but I never got an answer. While there, I tried calling the operator, but he was suspiciously unavailable. Yes, he knew I was there but he knew I didn't have any more money for him since I already fulfilled my entire financial obligation up front. He knew I was looking for the Tempest cocktail and he blew me off as a result. I now am convinced that, though such a machine once existed, it has probably been lost in one of the operator's other deals or due to mismanagement, and I will probably never see it.

But that's ok. I was able to obtain some great games and parts for a very good price, and I managed to ruin a nice cotton shirt, to boot! I can't wait for my next experience.

Then I'll probably discover the operator's nuclear waste disposal business.



## Next Issue....

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Well, fair gamers, sadly this episode has come to an end. Hope you enjoyed it and will be here for the Spring 2001 issue when we sit down with two former Atari employees, Ed Logg and David Akers. Logg is of course known for the legendary video games he did at Atari, such as Asteroids, Centipede, and Gauntlet. David Akers now works at Namco and created the infamous Atari Klax. He also worked on numerous games in the consumer division at Mattel. Don't miss our intriguing chats with both these creative programmers who remain an influential and active part of the video game industry, even today.

Stay well. Don't mention Lara Croft to girls you meet. Don't ever buy a Lara Croft action figure. Remember that there's life apart from Unreal Tournament. And don't believe the reviews on IGN.com. Cell-shading is a myth. It was spread by the Jet Grind Radio people.



Don't miss next  
issue.

Uncle Eugene was just  
here right? X-Box still won't be here.  
David is still a zookeeper poser. IGN  
still stands for Inbred Gaming Nerds.  
GamersLounge.com is for loozers.  
And POOYAN lives on.

Sincerely,  
The Guy





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