

No. 8 Sep. 2003

The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only

NEW AUTHORS!
NEW COLUMNS!



PREVIEWS

SYBERIA II

SPACE QUEST VII

INTERVIEWS

SCREEN 7

LEGACY

INTERACTIVE

REVIEWS

RUNAWAY

SALAMMBO

FATMAN

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER
ADVENTURE
COMICS!

The Inventory

Editor: Dimitris Manos
Authors: Dimitris Manos
Yngvil Runde
Carla Melloni
Al Lowe
Mark Lovegrove
Host: www.justadventure.com
Cover Art: Syberia 2

Contact Information:

Address: The Inventory Magazine
Tallrisvägen 39C
Örebro 70 234
Sweden

E-mail address: theinventory@yahoo.com

Phone No: +46702053444

Other Editions

Spanish: www.aventuraycia.com
French: www.aventurepc.com
German: www.adventure-treff.de
Italian: www.pollodigomma.net/~theinventory
Polish: www.przygodoskop.gery.pl
Russian: Coming soon
Korean: myst.cafe24.com

The Inventory is copyright Dimitris Manos and may not be reprinted elsewhere without the express written consent of the owner. If anyone sees The Inventory or portions of The Inventory posted someplace without express written consent, then please contact us at: theinventory@yahoo.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE 1

PREVIEWS 2

Syberia 2 p. 2

Space Quest 7 p. 7

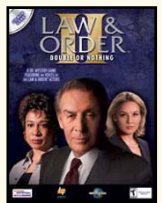


ADVENTURE GOSSIP 10

THE LOUNGE 13

Legacy Interactive (Law & Order 2) p. 13

Screen 7 Entertainment (Indiana Jones FoY) p. 18

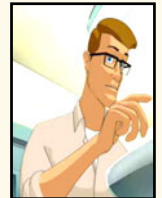


ADVENTURE COMICS 28

REVIEWS 29

Review of the Month:
Runaway p. 29

Salamambo p. 35
Fatman p. 40



TALKING DEAD 42

THE AL LOWE SHOW 43

INVENTO-MAIL 44

THE HYDRA 46

EPILOGUE 47

Special Thanks:

Emerald City Games, Cedric Orvoine, Legacy Interactive, Screen 7 Entertainment, Space Quest 7 Development Team

Prologue

Summer is gone, our batteries are recharged and we are ready with (once again) a new layout to bring you the latest news in the adventure community. We have to mention here that the new layout is inspired (or should I say copied?) by the work of the Polish edition of The Inventory. The Polish Inventory team did a better job on the layout than I used to do and therefore we decided to adapt The Inventory to their style instead.

But the layout is the least of the surprises we have prepared for you. First of all, The Inventory and Emerald City Games are teaming to give you, for the first time ever, a comic strip based on an upcoming adventure game. Of course most of the credit for that goes to Emerald City Games, the company behind the ‘new adventure’ mentioned in our gossip area last month, for moving ahead with our proposition to this groundbreaking deal. The strip will be featured on every issue of The Inventory up until its release date, which is still undetermined. It will hopefully give the community a look into the world and characters of the upcoming game. Emerald City Games and The Inventory are excited about this new type of promotion, which is the first of its type in gaming history.

And now let’s move on to the rest of the surprises. You have to admit that although The Inventory has been very informative so far, it was kind of dull humour-wise. And who is the best guy in the humour area, in the adventure community? (To anyone who might not have answered Al Lowe, you are either too young and you are forgiven, or you have committed a crime in the adventure community and have not played the Larry games... in which case close the magazine now, go find these games, play them and then come back to continue reading) Yep, THE Al Lowe, of the Larry Laffer fame, will be writing every month from now on a compilation of the best jokes he has sent out for the month that passed to his Cyberjoke-subscribers, for The Inventory.

Al Lowe, is not the only developer who has joined the Inventory. I am very proud to present to you the second writer that joined The Inventory during the summer, and is no other than ...drum roll please...Mark Lovegrove, project leader of the upcoming adventure Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth, ‘big boss’ of Screen 7 entertainment and editor of the AGD zine published by www.adventuredevelopers.com And last but definitely not least, Carla Melloni, a devoted adventurer from Argentina, will take care of the adventure gossip section giving you all the latest rumours in the adventure industry. With the addition of the new authors and of course the help of Yngvil Runde who has been a part of The Inventory from the very beginning (and there would probable be no Inventory without her) I hope that I will have more time in my hands to spell check what I write so you guys can stop laughing with my silly spelling mistakes. Ok that’s all nice and fancy, but what about the contents you might be wondering.

For starters, what about a 5-page extensive preview with all the latest news about Syberia 2, the most awaited adventure right now? ‘Served’ of course with exclusive screenshots (the first screenshots from the 3rd world of Syberia 2), the latest information on the gameplay, the enhancements that the game has received and exclusive information on what Microids prepares for us in the future! And if you want even more...-by the way, you’d better take a deep breath now if you plan to read the next sentence out loud-...

Well how about the first screenshots from another upcoming gem made by fans (and not only) Space Quest 7, an interview with Legacy Interactive talking about their Law and Order series, an interview with Screen 7 Entertainment about their upcoming Indiana Jones adventure in our Lounge (previously known as Celebrity Corner), a review-of-the-month of Runaway, reviews of Salamambo and Fatman, the latest gossip of the adventure scene and another article on Hydra? I have to admit that there is much more content on this Inventory than ever before, and I can already hear some of our translators swearing wrathfully at me ☺. But now let’s move on. I am proud to present to you...the return of Kate Walker!

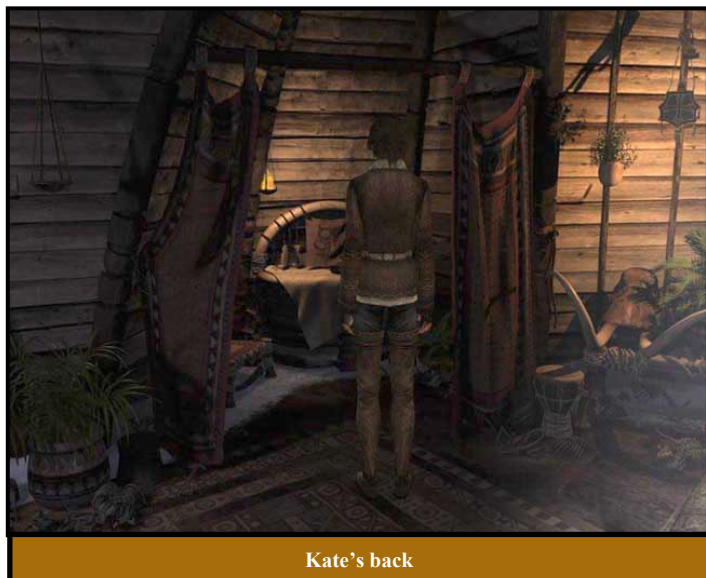
The Editor

Dimitris Manos

Syberia Reloaded



Last November when we first started with The Inventory, we featured as review of the month a game that was meant to become a legend in recent adventure history. I am talking of course about Syberia, the game that won literally every Best Adventure Award for the year 2002 and numerous awards for the artistic perfection of its graphics. An artistic perfection that bears the signature of Benoit Sokal. Syberia was the first adventure in years now



Kate's back

that managed to win the attention of non-adventure and even non-gaming media.

The big difference with the rest of the adventures produced till that point, was that it offered a much more realistic (in the context of the story) solution to puzzles. Instead of the usual combine items A+B+C to create obscure item X, it featured puzzles that were based mostly on character interaction and on exploring the game environment, something that is far closer to how obstacles are overcome in real life, while at the same time relieving players of the tedious pixel hunting that many adventures are suffering from.

Obviously when its sequel was announced, it became the most anticipated adventure of 2003 for the thousands of gamers worldwide that played and enjoyed the first one. Only recently though, the most anticipated adventure of the year 2003 became the **most anticipated adventure for the year 2004**. Microids decided to push back its release date for the PC, from October 2003 to the first quarter of 2004. According to Microids, the reason for this push-back was the decision to release the game simultaneously

on all different platforms. While this totally ruined Syberia fans' plans for Christmas, well the only thing you and I can do is wait a bit longer.



Snow looks so real your cursor might slip!

To ease the pain of waiting though, we will give you all the latest information concerning Syberia 2. And because nobody can tell the news better than the people who make the game themselves we decided to let Cedric Orvoine, the PR Manager for Microids, tell us all the information we need to know about Syberia 2. Before we continue we have to congratulate Cedric for doing an excellent job on promoting the Syberia franchise. He has always been very helpful with whatever we needed to know and has always delivered everything he had promised to deliver, on time. The adventure games industry needs more people like him in the PR departments.

Now on to Syberia 2. The first question that naturally arises is in what ways will Microids polish Syberia 2. What is going to be different now that the release date is pushed back than if it was to be released on October? Cedric's answer was *'We will be working on a few different things but mainly on details. Details that aren't directly noticeable but that enhance the gameplay experience. Here's a few of the things we will be working on:*

- *Characters animation: we want to add fluidity in their movements and make a better job at coordinating the voices and the movements when characters are talking;*
- *Gameplay tweaking: we are working on enhancing some gameplays to make them more natural;*
- *Cinematics: The delay gives us more time to produce better cinematics but also, it gives us some time to create an additional cinematic that wasn't planned in the beginning to give the players an*

September 2003

additional little "eye-candy"; BTW, the cinematics are 100% nicer than the ones in the first game. I think we really achieved something special with the cinematics

- The game will be bug free: We will have more time to test the game and make sure it is completely bug free and to test a wider range of configurations.'



Puzzles in Syberia 2 will have a more natural flavour.

Let us talk now about one of Syberia's strongest points, its **story**. If you have already finished the first part of Syberia then you already know how Syberia 2 will start. So in order not to spoil the game for the players that have not finished the first one yet and not to bore those that have with details they already know, I will skip mentioning how the story of Syberia 2 starts. One of the few complaints Syberia 1 received was that it was quite short. We asked Cedric what is the estimated playing time for Syberia 2 and he replied *'Between 15 to 20 hours is what we are expecting but nobody has yet played the game from the beginning to the end. We are currently testing each different world separately. When we'll play the*



Now where is Momo when you most need him?

game from the beginning to the end, we'll have a more precise figure to communicate.'

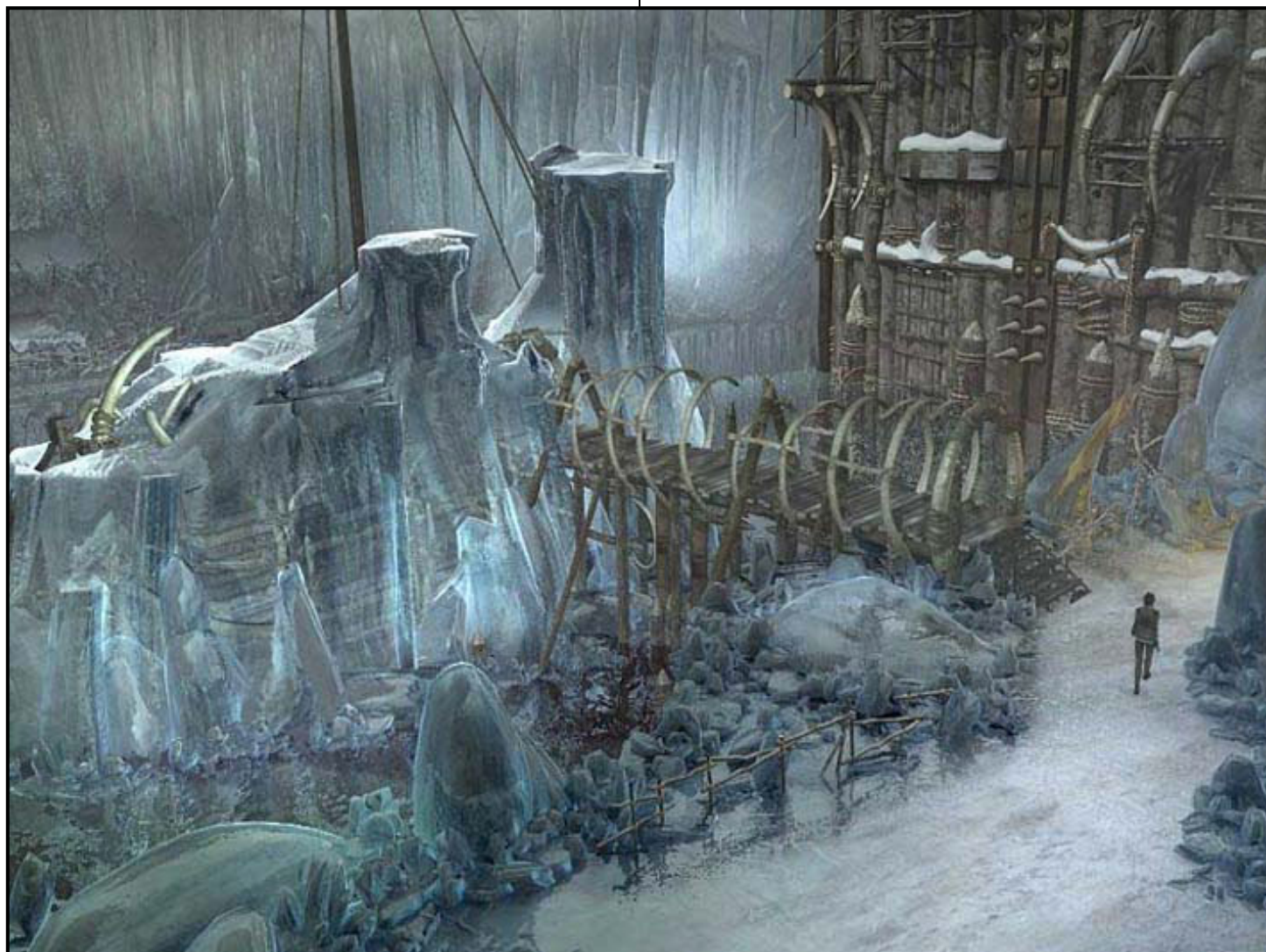
Now if 15 to 20 hours corresponds to the playing time of the final product then it will be almost twice as long as the first one was. Which means...twice as fun! Cedric also said that we are going to meet *'About 25 different characters in four major locations.'* Which means that the game includes more characters than the first one, thus it will feel much more alive.

Regarding the **graphics** of the game, there is nothing to worry about. Except from the fact that the screenshots speak for themselves, the name **Benoit Sokal** is enough to guarantee artistic excellence once more. The backgrounds look stunning. Snow never seemed so real before on a computer screen. As **Benoit** said in the interview we had with Microïds on the 4th issue of *The Inventory*, *'we will use the same graphic engine but some enhancements will be brought upon to make sure we raise the bar once again in terms of quality. Let's mention these*

additions: dynamic graphics and lighting details such as glass reflections, ice texture, uniform fabric, and decals, Real time snowfall and footsteps marks, dynamic lighting and shadows, animated fog and finally, enhanced in-game animation''

You can probably see for yourselves in the screenshots that the backgrounds are the best ever seen in any game ever. Did I mention the snow? It is so realistic it makes you want to take care where you are walking. When asked if Kate is going to wear the same outfit throughout the whole game, Cedric replied *'Kate will have different outfits.'* And as something special for the readers of *The Inventory* Microïds sent us the first published screenshots from the third world of *Syberia 2*, The Youkol Village.

The **sound** of *Syberia* was also an important part for the success of the first one. Beautiful orchestral music gave a nostalgic tone to the theme of the game (although the game could have used some more tracks). For the second instalment according to Cedric *'The music has changed because the location of the*



A screenshot from the Youkol village, the third world of *Syberia 2*. More and more hints of mammoths...

game has changed. The music will have a different colour with a little bit of a tzigian touch...' When we asked him if the same actors are going to do the voice-overs for the characters of the first Syberia he said *'Some of them yes, others no. Kate will have the same voice.'* Since the name of the actress who did Kate Walker's voice was never known and many people in several adventure forums were wondering about it, we thought of digging this information out of Microïds as well. And the name of the woman behind Kate Walker is ... *'Sharon Mann'*.



The lighting effects will obviously be much better this time around.

But the most interesting part of information Cedric gave to us was about the gameplay of Syberia 2 and more specifically about the new dialogue system. *'The new dialogue system is based on the first system we had with Syberia and we added some features from the Post Mortem dialogue engine. We just wanted to avoid repetitive comments from Kate and to add some diversity to her reflections.'* When we first read that, we thought that this would mean a



This looks a lot like a contraption made by Hans Voralberg.

non-linear Syberia 2 with multiple endings. But Cedric made things quite clear when we asked him if what we thought was right *'No no no... It's just that we managed to add some lines in Kate's dialogue folder so that when she tries to open a door (for example) and it won't open, she will say different things if you try a few times. But no multiple endings... A unique and very emotional ending. Kate will not be more talkative but we definitely wanted to add some comments to her lines.'*

By looking at the screenshots, it is evident that there is more gameplay outdoors this time than in Syberia 1. So we were wondering if Syberia 2 will feature more physical puzzles than mechanical ones. *'Yes and no. I'm not sure what you mean by physical puzzles but in general, there will be less mechanics involved in the puzzles. But I won't say all the puzzles won't be mechanical. We're still talking about a story featuring Hans Voralberg after all. I think we can say that the puzzles will have a "natural" flavour with all the outdoor environments...'*



The detail given to the architecture of each building is mind-boggling.

And let us not also forget what Benoit Sokal had told us in the interview in The Inventory 4 concerning the **gameplay** of Syberia 2. When asked if Syberia 2 will have the same level of difficulty he answered *'About the same level of difficulty yes. We're working hard to better integrate the puzzles in the story once again. They have to be logical to the players. Some of the puzzles will be a bit tougher also.'* As for Kate's mobile phone and how much she is going to use it, Benoit had said *'Yes she will but less. As she shut the door on most of her past, people who used to call her will have more and more difficulty to reach her... The cell phone will take a lesser importance in Syberia II.'*



Kate will meet dangerous characters that will stand in her path.

‘That’s all nice but will it run on my computer’, some of you might wonder. According to Cedric ‘*The system specs are exactly the same as for Syberia 1 except for the fact Win 95 users won’t be able to play because of DirectX 8.1.*’ More specifically, what you will need is: Win 98/ME/2000/XP, Pentium II 350, 16MB Direct 3D (DirectX 8.1) video card, 64MB RAM, 400MB HD, a 16X CD-ROM and a DirectX 7 compatible sound card. Those of you who are eager to try out Syberia, you would better hold your breath for a couple of months. Cedric said that the **playable demo** of the game will be ready probably in February.

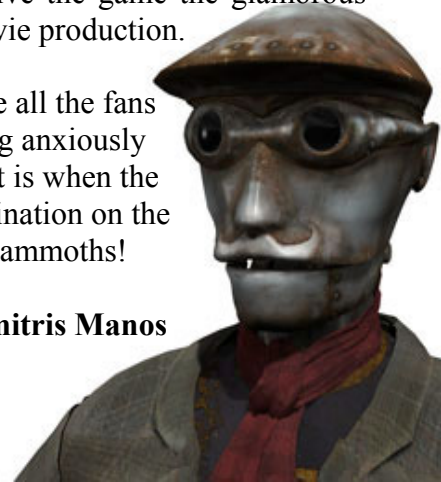
We left the best news however for the end of this preview. We asked Cedric, **if Microids has any other adventures in the works right now.** Here is his reply: ‘*Yes, 2... But I still can’t talk about them.*’ That’s right dear adventurers. The leading company in the adventure genre is preparing two more gems for us, apart from Syberia 2. But come to think of it...why shouldn’t they? We asked Cedric how many copies has Syberia sold so far. His reply was

definitely sweet music to our ears ‘*We are almost at 350,000 copies worldwide. X-box and PC.*’

So after this positive note, it is time for me to sum up the preview of the most awaited upcoming adventure right now. The adventure that managed to turn the general interest to adventure games, is prepared to do it again. Benoit Sokal is a sure bet that the game will include a first-class story and superb graphics which will probably set the standards even higher than the first one did. According to what we’ve been told there will be more characters to interact with, more locations to visit, better responses from Kate, better integrated puzzles to the story and much more cinematic cutscenes to give the game the glamorous feeling of a high-cost movie production.

All that is enough to leave all the fans of the first Syberia waiting anxiously for Q1 2004. Because that is when the train reaches its next destination on the road to Syberia and the mammoths!

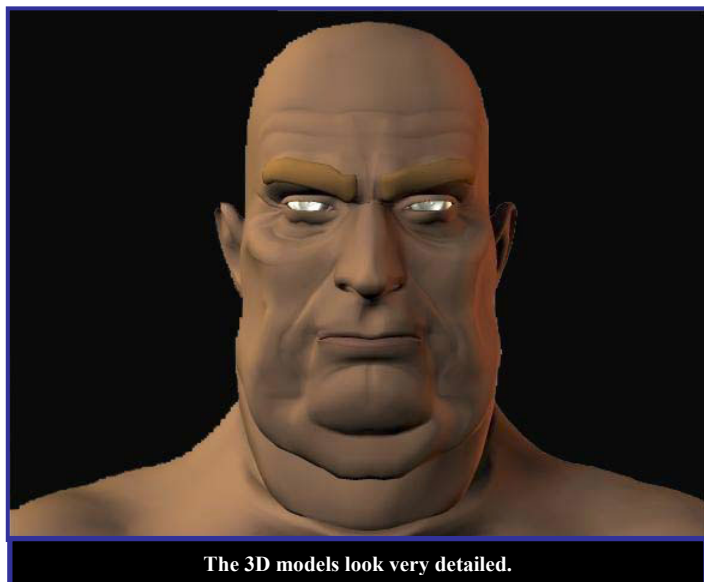
- Dimitris Manos





Before summer we revealed to you the first screenshots of King's Quest IX, a fan project whose first showings pleasantly surprised adventure fans. This month, get prepared to be pleasantly surprised once more. Because the universe was getting dirty and we all know that there is only one person for dirty jobs... Roger Wilco of course. The old and beloved by many Space Quest series of the former Sierra, is back once more, developed this time by the fans themselves. But there are not only 'fans' aboard this project.

Josh Mandel, the person whose résumé as a writer/designer includes Space Quests 4, 6, working side by side with **Al Lowe** on Freddy Pharkas and



The 3D models look very detailed.

many Larry adventures, Laura Bow, some King's Quest games and Police Quest 1 as well as performing voice-overs for many major Sierra adventures like King's Quest 5, 6, Phantasmagoria and Tierra's King's Quest remakes, is one of the writers on this project. His presence in the credits is a guarantee for big things to come.

The SQ7 team did not want to reveal any significant details about the **storyline** at the time being. The team had to go through a process of choosing what to keep familiar and what to introduce for the first time with the 7th part of the Space Quest saga. The final decision of the team was to produce a fun game that would appeal both to newcomers and the old Space Quest fans, rather than producing an ending chapter to the Space Quest series focused only on the hardcore Space Quest fans. As the developers said themselves: *'We realized that the plot of SQ games is hard to define, or pin down at times.. In SQ4, Roger went through space and time, to go shopping with Valley girls at the mall. It's often a bit, chaotic. But it usually comes down to one of two things- Roger saves the world, or Roger Saves himself. We've got a bit of each of those, plus a dash of old and new friends, villains, and girlfriends. Who knows, maybe this time, Roger might even get together with Bea ;)'*

The biggest difference that the 7th Space Quest will have compared to its predecessors will be its **graphics**. It will be the first time that you will see

PREVIEWS

Roger Wilco in three dimensions. We are happy to report that the first showings of the team's work on the characters demonstrate that they have made a much better job than Sierra previously did in Gabriel Knight 3 and King's Quest 8 and has nothing to be jealous of, from recent commercial adventures. Roger Wilco looks excellent in 3D and does not lose his comic style as it sometimes happens when turning a 2D character into 3D.

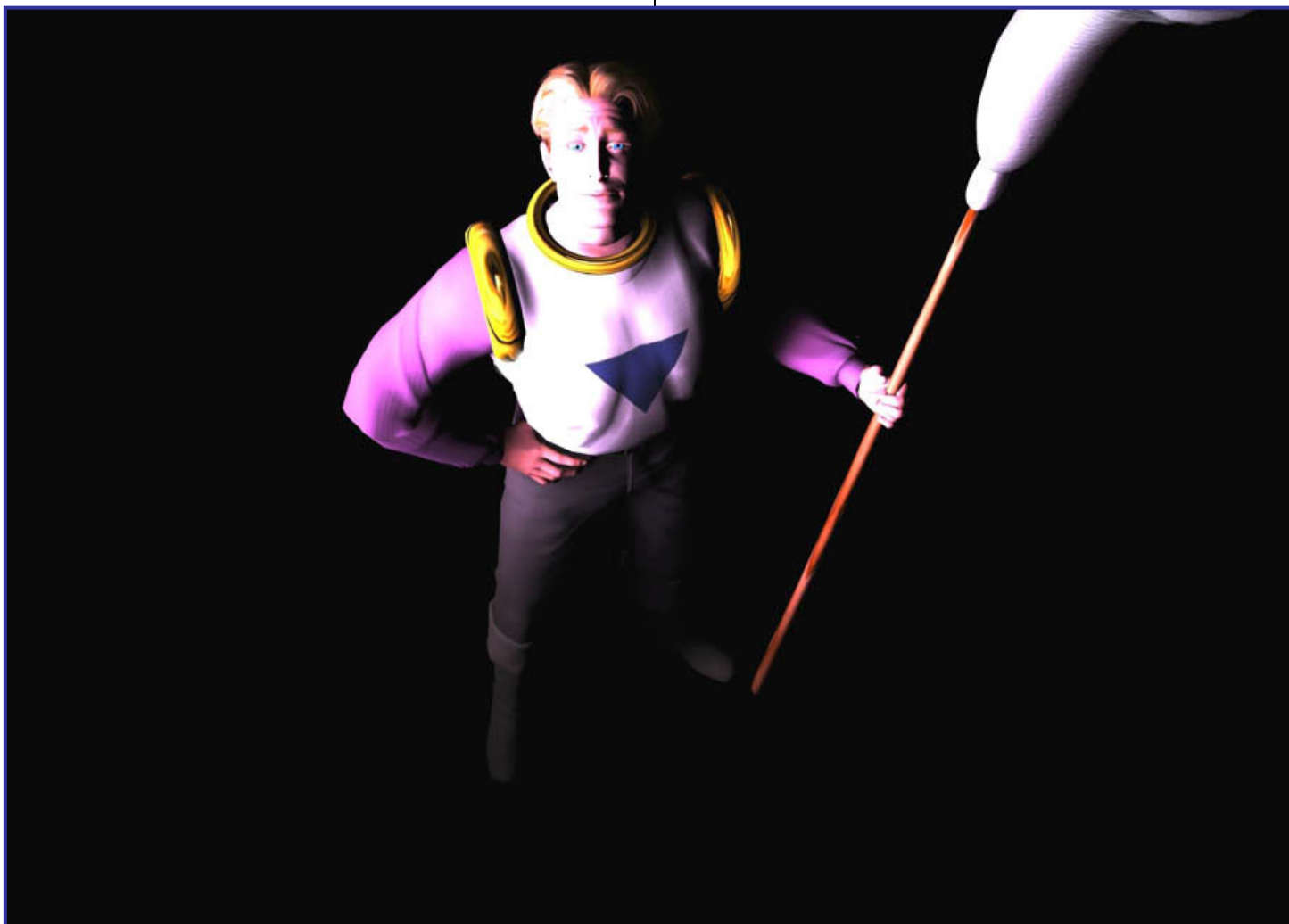


The graphics of the game will be pre-rendered and in high resolution in order to make SQ7 the best-looking Space Quest game to date. The developers decided to use pre-rendered graphics because they give the game a traditional adventure feeling. As they stated, adventures that try to convert to a 3D environment, like *Escape from Monkey Island*, suffer in the translation and are not true to the roots of the genre. That statement alone, shows that the developers know very well what they are doing and how to make a real

adventure in 3D unlike other commercial companies. SQ7's 3D pre-rendered graphics will allow the developers to position the camera in the exact spot to get the best perspective of a screen.

The team is developing its own **engine** for the purposes of the game. The engine's name is **SLAGE** and it stands for Sierra Like Adventure Game Engine or Silly Little Adventure Game Engine as the developers like to call it. The team has decided to proceed in the development of a new engine from scratch because all the attempts to use an already existent adventure game engine, did not give the developers the freedom they required in order to incorporate all the features they had in mind for the game. If they had chosen the path of using an already existent engine they would eventually have to compromise and SQ7 would be only as good as the engine would allow it to be.

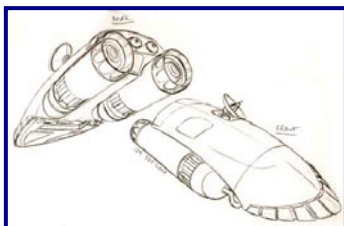
One of the early engines the developers used was AGAST. Although they decided to drop the engine because of the limitations it involved (virtually impossible to extend), they did learn a lot from the



Well there you go... the famous space janitor in height, width and depth! Roger Wilco got himself a third dimension.

process that will be proven useful in the development of the new engine. They also intend to release SLAGE as an open license engine for others to work on, modify or use.

Now when it comes to the games **audio** features, we can say already that it is going to make you wonder how a team with no budget can produce such quality. Let us start by saying that we heard a track which is called **'by Name'**, and let me just tell you that I have not heard another song in ANY adventure game I've played that sounded so professional. When I did listen to it, I asked the developers if this song was really going to be featured in the final version of the game, or if it was a commercial song that they just sent to me by mistake. It is THAT good. We also got to hear rough versions of other tracks that are going to be used in SQ7 and they were very reminiscent of the epic themes used in the older Sierra adventures.



It is noteworthy here to say that a member of the musical department behind the game is Dee Bloks, project leader of the Space Quest Prequels that we previewed on the fifth issue of The Inventory. The game will have **full voice support** and the developers will use both MP3 and OGG files. If the standards of the rest of the features are as high as the standards for

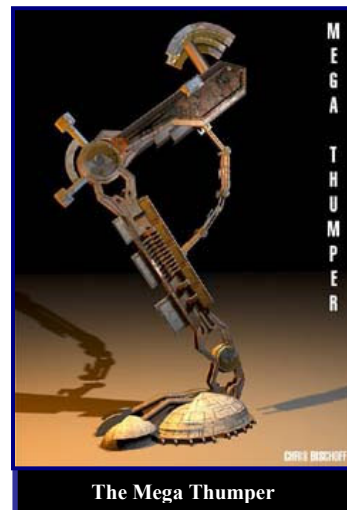


Another 3D model from SQ7.

the music, we can safely say that this is going to be one of the best adventures ever.

Regarding the **interface** of the game, SQ7 will proceed to a revolutionary move and will give the players the option of playing the game either with a **point and click interface** or with a **text parser!** So yes, all of you interface nostalgics out there have a good reason to rejoice! To give you an example of the interface freedom you will have in SQ7 let's imagine that there is a box that you want to open. You can either click on the hand icon and then on the box, or you can just type OPEN BOX in your parser. Both actions will have the same result. The icons of the point and click interface will be similar to the older Sierra adventures and if you want to get an idea of what they are going to look like in the final version, you can visit the game's official website (www.sq7.org) and look at the icons on the top. As the developers say themselves **'For the SQ 7 project we believe in choice'**. And this is why they provide players with both a point and click interface and a parser.

As for the **puzzles** of the game, the developers promise us some new interesting concepts. Apart from the traditional object combination puzzles that we are all used to, Space Quest 7 will feature puzzles built into the game design itself. Players might not identify them as puzzles, but they will be logical problems that you will have to tackle.



The Mega Thumper

The developers do not stop in great graphics, absolutely top-notch music, and a good interface in order to revive the golden days of Sierra. They will even create a full PDF print-out magazine like the ones that shipped with Sierra's Space Quest series. Their love for the genre and for the Space Quest games is evident. They also seem determined to complete this project no matter what. The team is currently looking for more members to join them, so if you are interested check out the back cover of The Inventory or visit their site www.sq7.org. We are definitely looking forward to the new adventures of Roger Wilco.

- Dimitris Manos

ADVENTURE GOSSIP

Tierra started working on Quest for Glory 2 VGA



Welcome back to the desert city of Shapeir, where the days are warm, and the open plazas bustle with the activities of friendly merchants. Quest For Glory II: Trial By Fire is next on Tierra's schedule. The remake of the popular game incorporates modernized graphics, enhanced music, and mouse-based point & click icons, while maintaining the story, and puzzles' style from the 1990 original. The game is still in a very early stage in development, so there's no way to tell when QFG2VGA will be released.

Tierra's plan is to keep the remake faithful to the original, which means there will be no plot changes, and the QFG2VGA hero will resemble the original hero (maintaining the Arabian style clothing), but will be updated into VGA graphics. But of course,

there will be some additional features. They include a new interface, dialogue pictures, enhanced music and new easter eggs. Tierra has even contacted Corey Cole, to get his opinion on what he'd like to see added in the remake.

The new interface will implement point and click icons for interacting-picking up items, and other actions and spells to communicate with other characters. QFG2VGA will feature both importing and exporting options, which will allow you to import a character from QFG1 and save your hero at the end of the game for use in QFG3. And yes, QFG2VGA will include the X-ray glasses easter egg! This is what Tierra had to say to us about the current state of QFG2:

"QFG2 is currently in major design / scripting stage. Current focus is to get all the basic elements of the game in working order (alleys, conversation, combat, buying, etc), to compromise between bitrate (filesize) and sound quality so that

the music pack will be included in the main game download. As previously said, QFG2 will not have a voice pack and QFG2 can import and export from previous QFG games. Watch the tierra website for regular updates"

For more information visit Tierra's site: www.tierraentertainment.com

Lucasarts stopped production on Full Throttle II

Ben's fans are devastated by the recent announcement of LucasArts, which has decided to stop production on Full Throttle: Hell on Wheels, and they've certainly expressed their feelings in almost every adventure game forum.

"We do not want to disappoint the many fans of Full Throttle," says Simon Jeffery, president of LucasArts, "and hope everyone can understand how committed we are to delivering the best quality gaming experience that we possibly can."

The sequel of the 1995 classic game was going to feature one of LucasArts' most popular and enduring characters, the swaggering outlaw biker Ben, leader of a renegade motorcycle gang called the Polecats. Before LucasArts announced the cancellation, many adventure players were discussing about one of the additions the follow up would feature: more action elements. If you're a lover of bare knuckle fighting and high speed biking, come sit next to me, and we'll wait together.

Ubisoft Entertainment announced a second CSI: Crime Scene Investigation game

Ubisoft confirmed that the same team that created the last game based on the hit TV series is working on a new project. CSI 1 shipped last March to good reviews and solid sales.

The game challenges you to solve a series of crimes as members of the Las Vegas CSI team. William Petersen, Marg Helgenberger and the rest of the crew provided their voces, and will do it again in the sequel. There are currently no details on the game's specifications or a tentative release date. Ubisoft did not have to report anything at the moment as the game is in a very early development stage.



The Inventory is looking for sponsors.

Would you like your products to be advertised in *The Inventory*? Did you know that you can link to websites from banners, images or text inside a PDF file? Would you like the readers of *The Inventory* to visit your website? If so and if you want to know more about our pricing policy then do not hesitate to contact us at theinventory@yahoo.com and we will get back to you within 24 hours.

Screen 7 Entertainment released a short trailer for Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth



Who can forget the golden days of "Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis"? Well, you'll soon revive those glory days! Screen 7 Entertainment has

released a short trailer of one of the most expected projects, "Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth". The story features Indy (who else could it be?), who is trying to prevent the Nazis from getting to the fountain of youth.

One of the most promising features about this new game is the graphics. They simply look awesome. Background, objects and inventory art were made by Misja Van Laatum, a professional and very talented artist. He also made a tutorial of how to make Fate of Atlantis-like graphics, available at the [FoY website](#)

The music also shows a huge potential. Although Mark
September 2003

Lovegrove said that it's not finished, the two tracks released sound great. For those who are expecting some fist work besides thinking, Mark Lovegrove confirmed that there will be a fight system in FoY, similar in nature to the one in FoA. The demo which features the intro and the first set of puzzles will be released sometime on September. The final release isn't scheduled yet, the team expects it will be released somewhere in 2004.

Mark Lovegrove promised that the plot will be rather non-linear and the game will have considerable replay value. Talkie version and digital soundtrack aren't planned yet, but Mark's intention is to have two versions of the game – a freeware one with text and midi music, and a boxed one with digital soundtrack and voice acting. Stay tuned for more news about Indy's next adventure! Demo available at: http://tong.bsone.net/rolling_foy.zip

New adventure game endeavour: Himalaya Studios

One member of the Tierra team, has created a new company called Himalaya Studios (official site: <http://www.himalayastudios.com/>), which is going to create commercial adventures in classic

style (like KQ2). Britney K. Brimhall, CEO of Himalaya Studios, says that "Himalaya Studios is a small business specializing in the development of commercial adventure games. Our aim is to create games that will run on current technology, yet retain the nostalgic feeling of the classics."

Brimhall considers that current games lack strong storylines, focusing on a fancy design and immersing dialogue. "Our graphics are a combination of beautifully hand painted hi color/resolution backgrounds made by award winning artists, and impressive 3D animations", said Brimhall. The official game engine of Himalaya team is Chris Jones' Adventure Game Studio, and musical staff consists of the husband and wife team, Tom and Dianne Lewandowski, of Quest Studios.

Brimhall also confirmed that they are currently working on a project that has been "somewhat secretive in nature": at the moment, a working version of this game is complete, and the team continues to finish tasks that will lead to the finalized product". No information has been released on the game yet, but Himalaya expects it'd be finished in the not-too-distant future.

Quest for Glory: The Novel?

At Quest for Glory Forum (also at JA+ Forum), Lori Cole and Mishell Baker have started a petition for gathering signs in order to get published their Quest For Glory novel.

Laura Blake Peterson, an agent from Curtis Brown Ltd. -a very important agency in US- has read the Cole and Baker's book and apparently saw some potential in it; especially considering the market Harry Potter has initiated. As Baker says, "She (Peterson) probably thought of the masses of kids and young adults turning the last page of the last Harry Potter and thinking, "Now what?""

AGDzine returns

The AGDzine (Adventure Game Developer Zine) has always been the ultimate online magazine for amateur adventure game creators, with free resources to use in your games.

After a period "offline" the AGDzine is returning this fall with a brand new design and some great new content. Exclusive interviews with two of the biggest names in the industry, brand new tutorials, lots of interactive content and much much more will see the launch of the new AGDzine. Watch this space!

Journey to the Center of the Earth site and trailer

Before the game release in November 2003, you can stay tuned at <http://www.journey-earth.com/>, a site that'll keep you informed of the game's breaking news. You can download the first preview video, screenshots, sketches and wallpapers.

Just Adventure hosts independent developers

Just Adventure has switched over to a new 20GB drive with a 800MHZ AMD processor and 256

MB RAM, thus being able to host more adventure trailer and demos... But the breaking news is that people at JA + is extending their offer to all independent adventure game developers who want to have their game hosted, while JA+ prepares to open a new section devoted to supporting the independent development community. For more information, contact Randy Sluganski by e-mail, randy@justadventure.com

The first episode of AGON is released

Private Moon Studios has released the first episode of AGON, which is available to buy and download at <http://www.agongame.com>.

AGON's team consider the genre of adventure game as a new way of telling a story, and this you can tell after playing AGON. Apart from playing a game, in AGON you have various degrees of immersion in a story. There are three possible levels of involvement, and the players can decide how much they want to deal with background stories of just solve specific puzzles. As AGON's developers stated, all players will be able to succeed at their chosen level at the end of the game (in episode 14), but players on the different levels may come to different conclusions.

The AGON CLUB will operate

Do you want to write for The Inventory?

We are almost fully staffed for this season but we could use the contribution of 1 more writer. Since there is only one position open though the competition will probably be tough.

If you want to apply for a place in The Inventory then what you have to do is send us a short review of your favourite adventure, a short review of an adventure you don't like and a short description about yourself.

Requirements: You must be punctual and have a good knowledge of the English language. Send applications to theinventory@yahoo.com

after the release of the first episode; all of those buying the episode can be members. Apart from providing information on the development it provides additional details of the story, such as the Professor's correspondence, his life story, his adventures not included in the game, Smythe's (his friend) discoveries and further information and amusement. And this is the place to play the board games with other gamers. Episodes will come approximately bimonthly and in a fix order.

- Carla Melloni

Microids has 2 new adventures under development!!!

We thought we might repeat what we wrote in the Syberia 2 preview in case somebody skipped that part. Yes it is true. Cedric Orvoine, PR Manager of Microids revealed to us that the leading company in the adventure genre has 2 new adventures (apart from Syberia 2) under development. The 2 adventures are in a very early phase of development and Microids prefers to keep them under wraps for the time being.

Apparently, the fact that Syberia has become Microids' most successful title to date, having sold nearly 350,000 copies in both the PC and X-box market has played some role in Microids' decision to focus on the adventure genre. On another note, Microids is going to launch soon the official website for Syberia 2, which is going to be completely separate to the one used for Syberia 1.

Interview with Legacy Interactive

Last year Legacy Interactive released an investigation adventure game based on the well-known TV series Law and Order. This was the first game to launch a new breed of adventures based on TV programs. The biggest innovation of the game was the chance to play both as an investigator and as an assistant district attorney. Now one year later Legacy Interactive is ready to publish the second installment of Law and Order, called Double or Nothing and promises to keep the good aspects of the first one as well as get rid of its flaws. This month, Christina Oliver Taylor, the producer of Law and Order II: Double or Nothing, passed by our Lounge (formerly known as the Celebrity Corner) to give us the latest information on the game.

Themselves: - Could you give us some background on yourselves?

I have a background in theater, which came in handy especially during the script development phase and during the voice casting and voice over recording. I've worked on adventure style games for approximately six years. My design partner, Craig Brannon, has a Ph.D. in Education, with an emphasis on technology in teaching. He's been developing games and educational software for 15 years.

- Have you worked on other games before Law and Order?

Yes, we worked on D.A.: Pursuit of Justice, as well as several Emergency Room titles and multiple training and educational products for the Web and CD-ROM.

some popular TV brands was the best way to accomplish that goal.

- Why did you decide to choose the adventure genre for your game?

Our primary goal was to create a game that faithfully reflects the style and structure of the TV show. We wanted the fans to feel like they had stepped into a Law & Order episode and now have the chance to solve a case themselves. Since interviewing witnesses, collecting and testing evidence and are the main activities of the show, we tried to translate those activities into the core gameplay. These elements made sense in an adventure-style game, which typically includes an inventory of items that players collect and use throughout the game, other characters

“The idea was Ariella Lehrer’s, president and founder of Legacy Interactive, who has always wanted to expand the base of game players beyond the “core gamer” demographic”

- Do you play other adventure games? If the answer is yes could you mention some of your favourite ones?

Myst trilogy, Syberia, Grim Fandango.

Law & Order 1: - Whose idea was it to turn the series into a game? Did the network NBC play any role in this decision?

The idea was Ariella Lehrer’s, president and founder of Legacy Interactive, who has always wanted to expand the base of game players beyond the “core gamer” demographic and thought that aligning with

who help the player advance, and several smaller



goals and puzzles that must be solved on the path toward completing one main overarching objective. In our case, the main objective is to achieve a murder conviction, and the smaller goals are getting search warrants to access more locations in which to search for evidence, and arresting a suspect. Along the way players have to solve puzzles to gain access to certain pieces of evidence and convince reluctant witnesses to cooperate by offering them the right incentives.

- Why did you decide to make the game in first person perspective and why did you decide to not use one of the cast members as the main character of the game?

We wanted the player to feel as though they had stepped into the world of Law & Order and have the chance to work alongside their favorite Law & Order characters.

- Let's talk about the feedback you got from players. Judging by your decision to release a patch that eliminates the timer, I assume that this was something that most adventurers felt uncomfortable with. Apart from that, what did players like the most about Law and Order 1 and what didn't they like as much?

“Over 120,000 units have sold through to customers so far in the U.S.”

Players loved getting to play both detective and district attorney. They liked Briscoe's character because he has the same wisecracking personality in the game as he does on the show. They liked the puzzles and the twists and turns of the plot. The most negative feedback we got was about the clock, which we removed completely for Law & Order II. Players also let us know that they didn't like having to exit the game and reload an earlier save if they didn't get all the information from a witness. In response, we added a “redo interview” feature that allows the player to essentially go back in time and start any interview over from the beginning. We also added subtitles, the ability to pause longer movies, and a case log feature which tracks players' movements through the game.

- How many copies has the game sold so far worldwide (if you cannot give an exact no you could say approximately how many copies)?

Over 120,000 units have sold through to customers so far in the U.S. The game is about to be released for the Macintosh and internationally in other languages

as well. Early sales reports for the United Kingdom have been very positive.

- Are you happy with that number? Is it in line with your expectations?

Yes, we are very pleased with the sales of Law & Order I. Frankly, we weren't sure how popular the game would be, given reports of decreasing sales trends for both adventure games and PC games, but we were counting on the enthusiasm of the Law & Order fans, and they really came through.

Law & Order 2: - The writer of the story of the first Law and Order game did a great job. Is he going to write the story for the second one as well?

Well, actually, he's a she – her name is Suzanne Oshry. And no, we had a different writer, Douglas Stark, write Law & Order II: Double or Nothing. Both Doug and Suzanne have previously written for the TV show.

- How many characters will we get to meet in the game and how many locations will we get to visit?

There are 15 witnesses in Law & Order II: Double or Nothing, and there are eight locations in which to hunt for clues.

- Approximately, will the length of the game be longer or shorter than the first one?

The length will be a bit longer, given the addition of more puzzles, more witness interviews, and more searchable locations.

- Is the same interface with the first game going to be used or are you going to use a different interface? (If different) Could you describe to us



the differences between the new and the old interface?

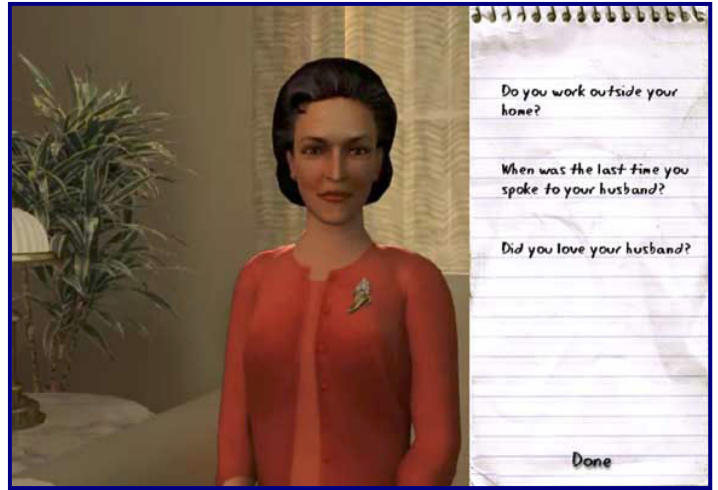
The interface will be the same with enhanced features. We've added pop-up tutorial screens that provide instruction to the player the first time certain features are encountered. We've added a new feature called the Case Log, which summarizes every action by the player. This will be useful to players who have multiple saved games and may want to return to the game after some time has elapsed. Players won't have to retain what they have and haven't done in each saved game their own memory – the game will do it for them.

- Is the case file going to work in a different way in the second part? Is it going to be differently organized?

The case file will work similarly to the first case, with a few improvements. We've added more space to the inventory, as well as a new skill called the Case Organization skill that will give players hints on what to include in their search warrants, arrest warrants, and trial subpoenas.

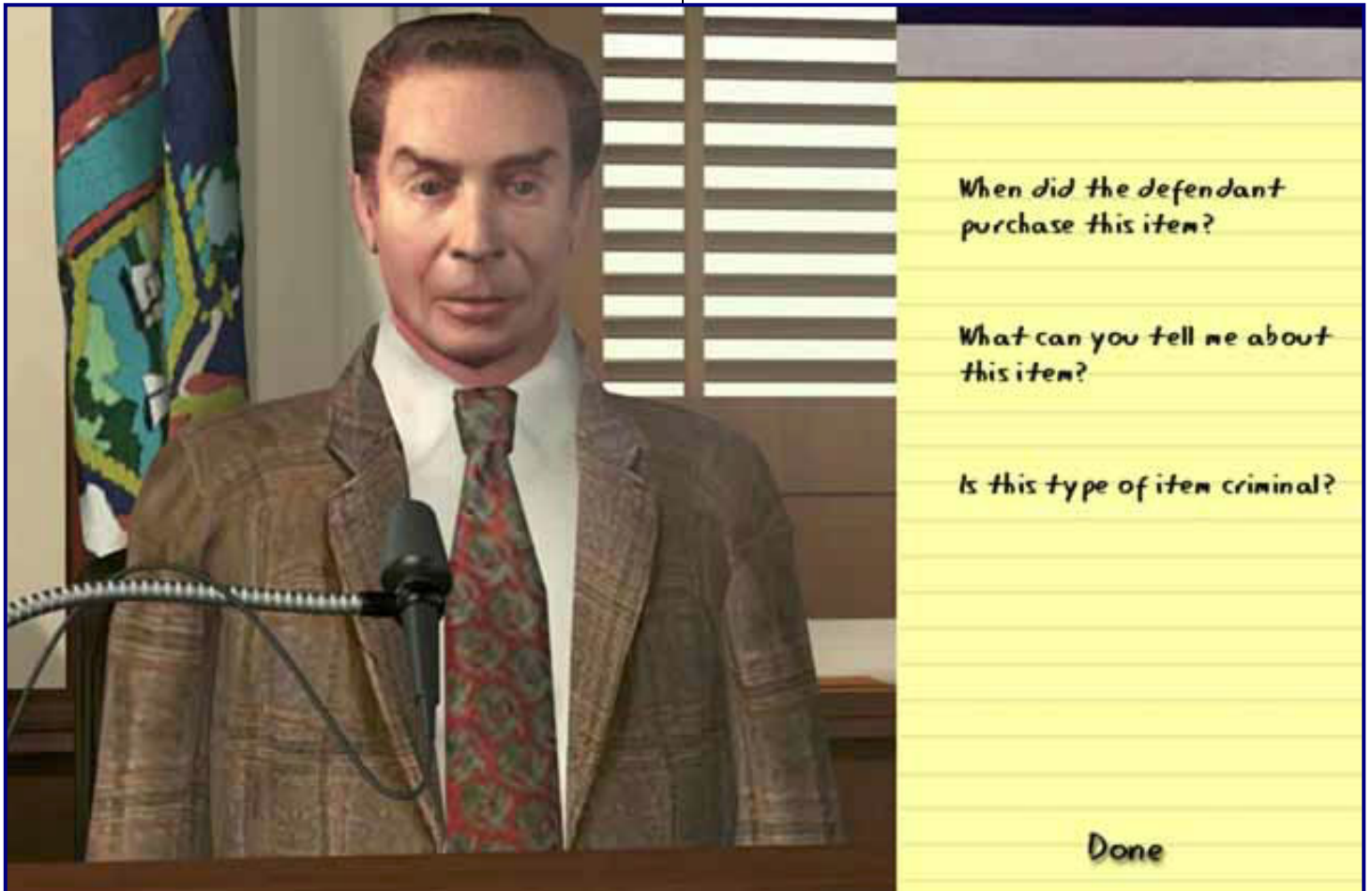
- What about the dialogue system? Will we still get the notepad on the side of the screen to choose questions from?

The dialog system will still consist of a notepad on the



side to choose questions from, with one notable new feature. If the player is unhappy with the information they got or didn't get from the witness, they can select a "redo interview" button and essentially go back in time and start the interview over. In Law & Order I, in order for a player to redo an interview, they had to quit the game and reload a previous save. We got feedback from our customers that they didn't want to have to exit the game in order to retry the interview, so we created this new feature to satisfy their requests.

- Let's go to the gameplay of Law and Order 2 now. The first installment did not contain a lot of

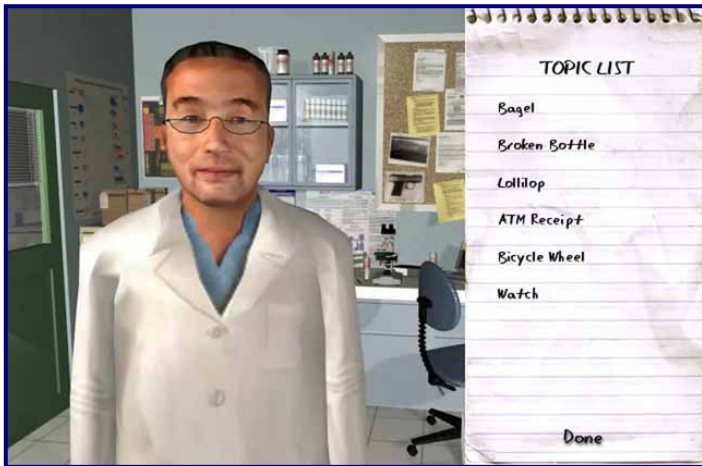


puzzles, but according to your press release puzzles will come more often in the second part. Could you describe the kind of puzzles that the players will face in Law and Order 2? Will they require the use of certain investigation tools?

The new puzzles include a paper shredder puzzle in which the player will need to assemble the pieces of a document that had been shredded, an encrypted email which the player will have to decode, and a combination-locked safe that contains important evidence. There will also be several locked items that require keys and other tools to be opened, sometimes by items that are obtained in searchable locations and sometimes directly from witnesses. There are also many witnesses who refuse to cooperate unless they are given a strong incentive, so the player must figure out what will convince those witnesses to talk.

- Will the game be easier or more difficult than its predecessor?

The game is a little more difficult than its predecessor, but if the player uses the two hint features that are available, Teamwork and Case Organization, it lowers the difficulty level to about the same level as the first case.



- In Law and Order 1 when you gave evidence to the crime lab you had to wait for a while until the lab tests were completed. Will this happen in Law and Order 2 as well or will you get the lab tests right away?

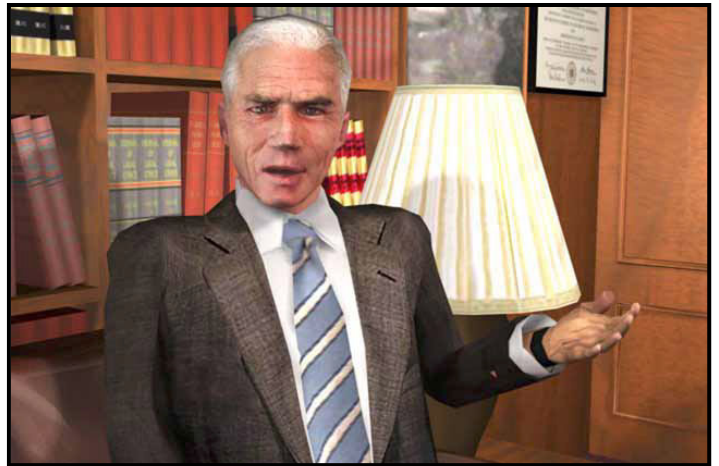
We've cut the time it takes for test results to be completed in half, to be sure players aren't spending lots of time just waiting for their results to come back.

- Will the graphics of the game get any enhancements and if so what are these going to be?

The graphics are improved in Law & Order II. The most noticeable change is the lighting – we've used new technology to achieve more sophisticated lighting effects as well as depth of field, to make the

September 2003

graphics richer and more aesthetically pleasing. We've also put more resources into the animation, so the movements of the characters are smoother and more expressive.



- When will the game be released?

Law & Order II: Double or Nothing will be released on September 30, 2003.

- How did it go with the beta testing phase? The previous installment had some technical problems and some gamers felt a bit annoyed by that. Have you taken any measures to avoid this kind of situation in the second game?

We've had a beta test group playing the game for the past four weeks, and have made many adjustments to the gameplay in response to their suggestions, like adjusting the timing and content of hints, and adding phone messages to explain certain aspects of the case as it develops.

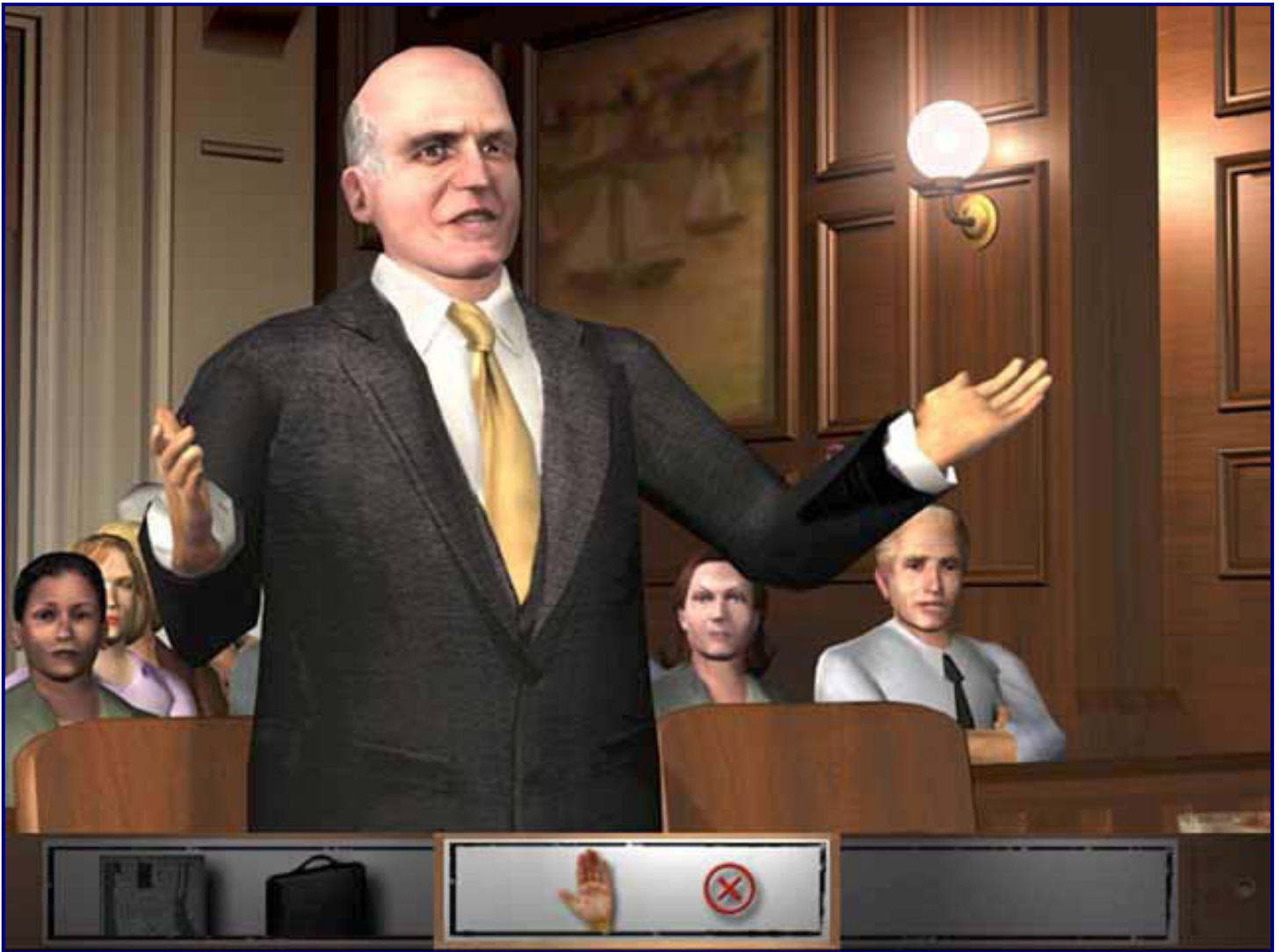
Regarding the technical problems, we learned a great deal from the release of Law & Order: Dead on the Money, and have added many new features to the installer to make the game run properly on more systems. These new installer features will detect the user's video card, chip set, QuickTime and DirectX version and make the appropriate adjustments automatically. Most of these functions will be invisible to the player, but should allow the game to install and run seamlessly a greater percentage of the time. We've done our very best to improve the compatibility of the game so that more people will be able to successfully install and play it.

- When will a playable demo be available?

A playable demo will be available at www.lawandordergame.com by September 30.

- Are you planning for more sequels in the Law and Order series after Double or Nothing?

“There will be commercial spots during Law & Order shows for the first few months after the game is released”



We'll release information any future sequels at a later date.

General: - Are you thinking of producing any other adventures apart from the Law and Order series?

We are currently in production on a strategy game based on the hit TV series, ER. We are also pursuing licenses for the some other popular TV shows as well.

- Are you going to publish the game yourselves or have you found another publisher to do that for you?

Vivendi Universal is our publisher and distributor for both Law & Order: Dead on the Money and Law & Order II: Double or Nothing.

- There was another adventure based on a TV-show that was quite similar in concept to Law and Order and that adventure was CSI: Crime Scene

Investigation. Have you played that game and if yes what did you think of it?

We did play the C.S.I. game, and we were impressed with some of the interface features as well as the graphics quality of the locations. Many of us here felt that there weren't enough hours of gameplay in the product to satisfy players, and that the game was a little too easy.

- Have you thought of any strategies in order to pull the TV fan-base to the game? Will there be any commercials during the TV show advertising the game?

There will be commercial spots during Law & Order shows for the first few months after the game is released, as well as during similar shows like Monk. We'll be posting our online demo on fan sites for the show as well, and have a strong PR campaign in the works which includes a story in TV Guide to coincide with the season premiere.

Interview with Screen 7 Entertainment

I am sure that most of you can still remember Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis. It appears more than often in adventurer's top ten lists of adventures. Its beautiful graphics, the great story involving the famous professor, the lost dialogues of Plato and its amazing gameplay offering three different ways to solve the adventure made this game one of the most remarkable ones we ever got to play. Lucasarts decided that the action genre would suit the famous hero more than the adventure one. On the other hand, the adventure genre's devoted fans had a different opinion.

Some of these devoted fans, formed Screen 7 Entertainment, a company specializing in point and click adventures, and decided to put the whip back in Indy's hands and the mouse back in ours. As you read already in our gossip area, Screen 7 released during the summer a rolling demo of Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth, which is the name of their upcoming adventure, and the result they produced is by all means extraordinary. Mark Lovegrove, the project leader of the Indiana Jones FOY, has joined forces with our magazine and he is going to write the Talking Dead column from now on for The Inventory. In order to celebrate his debut we decided to bring the talents behind FOY to our celebrity corner in their first large-scale interview ever (believe me, I am certain they are going to give many more in the future). So let's see what they have to say.

- Could you give us some background on yourselves?

MJL (Mark "m0ds" Lovegrove): *I'm a young guy from the UK, who is trying to make a name for himself by developing adventure games (Uh-oh). I'm currently working as a web developer for a small company in Oxford. Despite the fact it takes me ages to get to and from work, I like to spend my evenings working on various projects, including FoY. Working on FoY and other projects, including the AGDzine etc takes up a lot of my free time, and only at weekends do I get time to undertake my other passion – film-making. It's my ambition to some day be the owner of a company that develops adventure games – especially point and clicks. However, the first hurdle to this challenge is getting point and clicks back as main-stream games, this, therefore – is my first target. Oh, and of course so is finishing FoY ☺*

MvL (Misja "Miez" van Laatum): *I was born a long, long time ago, in a cold and wet country. I attended the Utrecht College of Arts, studying computer graphics. I fill my present days as a freelance (web) designer and jack-of-all-trades. I like cats and books. My special subject is world peace.*

SG (Shawn "Rodekill" Guzzo): *Well, I'm a 24-year-old graphic designer from Montreal. I like to doodle. My room smells like dirty socks at the moment. Hello ladies. Aside from that, well, I'm pretty dull. I like making adventure games, obviously, and going to the*

gym once every few months. I think my gym bag smells better than my room right now, actually. Wow, remind me never to be asked about myself again. It's pretty depressing. The first adventure game I played was Kings Quest III, way back when, but it wasn't the game that really captured my imagination. That dubious honour goes to Space Quest 3, which at the time was nothing but a page in the Sierra catalogue. Once it finally came out though, that was pretty much the end of my chances at being the cool jock in school. The first time I saw Raiders of the Lost Ark, I was about four years old, and the corpse of Sapito AKA Satipo scarred me for life.

AR(Alan Rodrigues): *I'm an 18 years old male from Switzerland. I graduated high school this summer, and will study social and political sciences at college. I like to draw and i enjoy adventure games. I can also*



hold my breath for 10 minutes.

AJ (Amberle “Pestilence” Johnson): Well, I'm a 20 year old game design student and ex-archeology major. As far as my video game background goes, I don't remember a time when I haven't had computers, consoles, or games in my life. My family used to sit around playing the old Sierra adventure games and the Dungeons and Dragons computer games together. Some of my earliest memories are playing games on our old Atari.

- I take it that most of you are big fans of Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis. Any other adventures you are very fond of?

MJL: FoA is still my favourite game of all time! I always enjoyed the movies and playing the game just added to my love of all things Indiana Jones. The Fate Of Atlantis has inspired all my movements in point and click development, and probably always will. I'm a big fan of all the LucasArts adventures, especially The Dig, Monkey Island and Day of the Tentacle. I also love Teen Agent, Little Big Adventure

the Sierra games with my family, so they'll always hold a special place in my heart.

AR: Sure, my favorites are mostly LucasArts classics like Loom, Monkey Island 1 or DOTT. There are just too many good games to make a full list. And yes, Princess Tomato is underrated!

SG: Space Quest 1-4, Monkey Island 1-3, Indy 3, DOTT, Sam N Max etc... Pretty much all the classics I guess you could say. Back in the heyday, I devoured adventures. I even played those Les Manly games. Get it? Less Manly? Haha. Also some of the amateur stuff out there is excellent, like Larry Vales.

- When and where does the story of the game take place?

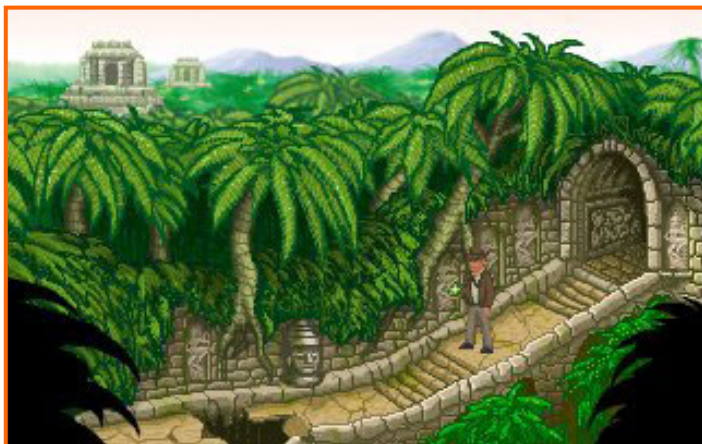
MJL: As always, Indiana Jones travels far and wide on his search for the fountain of youth. Clues are dotted around the world and it's up to him to search for them and make use of them as best he can. The game is set in 1939, the dawn of World War II. We see that many towns and cities are preparing for the new war.

“It was recently asked whether Sophia Hapgood will return, and it is definitely being considered.”

(both one and two) and The Adventures Of Fatman, also another inspiring project.

MvL: Many, many: I love the most old LucasArts games: the Dig, Loom, MI 1&2, Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade, etc. I've played and enjoyed the Longest Journey – but my favorite series has to be the Gabriel Knight adventures.

AJ: There aren't many I don't enjoy. My favorites are some of the more obscure ones, like Callahan's Crosstime Saloon, Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth, and Princess Tomato in the Salad Kingdom (a very underrated NES adventure game), as well as the more known ones like the Monkey Island games and Sam and Max. As I mentioned, I grew up playing



- How will the game start?

SG: Action! Adventure! Fortune! Glory! Uppercuts!

MJL: The game starts with an expedition in Asia, where Indiana Jones has recovered a lost gem, which has a strange glow... However, things don't seem to be looking too good for Indy. Avoiding boulders, losing his gun and then losing the Gem. And if that wasn't bad enough, Marcus has got even MORE bad news on his return to Barnett College. It turns out a German general is searching for the Fountain of Youth, so it's up to Indy to take up the hunt that many explorers failed to find the fountain before it's too late.

- Will we get to meet any famous characters from previous Indiana Jones films or games? How about Sophia Hapgood? Is she going to help Indy this time around? Or what about Indy's father, Henry Jones?

SG: I guarantee that there will be at least a couple of appearances from Nazis.

MJL: We're finding that we are able to link characters into the design that had not already been planned. It was recently asked whether Sophia Hapgood will return, and it is definitely being considered. Of course, Marcus Brody is back again,

as is Sallah who you'll remember from the movies. Henry Jones doesn't feature in FoY (which is a shame, I agree) but there may well be other appearances from characters from FoA and the Indiana Jones movies. Make sure you play the game and you'll see!

- How many characters is Indy going to meet and how many locations will he visit?

MJL: *With the current design, there are more than 10 different locations, this could grow considerably. Bearing in mind that each location may consist of anything up to five or six screens, there will be a lot of places to visit! He'll also meet an interesting array of characters, at least twenty of them each with their own personalities, characteristics and clues!*

- Is he going to meet any snakes? He hates snakes you know ;)

MJL: *Indy will undoubtedly find snakes right where he doesn't want them!*

SG: *I wanted to put in a giant man-eating snake at the center of the Earth, but we couldn't make it work. Also, it's a terrible idea.*



on how professional you are handling the development of FOY, it also gives birth to the question whether FOY will include some historical events. So apart from the nazis and WW2 is there anything else in the game that comes out from the history books?

MvL: *I can't speak for all the stuff in the game, but I personally check a lot of details while making background art: what did buildings look like in the 1930's? did that plane exist before the war? Etc...*

AJ: *Well, I've mostly researched the legends about the Fountain of Youth's locations, the people who've looked for it, stuff like that. I'm not sure how much of what I've found will be going into the game, but I do know it won't be taking place in Florida, which was only accidentally thought to be a location by Ponce*

“...we don't want to create something you can play and finish on a lunch break. The game will be long, the game will be big.”

- Apart from a few exceptions most fan-made adventures are quite short in length for obvious reasons. How long will FOY be? How many hours do you expect to take an average adventurer to finish it?

MJL: *It is a great fear of mine that we create a game that is too short. Although FoY is an amateur adventure game, a fan-made adventure or whatever you wish to call it – we are striving to create something that will entertain and enthuse others for many years after it's release. Therefore, we don't want to create something you can play and finish on a lunch break. The game will be long, the game will be big. I feel we have a very strong, capable team right now – and the constant support from people such as yourselves and your readers only strengthens the integrity of the team. I don't know yet how long it will take any adventurer, this is something we'll hopefully be able to start charting once it goes into beta-testing.*

- It is quite noteworthy that you even have a researcher in your team. Apart from being a proof

de Leon. That and it'd just be silly.

MJL: *A lot of the influence on the first section of the game relies on the travels of Ponce de Leon, probably the most famous fountain of youth explorer. There isn't a lot of history on the fountain of youth, but what there is we are trying to implement and keep accurate. History is of key importance to archaeology, and Indiana Jones is an archaeologist – therefore, an Indiana Jones game definitely uses historic elements. Amberle has been making sure that everything with historic relevance in the game, i.e. artifacts, locations etc ties in with actual history. I remember that either her or Misja found out that in Bimini, which is one of the places Indy travels too – that there is a road which is said to point to Atlantis. We were thinking about incorporating this into the game ;)*

- Judging by the screenshots we have seen so far, we can safely say that this game has nothing to be jealous of the old Lucasarts' great adventures. There is also a tutorial on your website showing

people how to create backgrounds in the old Lucasarts style. How did you come up with that knowledge?

MJL: *Why, we hired the artists at LucasArts of course... :P*

MvL: *Basically it's a lot of trial and error – and looking a lot at original LucasArts background artwork. Using this style of drawing started way back in the 90's when I was at the Art College, we were working on Amiga's and I was forever trying to make a game. A lot of graphics were made, and quite some coding – but somehow I never really finished any game.*

- Why did you choose to use a 320x200 resolution and not a higher one?

MJL: *If I were an artist, I might be able to say “its easier to use” or “its less complicated than a higher resolution” – but I'm not an artist. It was chosen because a) it has a distinct classic adventure look about it and b) because the other two Indiana Jones point and click adventures were in the same resolution too. Simple!*

MvL: *All the FoY graphics are original, but I've definitely looked at the original FoA graphics for inspiration. What colors did they use? What textures? Also, to make familiar locations look “right” – after all, we all know what Indy's office looks like, right?*

MJL: *When I advertised for background artists, I asked “The ability to draw to the Fate Of Atlantis Style preferred” – and you can certainly see that Misja fitted the bill! For those who may remember the dawn of FoY, (which was back in 2000) there was a completely different team, a different plot and a different way of going about things. Back then, the artists were using FoA's graphics rather than using them as a reference. Ripping graphics is a definite no-no in my book, especially without permission from the author. This was whilst Jocke Andersson was project leader. Once I had taken over, the project lay dormant – and I think it was the result of me saying no to ripped graphics. From that day on, I wanted original graphics and that was all. Even though nothing was done on the game for a year, I think the result of that decision was totally just. Look at the team we have now, the quality of their work and the*

“I suggest to anyone making a fan-made adventure not to start if off half cocked. Do everything from the start, make it your own, make it from scratch.”

- Cutscenes are usually considered by players as the best reward for solving a puzzle. Will the game feature a large number of cutscenes?

MvL: *I hope so – they're fun to draw, they help the story along, and it can't be a real FoA sequel if it doesn't have in game cutscenes.*

MJL: *If that's the case Misja, then I'll get Shawn to write in twenty more cut-scenes :P FoA featured some superb cut-scenes and we're going to try our best to reward the player as best we can. Of course, smaller advances in the storyline result in smaller cut-scenes, whereas larger advances mean larger cut-scenes. We're going to try and ram the game full of animation so the player is never bored, but remains captivated throughout.*

- Did you use the graphics of FOA as a reference? Did you use any of FOA's graphics or did you design everything from scratch?

AR: *I sometimes look for reference in FOA, mostly for animations. However, I try to keep my own distinct style, particularly when I design characters.*

coverage we are getting. I suggest to anyone making a fan-made adventure not to start if off half cocked. Do everything from the start, make it your own, make it from scratch.

- Do you intend to use voice-overs for Indiana Jones FOY?

MJL: *Not for the initial release, but it's something we may consider for a future version. Our time and effort at the moment is going into creating a solid, enjoyable game, and extras like a full-talkie are something we need not worry about until the initial*



release! I'd only really want to release a talkie version if I was assured Doug Lee would do the voice of Indy again.

- Will you make an mp3 pack for the game or will you only use MIDI?

MJL: It's the same as above – if we get time, have the energy and feel FoY will benefit from it, we may add an MP3 pack after the initial release.

- How much time of music will the final version of the game include?

MJL: There will be over an hour of originally composed music for the soundtrack, and over an hour of ambient sound. The soundtrack will be available for download when the full game is finished too.



- Let's talk a bit about the interface of the game. We can see from the screenshots that your GUI differs a bit from the SCUMM engine used in FOA. In your GUI there are less commands, and you have also added the options, save, load buttons on the lower right corner. Would you like to tell us the reasons for these changes?

MvL: The old SCUMM GUI has some redundant functions, that we thought were not completely necessary: “push”, “pull” and “use” for instance can be used for a lot of the same functions. We decided to make the interface a little leaner, and more logical.

MJL: Decreasing the amount of options in the GUI may make the game easier, it may not. It's not really something we'll be able to tell until beta-testing. Our main concern is that “push, pull, open and close” do not get used enough, so we deprecated them. However, as with FoA, some special GUI commands will appear, like “touch” and “feel”. We added the

buttons to the right hand side because the game will be mouse driven. Although in places you will be able to use the keyboard, you will not be able to move the cursor around with the arrow keys like you could in FoA, therefore, we felt it would be useful to have the Save/Load and Options available to the player at the click of a button.

- Will you have to click on a command first and then click on a certain hotspot or will the appropriate command be automatically chosen if you right click on a hotspot like Lucasarts did in their last point and click adventures (i.e. if you passed your cursor over a door, you wouldn't have to click on open first and then on the door, but you could just right click and the open command would be chosen automatically)?

MJL: Good question! Perhaps this is something we really need more feedback about. Yes, it'd be nice to have it – but will it really be needed since we've cut down on the number of buttons in the GUI?

- Is the dialogue system going to be the same with FOA?

MJL: It is indeed.

- The only undisputed flaw of some point and click adventures, is extreme pixel hunting, which sometimes haunts point and click adventures because some developers decide to ‘hide’ objects in the backgrounds. We have seen though many point and click adventures that have managed to avoid that mistake by carefully staging objects and hotspots on the screen. Will you take any measures in order to avoid extreme pixel hunting?

MJL: It's noted that almost every graphic point and click adventure you play, you're bound to come across at least one pixel-hunt puzzle. That's the same with FoY, there will be some pixel hunt puzzles. To avoid extreme pixel hunting, I think the best we can offer is a well-written or well-described clue. This is something the team is still discussing together.

MvL: Yes – we've looked into it. There will be some pixel hunting, but only in those situations where it makes some sort of “sense”. We won't frustrate the player any more than necessary.

- Many new adventures, even fan-made ones, prefer easier and more logical puzzles in order to

“The old SCUMM GUI has some redundant functions, that we thought were not completely necessary...”

introduce new members to our genre. Will FOY be a newbie-friendly adventure or will it require a large experience on adventure games and much brain-busting?

MvL: *I hope we can introduce the player gradually into the game: the original FoA had a very nice learning curve built in, and I hope we can duplicate that to a degree.*

- Will the players get to drive any vehicles like in FOA?

MvL: *Nice one! I don't know yet ... Mark? Shawn?*

MJL: *Certainly! I don't really want to say what these vehicles will be just yet, but of course – Indy will find something! Don't forget, he often finds himself on the outside of a vehicle or on the hind end of a horse! ;)*

“We’re going to focus a lot more on other characters being vital to helping Indy out – and instead of Indy doing all the work, other characters he meets are going to be more realistic in their AI.”

MJL: *It was initially my plan to start the game off easy, and get harder. To some extent, it does do that – but you do get thrown into a couple of fairly hard puzzles quite early on in the game. I think however, FoY will appeal to a new player AND an old timer. Like everyday life, there will be a mixture of puzzles, easy and taxing. All the puzzles in the game try to be logical and try to have some form of clue about them, so you should never be left wondering what to do next so long as you've found the clue.*



- FOA was one of the most non-linear adventure games ever made, offering three different multiple paths a gamer could take (team, fighting, brains). Will FOY also be non-linear or are you opting for a linear mode with only one path?

MJL: *You don't have to have three paths to have a non-linear game ;) You have to have a well-written storyline, well written puzzles, interesting characters, cut-scenes and enemies. And that's what we will have. I think the three-path part of FoA added to the replayability value rather than its non-linearity. We know FoY will be non-linear, and we hope it'll be replayable too!*

- In the forum you have mentioned a new nifty feature that focuses on character interaction. Would you like to tell us what exactly is this feature?

MJL: *With FoY, we're working on several scripts that do things you won't have seen before in an adventure game. The one I mentioned on the forum works on character interaction. We're going to focus a lot more on other characters being vital to helping Indy out – and instead of Indy doing all the work, other characters he meets are going to be more realistic in their AI. They'll walk around on their own, talk to Indy and even more. We're even working on a script where other characters will affect parts of a puzzle (although I don't want to give away how just yet!) You'll see an example of some of this in the playable demo. We hope it'll make the game more enjoyable – and again it should add to replay-ability and so forth.*

- Will the game feature fight sequences like in Fate of Atlantis. If yes, then how do you plan to handle them? Will the player have to use the keyboard or the mouse? How easy will the fight sequences be?

MvL: *Yes, but they will not be obligatory: there will be ways to avoid fights (as there were in the original FoA).*

MJL: *It will almost always be possible in FoY to avoid a fight, but if you do get pulled into one – they will vary like in FoA. Sometimes you had a weak opponent that it might take two hits to put down, but then, you may have a harder opponent. At the moment, we're looking into being able to use either mouse or keyboard when throwing a fight, but our fight system is still very much in its early stages of development – i.e. planning!*

- Let's talk about something very critical concerning the future of the game, and that is copyright issues. Do you know by any chance if Lucasarts is aware of your project?

MJL: I have no idea if they are. If they are aware of it, I'd love to hear from them to know that they're okay with it. If they don't know about it, I hope they remain unknowing until its release, just in case they do have something to say.

SG: My name is John Doe, and I live in Antarctica. Seriously though, I understand the need to protect the copyright. It's laws and stuff, you know, boring crap. That said, why risk developing a project that may just get shut down? I have no idea. It's probably similar to why people make fan films. I know I want more Indy stories, and what better way than to make your own? It's probably an artist thing. We're all nuts. Worst come to worst, hopefully we'll be able to work something out with Lucasarts. We're not in this for the money or anything. Maybe we should just make Indy a babbling idiot and call it a 'parody'.

MvL: I don't think they're aware of the project yet. The only copyright issues that we might have is the name "Indiana Jones" and the use of his likeness in some artwork. I'm not that worried however; only last week an UT mod group that is making a Star Wars Imperial Stormtroopers mod got the official "green light" by LucasArts to continue their project.

MJL (again): I'm fairly certain they won't touch FoY, after all – everything we're doing except the name "Indiana Jones", some of the other character names and a couple of locations is original. FoA II does not seem to have been touched yet their game has been in development for at least three years. We should be fine, and I think if LucasArts' were to play FoY, they'd realise how our game compliments the characters and the world they created around Indiana Jones.

- If (and let's all hope that this won't happen) Lucasarts decides to put an end to your project what will you do then? Some other developers of other projects based on Sierra's or Lucasarts' rights, have said that if something like that happens they would just change the name of the characters and their looks and they would just go on with the game. Is this something you might do as well in such a case?

SG: I'd probably cry or something. Again, it's

completely within their rights to shut it down. I still find it odd that you can go to <http://www.theforce.net/theater/> and watch a billion fan films, and no one seems to have any problem with that.

- The game's fans are already longing for the playable demo. When approximately will the demo be ready for download?

MvL: We are still working for a September release. Aren't we?

MJL: Although I'm not putting my finger on a date, the playable demo could be ready sometime this month (September) – however, to ensure the demo is top quality, it may take a little longer. Again – we don't want to disappoint, and the only way of making sure of that is by releasing the demo only when we're totally sure it's ready.



- And although a playable demo is very much awaited, nothing can be compared to the real deal, the game itself! I can understand that because it is a non-profit project, it is difficult and maybe unnecessary to set release dates, but can you tell the readers who are eager to play FOY roughly when do you think the game will be ready?

MvL: A full game release is still scheduled for 2004 – nothing more definite than that though.

MJL: I'm trying to keep the development to schedules. Of course, with everyone on the team doing different things in their lives the schedules cannot always be kept, or are rather loose. And of course, it's not like I'm going to get mad if anyone on the team falls behind schedule :P But I am hoping that it will be ready for Fall 2004. Bottom line, under no circumstances are we going to rush, and there's

“A full game release is still scheduled for 2004 – nothing more definite than that though.”

no chance I'd ever be too pushy towards the team to get things done.

- Could you estimate how big in file size will the final game be? How do you plan to make the game available to the public?

MJL: The download should be between 10 and 20mb zipped maximum, but it's far too early to say just yet. You will be able to download the game (which will be the smaller download) and then the ambient sound effects if you want too (which will be a bigger download).

- Is there anything else you would like to add about FOY?

MJL: I hope it meets everyone's expectations! There's been so much interest toward the project from fans of Indiana Jones, Fate Of Atlantis and point and clicks that it'd be a shame if it didn't. With the team we've got now, I'm sure it can fulfill everyone's expectations and hopefully more. Just remember we're going to take what we've learnt from FoA and build on it. The support we've been getting from fans is great – and very much appreciated. FoY is not trying to be FoA. It's trying to be a sister product, something that you will be able to play alongside FoA and hopefully enjoy just as much.

MvL: I love working on this project! It is so much more fun than the day-to-day work I do making websites. I'm very proud of what we've done already; this is going to be a great game!

MJL (again): PS, a new website is coming soon! Misja is working hard on the design... AREN'T YOU MISJA! :P

- Old Sierra vs old Lucasarts. Which company did you prefer and why?

MvL: LucasArts; I prefer their graphical style much more. I also think that they're better storytellers – they are more cinematic, and I appreciate that. The old Sierra games; Kings-, Space- and Police Quest simply never did it for me.

MJL: LucasArts for me. Their graphics stood out to me more, their gameplay inspired me more and their control interface just worked for me more. I much preferred the story/dialogue driven approach to the death-sequences method.

SG: Ah, the age old question. That's tough. I think I'd have to say Lucasarts, just because their games were more character based, and I like that.

- Point and click vs direct control. Which one do you think is the best interface for adventure games and why?

SG: Point and Click. Direct control just feels wrong, I mean, it doesn't add anything to the gameplay, so why bother? Getting stuck on random background objects in MI4, while more fun than Monkey Kombat, sure as heck didn't draw me into the story or anything.

MvL: It completely depends on the type of story you're trying to tell. They each have their merits, and I don't prefer one over the other.

MJL: I think it depends on the game. Something like the new Broken Sword game makes much more sense to work using direct control, which it does, but I still think Grim Fandango could have worked well with a point and click interface of some nature. 3D games don't have to use direct controls, but then I don't think 2D games need to be point and click. It's up to the designer whether it works or not. I still prefer point and click, because I prefer the chance to think about things, work my way through at my own pace, rather than having to press a button for an instant of a second to do something specific.

- 1st person vs 3rd person viewpoint. Which is better in your opinion?

MvL: Again: it all depends on the type of story – first person is more "in your face", better suited for those stories where you have to identify with the protagonist. 3rd person works better for "traditional" storytelling I guess.

MJL: 3rd person for me, yet I'd never say no to making at least one first person adventure game during my amateur developing career.

SG: This would really depend on the game. If the main character has an identity and a distinct personality, then it makes more sense to be able to see him on screen. You want the hero to be, how would you say it... complete, I guess. A whole person. If you really wanted to use the first person perspective, you'd probably be better off with a "You walk into a tree and it talks to you" scenario. Emphasis on the 'YOU' of course.



- AGS vs AGAST. What are the advantages and what the disadvantages of those two engines?

MJL: Oh great, I'm the only sucker who dared answer this question! I prefer AGS, but each to their own opinion...

- We can safely say that the fans revolution has already started. The number of the fan made adventures out there is maybe even larger than the number of commercial adventures made. What do you see in the future for fan-developed games.

MJL: I think we'll continue to see many more fan-made adventures from now till the future. The problem with fan-adventures is that a lot of them get shut-down. I'd never have considered being part of a fan-adventure unless I was assured it was being done



MJL: I'm looking forward to a game called FoY, and I wish the developers would hurry up and make it.

MvL: I'm very, very curious about the "Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis II" project by AmberfishArts. What I've seen of their game looks great already!

“Games need stories, and I always enjoy the ones that HAVE a story much more than the ones that just pretend to have one.”

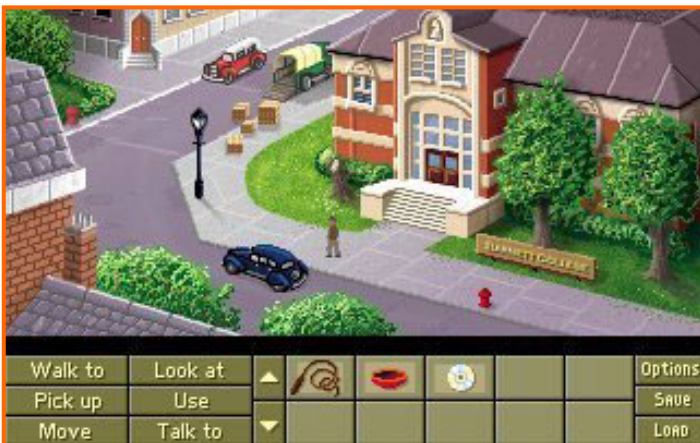
properly, and complimented the original(s). Perhaps in the future, companies will open up to fan-fiction, and I hope they do.

SG: I see more commercial projects, like "The Adventures Of Fatman". The quality is really getting up there, and for 10\$, you can't really go wrong. A lot of people probably won't agree with that, but, whatever.

MvL: More and more fan-based games are being made, and I think that's great. The tools to make your own games are getting better, more user friendly and wider available. It's a good thing that big games companies, and independent developers are unlocking all this potential.

- Which of the fan-made projects in development right now are you mostly looking forward to (apart from FOY of course ☺)?

SG: Anything that actually gets finished, lol.



MJL (again): I'm looking forward to FoA II because I'm interested to see how they develop the story from where it left off. There's a couple of Space Quest remakes I'm looking forward to. I also think that Tierra have done a magnificent job with their Kings Quest remakes and it was superb to hear that the developers moved in together to work on the games. I wish that could be possible for me, but I think I smell too much for anyone to want to move in with me ;)

- Although some years ago there was a stagnation of adventure games in the market, nowadays we see more and more of them made. Do you think that we can safely say that adventures are back?

MJL: Were they really ever gone? ;)

MvL: I hope so – I really think people are getting sick and tired of yet another cookie-cutter, run-of-the-mill FPS or RTS game. Games need stories, and I always enjoy the ones that HAVE a story much more than the ones that just pretend to have one.

SG: I think relying on big commercial developers is pointless. Adventures are back. The fans brought them back.

- You also have another adventure featured in your site called Kinky Island. Would you like to tell us something about this other adventure?

MJL: KI is a smaller, slower project. It's having problems of its own and is really just a game I can work on in my own time, to help me learn more about the engine we're using for FoY, Adventure Game Studio (AGS).



- What is the future for Screen 7 entertainment? Do you plan to release commercial adventures in the future?

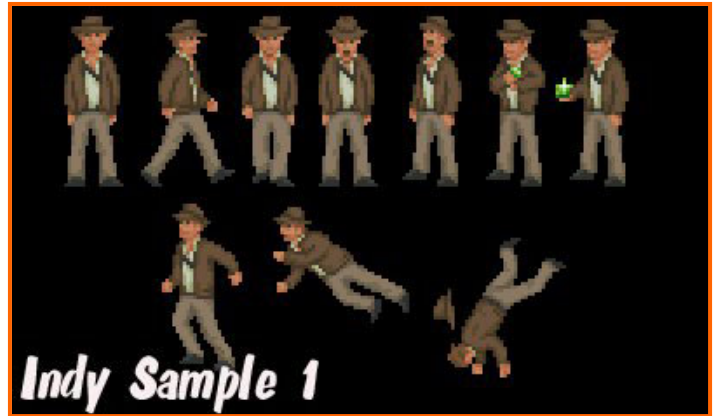
MJL: It is still my ambition to set Screen 7 Entertainment up as some form of company that deals with point and click adventures (and possibly more). Although I can't afford it yet, I'm certainly saving up to help this dream become a reality. Somewhere along the line, I think creating a commercial point and click adventure under Screen 7 Entertainment is inevitable. Whether it's to help fund setting up the company or whether its once the company is set up, I certainly want to work on a commercial project under the name.

- Is FOY the last adventure you make featuring Indy or are you thinking of making more adventures with that character?

MJL: Personally, I want to see how well FoY goes down with the fans. It's from that point on that I'd, or us as a team, would decide what to do next. I'd love to make another Indy adventure game – but there could come a point where there are just too many FoA clones! ;)

- Have you given thought to what adventure you are going to make after FOY?

MJL: I certainly have some ideas. I really hope the team that is making FoY, Misja, Alan, Shawn, Amberle, David and others, are all available after the end of developing FoY to work on another game with me. They're a fabulous team and I think their efforts



and talents could go very far within the industry. It's just a shame I don't have enough money to tantalize them with ;)

- In your future adventures, do you plan to use a higher resolution for your graphics, or are you going to choose a retro style again?

MJL: A point and click for me will always be 320x200, but I want to make one of them all. I guarantee at some point we would create an adventure game in a higher resolution, maybe even 3D – but I'd never lose the point and click interface. We'll see what the future brings ☺

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

MJL: Yes, I'm interested to see how you manage to cut this interview down from 12 pages long to make it fit in *The Inventory*! Keep up the good work with the magazine, we all love reading it – and thanks for your continual support of our project ☺

- Thank you very much for accepting our invitation to the celebrity corner. We can't wait to play Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth and we hope that it will make us have even more fun than we had when we played Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis.

MJL: Thank you – very interesting and in depth questions. I hope we satisfied the needs of your readers too ;)

AJ: I'm off to tell my mommy I was called noteworthy. She'll be ever so proud!



"THE HOLLOW LANDS: CHAPTER 1"

"I'M DREAMING..."

"...A DREAM OF FLESH AND RED FOG AND OLD THINGS STIRING IN THE QUAGMIRE"

"AND THIS ISN'T JUST ANY OLD BAD DREAM..."

CUTNSLICKRBBAGUBOBN

WILLLOOOCUNEN

"IT'S A MONSTER!"

FNDTUSFBAWTKRRODOPACE

"NO..!"

WE'RE COMING, BOY...
HEH...
WE'RE ALMOST UPON YOU NOW

AAAAAGHHHHH.....!!!

"SOMETHING'S COMING"

ITS MARCH THE 29TH, 03:12:27 PM
BY THE GREENWICH CLOCK

IN LESS THAN THREE DAYS LORD ALBRECH HAWKSMOOR,
DUKE OF LYONESS UNDER THE SEA, WILL BE DEAD.

NEXT: LONDINIUM



Run away right now and buy it (pun intended). It is probably the adventure that had taken the longest time to arrive in game stores, due to difficulties created by narrow-minded publishers. When it did finally arrive in stores however, it became a hit instantly since adventurers around the globe have been craving for a good old-school adventure for a long time now.

The instant success it received has led the developers, Pendulo Studios, to consider the development of a sequel. But let's see now what does the first Runaway holds in store for adventurers.

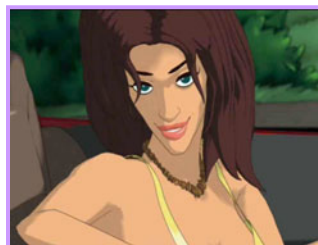
Story: You take the role of Brian Basco, a student whose dream for admittance in the famous Berkeley University has finally come true. As Brian is getting prepared to move to Berkeley from New York, where he is currently staying, he remembers that he has to pick up a book he had ordered from a bookstore in Manhattan. What seemed in the



Brian Basco

beginning as a routine ride downtown will soon become Brian's greatest life experience.

On his way to the bookstore, a charming lady (one of those that radiate danger and bring trouble wherever they go – think Liv Tyler in the film *One Night At McCool's*) suddenly appears from the middle of nowhere running across the street at the exact moment when Brian was driving through. After seeing that the girl, whose name is Gina, was slightly injured, Brian decided to take her to the nearest hospital.



Gina Timmins

It appears that Gina was being hunted by some mafia thugs. While at the hospital, Gina tells Brian what had happened only some seconds before he found her. Gina was working as a singer in the bar Pink Iguana. Her father, who was working for the government, had visited her that same night to give her an ancient crucifix, because he thought it would be in danger in his own hands. Now, her father is killed by the mafia, and as she witnessed the cruel assassination and since

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

she possesses the crucifix, she is the one being hunted now by them.



Beware the dog? What dog?

Brian, seeing how helpless (and beautiful) Gina is, decides to try and help her get out of that difficult situation. At that point you take control of Brian. Your first task is to make the mafia thugs believe that Gina is dead and to take Gina to a safe place.

It is difficult to categorize the story in some special genre. I would describe it as a road adventure with slight hints of a gangster movie, a comedy and a love story. It is certainly an unusual story that manages to escape the standard set of ideas presented in adventures lately (Atlantis, Templars etc...). It was definitely about time someone came up with something new and invigorating.

The story does have some plot holes but nothing serious that will ruin the fun. All the characters that you are going to meet in the game have their own distinctive personalities and there are many of them that you do not easily find in adventures. My



That's William Dustin. He's wicked ...and he can get you stuff!!!

favourites would include William Dustin, the Mayan museum's janitor who knows how to make money in non-traditional ways, Mama Dorita, the Indian woman who is able to talk with the spirits, and Rutger, the Jamaican resident of Douglasville and big fan of nature. Brian, the main character of Runaway, is your typical good-doer, hard-working student, who will think his way through and who will sometimes be betrayed by his own naïve kindness. When it comes to talking you could say that he is the opposite of Syberia's Kate Walker, meaning that while Kate Walker didn't talk that much and sometimes you would wish she would say something more, Brian talks all the time and sometimes you wish he would be a little bit more quiet. In general though, his comments are witty and help to build up his personality.

Pendolo did not hesitate to include some more mature incidents in the game, for example, you get to meet 3 transvestites, you see a big bouncer scratching his reproductive area more often than usual, while there is also use of drugs at some point in the game. Congratulations to Pendolo for choosing to give a more realistic touch to the game instead of being 'socially accepted'. I certainly hope that more companies will follow Pendolo's paradigm and that we are going to have more realistic adventures from now on. The adventure genre is in need of new concepts and ideas, and needs to be targeted to a more mature audience.



The game is full of animation that gives a cinematic feeling.

Graphics: The in-game graphics set a new standard in 2D hand-drawn backgrounds with a comic style. It is very reminiscent of Bill Tiller's graphic design and they will definitely put a smile on every adventurer out there who has been longing for a 2D adventure. The colours used are usually bright and warm, presenting a unique style that is not easily met nowadays in games. The characters themselves are drawn in 3D, but they look nothing like the 'bunches

of connected polygons' 3D models you usually get to see in other games. The edges of the characters are amazingly smooth, and you are going to be wondering if they are really drawn in 3D or not.

The animation is also of high standard and gives a lively tone to the game. While you are walking around the screen, NPCs will continue doing their own movements, some of them will scratch themselves, others will dance, others will throw cans in a basket etc. The lighting effects are very impressive as well, with shadows being carefully placed to give a more realistic touch to the environment.

The cutscenes however seem somehow blurry, and the 3D models during the cutscenes do not follow the high standards set by the ones used during the interactive part of the game. In order to understand better what I mean with the word blurry, think of stretch utilities in laptops. When a video is in a lower resolution than the laptop's monitor, the laptop usually uses a stretch utility to show the video in full screen and during that stretching the video's quality drops and looks blurry.

This is how the cutscenes of Runaway seem at certain points. Another strange issue is that some cutscenes look better or worse than the others. Sometimes there



This knife is definitely not for cutting bread.

are some strange close-ups during cutscenes. I am saying strange, because they are way too close...even for close-ups. In general terms though, the high standard of the in-game graphics overshadows the few glitches found during the cutscenes and the game is a true eye-candy.

Sound: The music of the game is very satisfactory. There is even a rock song performed for the purposes of the game by a Spanish band called Liquor. The song would be classified, as a mixture between pop rock and ska and the voice in the song will remind you a bit of Shakira. The rest of the score includes



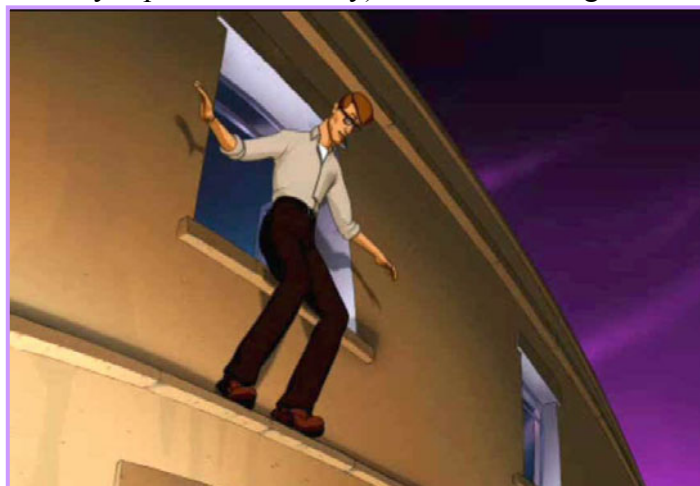
Have you ever wondered what would Grim Fandango look like if it had been done in 2D?



The lighting and shading effects of the game help to give a spooky feeling to this huge statue.

mostly ambient tracks during the first and second chapters, while later on the music turns to a western-kind of style music since the game will take you to the deserts of Arizona.

The voice-overs however are a mixed bag. Most of the NPC's voice-overs are well performed and even foreign accents are simulated successfully. Surprisingly though, the voice-overs of the two main characters are not so well performed. Especially Gina's voice is totally inappropriate for a character like Gina. Her voice should have sounded seducing and attractive, on the contrary though her voice sounded nothing like that. Listening to her scream was a quite bad experience as well (felt like turning off my speakers actually). Brian's acting is not



Press Shift to walk sideward...oh no wait...it's an adventure!!

satisfactory either, but at least it grows in you after a while.

The best voice-overs of the game have to be the ones of Rutger, with a perfect English-with-a-Jamaican-dialect recital, Mama Dorita's, with acting which totally suited a wise and old woman with good intentions and Sushi's, whose relaxed voice matched perfectly her laid back character.

Gameplay: This is the only part where Runaway faces considerable problems. The game's biggest flaw is the pixel hunting which at certain times is quite extreme. It is so extreme in a couple of occasions that even by reading a walkthrough you might not be able to find the hotspot you are looking for right away.

Spoiler I distinctively remember a certain nail Brian has to pick up in chapter 5 that is as tiny as it can get and is almost the same colour with the wood that it is inserted. If it was not for a walkthrough I would have never noticed it was there. Just imagine that I had already crossed the cursor carefully around the exact same screen to see if I had missed a hotspot without any luck. The nail however is not the only hotspot you are likely to miss while playing Runaway. I had not located the saloon entrance either until being stuck for a while and doing a hotspot search on every screen I was at. I was quite frustrated when I saw where the entrance to the saloon was placed. It is as if they wanted it to be hidden! ***End of**

spoiler*. In general terms the staging of objects and hotspots on screen is at some times horrendous. The developers should have paid more attention on the positioning of certain items inside the game and hotspotting in general, so that this kind of situations could have been avoided.



Does he count as a character you get to meet in the game or not?

The interface is a simple to use and easy to learn point and click interface. When the cursor is a magnifying glass it means that you can examine something and Brian will give you a description of it. When you switch your cursor to a hand, you can interact with an object (either open, close, pick up, use or push something). If it is a person then your cursor will switch to a talking bubble instead which means that you can initiate dialogue with that person. On the top of the screen you can also either open up your inventory or enter the options. Double clicking on an exit gets you instantly out of the room you were in, which is a nice feature.

You will have to access your inventory a lot in Runaway, since most of the puzzles in the game are inventory-based. You will also have to combine items



Got a problem in Douglasville? Sushi will always be there to help you.

The publishers' crime

The fact that it took nearly two years for an adventure like Runaway to hit the stores shows one more time that some publishers lack the open-mindedness necessary for bringing innovative and original titles in the market. Rumors had it that Runaway had difficulties in finding a publisher because:

- a) it was a point and click adventure with 2D backgrounds
- b) it contained some controversial characters and events.

If the real reason was a) then I hope the publishers that denied to release Runaway have regretted that now that they see how well it sells while if the real reason was b) then thank you for trying to hinder the publishing of a game that featured three transvestites while you help games that feature people shooting at each other to reach our children's computers. On the other hand, I would like to congratulate Tri-synergy, DTP, Focus and all the other publishing companies that believed in a point and click adventure targeted to adults. May your efforts be rewarded.

with each other in a not-so-conventional-way. Some puzzle solutions might seem a little far-fetched to some. Many of them are actually quite illogical and they will leave you thinking 'why' a lot of times.

On the other hand one would be pleasantly surprised with the smart application of the puzzles that are not illogical or out of place. Those are quite original and are fun to solve. A few other puzzles feel like they were thrown in just to increase playing time, and even if they are smart puzzles, they do not feel intertwined with the story. The kind of puzzles I am talking about usually involved getting an item or completing a certain task, so that in the end the person that handed you the task would tell you that you need to do something more as well with the certain item or complete your task by doing another task in order to proceed. I think this was kind of overused and somehow felt tacked in for prolonging the gameplay.

Another flaw of the puzzle design in Runaway is the incapability to pick up objects, or even identify them for that matter, until they become absolutely necessary in the game. ***Spoiler*** As an example, in chapter 2 there is a statue with some pots lying in

REVIEW OF THE MONTH



Show me the beans. Show me the beans! SHOW ME THE BEANS!!!

front of it. If you look in the pots, Brian says there is nothing interesting in there. Later on in the same chapter, Brian will need to make coffee. The solution requires that you go back to the statue, look again in the pots and then Brian sees some coffee beans inside!!! ***End of Spoiler***.

Generally if you are stuck in Runaway you should do two things. First scan every last pixel on the screen with your mouse for hotspots you might have missed, and second, examine again things you have examined before. These two bad features of the gameplay were a bit degrading of the whole experience with Runaway. However the story, graphics and music combined as well as a user-friendly interface make up for the distress caused by the somewhat flawed gameplay.

General Info: The version that I got to play comes in a simple DVD case and is nothing exciting. I have seen though the box that is being published in Germany and I have to say that it is much better looking on a shelf than the simple DVD-case. I met no bugs while playing Runaway. The only technical glitch was that the first time I played it the cutscenes

were playing upside down, but this was caused by some DivX drivers I had installed. As long as I uninstalled the drivers the video playback returned to normal. You have to put the first from the 3 CDs in the CD-ROM drive every time you start the game, even if you are on a later chapter, which was rather annoying.

In a few words: Could someone please convince Lucasarts to sell the Full Throttle rights to Pendulo so that we can finally see a worthy sequel to that series? Runaway comes as an oasis to the desert of uninspired adventures in the market. It is definitely not as good as The Longest Journey, Syberia or the King's Quest 2 remake, mostly because of its poor gameplay features. Incredible graphics, an original story and a pleasant soundtrack on the other hand make me consider Runaway a worthy title to buy. I hope the developers will pay more attention to hotspotting if they make a sequel and that they will improve the puzzle design. Now as I said in the beginning...run away and buy it!

- Dimitris Manos



Yep, he is doing exactly what you think he is doing.

Runaway: A Road Adventure

Game Info

Developer: Pendulo Studios

Category: Point and Click

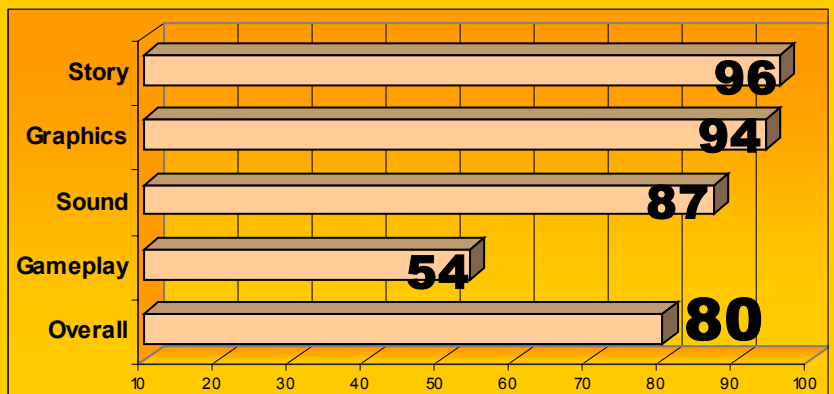
Perspective: 3rd Person

Difficulty: Medium / Hard

Site: www.pendulostudios.com/runaway

System Requirements: Win

95/98/ME/2000/XP, Pentium 333Mhz, 32MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 631 MB HD, DirectX





SALAMMBO

Salammbô is a first person adventure from the well-known publisher The Adventure Company. Salammbô was also the name of a novel written by Gustave Flaubert in the 19th century. In the 20th century, Philippe Druillet created a comic strip based on the book by Gustave Flaubert but adapted on Druillet's personal imagination. The game Salammbô on its turn is based on the comic book created by Philippe Druillet.

Philippe Druillet and The Adventure Company have worked together before in *The Ring*, while TAC has also published *Thorgal's Quest* recently, which is also based on a famous comic novel. You can also read an interview with TAC Europe in the fourth issue of *The Inventory*, where this is discussed in greater detail. Did Salammbô manage to adapt well to the computer medium? Let's see.

Story: The story of Salammbô takes place after the battle between Carthage and Rome. You take the role of Spendius, a slave in the city of Carthage. When

Spendius decides that he has had enough, he attempts to escape his prison cell. On his way out, Salammbô, the grand priestess of Tanith stops him. To his surprise, she does not turn him in, but asks from him instead to perform an errand for her. He is to escape the city of Carthage, travel to the mercenaries' camp and give a present to the leader of the mercenaries, Matho, as a symbol of Salammbô's love towards him. The fact that she is the grand priestess of Tanith makes it impossible for her to do it on her own since



Spendius.



And the most beautiful eyes ever seen in an adventure game award goes to.... Salamambo!!!

it is not allowed for the priestess to leave her temple. The story is definitely of epic proportions and is full of exciting events and thrilling incidents. As Spendius you will have to gradually work your way up in ranking from a mere slave that people have no respect for, to a general who will lead his forces to victory. Unfortunately once more in a 1st person adventure, we do not get to hear what our character says or see him that often, so it is not easy to identify this change in character. The only difference you will get to notice will be in the way the rest of the characters will be talking towards Spendius.

On the other side though, Salamambo, unlike most 1st person adventures is full of characters and dialogues! The characters themselves...well, let's just say that they are not your typical humans. Philippe Druillet's



fantasy world includes beast-like men, and gorgeous women. With the exception of Salamambo all the rest of the people do not have normal eyes, but have glowing lights coming out of them instead. I do not know how the game would have felt if it featured normal characters, but it does give a sense of distinctiveness in the story.

Apart from loads of characters, the big difference in the plotline of Salamambo compared to other 1st person adventures is the movie-like flow of events. Instead of dragging the story just to throw you another puzzle, the game will let you talk with characters, infiltrate enemy territory, plan conspiracies, wage war and change history through your actions. Especially the beginning and the middle part of the game will give you some very memorable moments, although the end is kind of disappointing, extremely short and seems very rushed.

Graphics: We have to hand it over to Philippe Druillet. His majestic artistic direction saved the graphics of the game from being totally unbearable because of the awful navigation system. Navigating Spendius can be considered as a puzzle by itself in this game. Apart from teleporting you from one place to the other with some 'gameworld-meters' difference, the navigation system also turns your view left or right after the 'jump' without your influence, making you constantly losing orientation. I really wonder how many adventures will have to suffer from this outdated navigation system.

Going back to the good part now, which is Philippe Druillet's artwork, that is going to leave you dazzled. I think you can see by yourselves the splendour of his work in the screenshots. Both characters and backgrounds have a dark mood emerge from their design. The characters will remind you a little bit of the movie Lord of the Rings, while the backgrounds reminded me of H.R. Giger's work in the old adventures Dark Seed and in the Alien movies. It kind of shows that Druillet is a fan of H.P. Lovecraft (read more about that later).



Watch the small details on the walls.

The 3D models themselves are a wonder to look at. Especially Salammbô is one of the best-worked 3D models that have ever appeared in games. The only problem someone might find with them is that their animation is very limited while talking to them. In the in-game section on the contrary, there is loads of animation that make the world look alive. Water running, guards walking, animals moving etc.

The lip-synching was not the best you have seen ever but it was quite satisfactory. The colours used in the game are mostly dark, and during most scenes either a blue variant or a red variant colour is dominating your screen, matching the two moons of Druillet's imaginary version of our world.

The few cutscenes in the game are very cinematic and you will think they were taken out of the latest 3D Hollywood movie. The problem though is that they are very, very sparsely used. Instead the game uses a series of comic strips to tell the story of Spendius. The strips are nicely drawn (although they are inside some very cheap looking frames) but to be honest I would much rather watch a video instead. I am a fan of comics but when the medium allows animation and video I don't see why they should not be used. If the

game featured a large number of long cutscenes it would certainly rate much higher in the final grade. Especially the ending cutscene was very disappointing as it lasts only for a few seconds. It makes you feel unrewarded for your efforts, like the mercenaries from the Carthaginians!



Not your typical pottery guy.

Sound: The soundtrack of Salammbô is one of the best I have ever heard in games. One thing is for sure, TAC has really found the right people to create the appropriate music to accompany their games. If the soundtrack ever makes it in stores (highly unlikely) I will make sure to buy it. It is basically a mixture of classic and epic music that sets the heroic tone of the game. There is in fact a song sung by a watcher priestess in the gardens of Tanith that is absolutely mesmerising. It's one of these serenades that will stay in your head for long time to come.

The voice-overs are also of high quality and the acting is fine. Salammbô's acting was pretty much exactly what someone would imagine by looking at



Priestesses don't look like that where I come from.

her, mysterious, cold and a tone of superiority attached to her speech. The actress who made Salammbo's voice over did a first-rate job. In general all the actors managed to create an epic sense in their character's voice avoiding at the same time exaggerations that can be seen in this sort of games or movies. The only complaint here is that we never get to listen to Spendius talking. Apart from that, no complaints in that part of the game, everything else was top notch.



Salammbo's dad. Salammbo must have taken the eyes of her mother.

Gameplay: The interface of Salammbo is the typical interface found in 1st person adventures. It is simple and you will not have any problems getting accustomed to it. The gameplay is quite rich and involves a large number of different styles of puzzles. Some of them will require you to say the right things during a conversation, some will require you to go somewhere without being seen, others will require you to use your inventory while in the end there are also a couple of Myst-style puzzles (i.e. putting several symbols in the right order, press the right



The little...dog is a good reason to follow Autharite's commands.

buttons etc) but not as many or as difficult as usually met in 1st person adventures.



The blind bird master.

A big minus in the whole gameplay is the often usage of timed puzzles. While some of them make sense and should be timed, I think that the developers should have given a larger amount of time available to the gamers and maybe use less such puzzles than they did. After all it is an adventure and even if the game takes you back to the moment before you die, you will have to repeat the same actions a few times before you get them on time, which often becomes rather tedious. Two or three of them in certain spots of the game would have been a nice addition to spice up the gameplay but as it is they are just overused.



This reminds me of a Star Wars movie.

There is also a mini game in Salammbo, which requires you to throw some helmets on a moving shield. You are not required to win though in order to proceed (you are actually required to loose!) so even though the mini-game itself is poorly implemented it should not bother you.



Standing in front of this grandiose statue was a great experience.

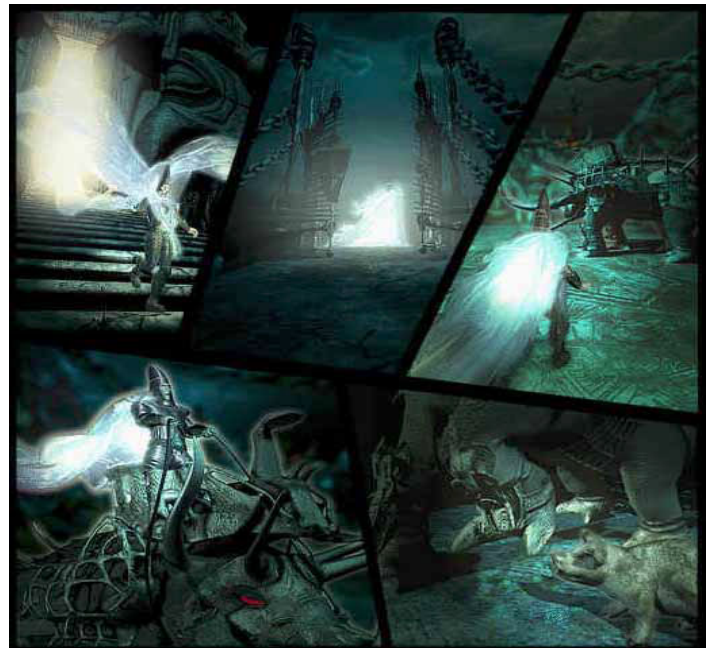
Near the end you will also have to lead your army in a strategic battle, but the system used is so simple that nobody should face any difficulty with it, even without any previous experience in strategy games. It was actually a neat feature.

General Info: Salamambo came in a DVD case including a manual and 2 CDs. There were no bugs encountered throughout the whole game. I thought it would have been really interesting if a comic book by Philippe Druillet was included in the box but nothing of the sorts in 2003. Makes you kind of nostalgic of the old days when companies took care of their customers....

Philippe Druillet was born in Toulouse, France on the 28th of June 1944. After creating comic strips for quite a few French fiction magazines (Fiction, Galaxie, Pilote), Druillet decided with the help of Frakas, Jean-Pierre Dionnet and Moebius to found his own science fiction



Philippe Druillet



One of the strips presented in the game...without the ugly frames.

magazine. The magazine's name was Metal Hurlant and it became a cult publication that was meant to change the history of science fiction. Being a great fan of H.P. Lovecraft's work, Druillet did the illustrations for many republications of Lovecraft's books. *source: www.comic-art.com*

In a few words: A good adventure that would have been one of the greatest adventures ever if it had a completely different navigation system, less timed puzzles, a better ending and more cutscenes. It is certainly worth buying though, because it offers one of the best soundtracks ever heard in adventure games, an interesting epic story, and the incredible baroque art of Philippe Druillet. It is certainly comforting to know that the adventure genre has such unique talents. It is really a pity that the navigation system and the lack of cutscenes does not allow me to put a much higher grade on the game's graphics.

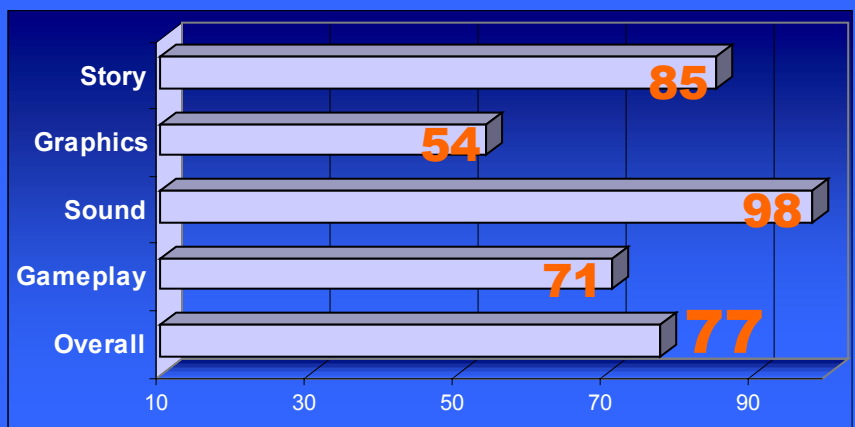
- Dimitris Manos

SALAMMBO

Game Info

Developer: Adventure Company
Category: Point and Click
Perspective: 1st Person
Difficulty: Easy
Site: salamambo.dcegames.com

System Requirements: Win 98/ME/2000/XP, Pentium 333Mhz, 32MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 631 MB HD, DirectX



The Adventures of

Fatman

Toxic Revenge

He's fat, he's lazy, he's broke, and he's going to save the world... (Help?!). The Adventures of Fatman: Toxic Revenge is the latest release of the point and click adventure company, Socko Entertainment. Fatman is clearly a comic parody of the great super hero Batman, and Fatman manages this in a very good way.

I found this game to be quite funny, sometimes Fatman's lines was just so superhero-clichè, that I couldn't help laughing! Even names for objects and places are changed, like the Batmobile's name is changed to Fatmobile, the Batcave is now known as the Fatcave... It's definitely a game that won't get you bored.

Story: The story revolves around an explosion at the ACME labs, and Fatman takes the case (though nobody has asked him too, and that for a purpose), he jumps into his Fatmobile, and arrives at the ACME labs, which have exploded into just a lot of dust and rubble, and Fatman starts to investigate right away... Eh, he just needs to get some doughnuts first!

It's a very charming story, really easy to get lost in. It's quite creative but it would have been nice if it was not so similar to hundreds of other stories. The clichès are too many, and it is not always that the



humour is good enough to make them bearable.

Graphics: The graphics is just like the early LucasArts games, like The Monkey Island 1 & 2. It is strange to meet games with such graphics now in the 21st century, but I believe that oh so many will dream back to the time when they were really young, and discovered the early LucasArts games... At least I did!



Fatman is a 2D adventure, with 3rd person perspective. The resolution is 320x200, which is nice, because it's really easy to get oversight on the different places that our (super?)hero travels through. The fact however that other 2D adventures have reached a much higher level of graphics makes Fatman look pale in comparison.

Sound: The sound is ok. The music gets slightly annoying sometimes, and it also has the Batman theme woven into it, which was not necessary. The voice acting! It's really nice, probably the part I like the most. The humour and the irony really shows, especially in Fatman's voice, it's just great stuff. **A big applause to the voice actors of Fatman.**

Gameplay: The gameplay is not too good. And there is one thing in particular. When Fatman enters a scene, does what he is supposed to do there, and is



Mr. Show-off himself pays a visit, but Fatman still rules the street!

ready to walk out, it is really hard to find the exit! I.e. you have to press to the very left of the screen (if that is where Fatman came from in the first place) several times before you hit the spot which sends him out. If the game had these little arrows to show the way out (like it's possible to have on *The Longest Journey*), it would make the gameplay so much smoother, and the player so less irritated.

The interface is ok, but it should be more handy and easy than the one that's there. Especially when switching from one thing to the other. The inventory could also be a bit different, there's **only 4 items displayed** at a time, so you need to use arrows to find

the others, so the switching occurs pretty often through the game. By the way, you can choose difficulty, either easy, or hard, that's an option I appreciate!

In a few words... My conclusion is that *Fatman* should be a bit more polished and improved here and there, but it is a funny and adventurous game, and it is pretty easy to fall in love with if you're not into details too much. The game is not expensive, so I think you should give it a try. I urge the gamers who like the early LucasArts games to try *Fatman*, I think they would really like it!

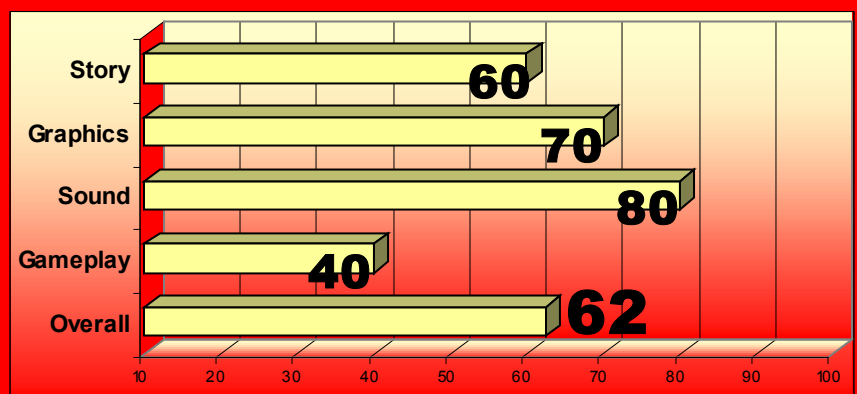
-Yngvil Runde

FATMAN

Game Info

Developer: Socko Entertainment
Category: Point and Click
Perspective: 3rd Person
Difficulty: Easy
Site: www.socko-entertainment.com

System Requirements: Win
 95/98/ME/2000/XP, Pentium 100Mhz,
 32MB RAM, CD-ROM, 320x200 VGA
 Display



Talking Dead

ARTIFICIAL IMPOTENCE

It's with great pleasure that I pull up a beanbag and splay myself all over it here at *The Inventory*. What's important is that you mustn't let my words get in the way of your enjoyment of this excellent magazine – if I go awry, then it's purely my fault and I'm just over-excited, excited that my nonsense isn't confined to an IRC chat room – but is let loose on a high profile online magazine.

Each issue, I will be talking about something different, something random. Randomly connected to adventure games though, don't you worry. For my first appearance, I thought I'd talk to you about eh. Eh? AI. Phonetically, eh.

Why is it that in most point and click adventures, *you*, the player, is the only one with any intelligence? Why don't the other thespians of the screen ever walk forward and start talking, dancing and what not. Cut-scenes are a haven for designers when it comes to "Lets make non-player characters do something", yet in-game everything seems so static. So sparse. So... Artificially Impotent.

It's on this note that I start to boast, shamelessly plug, and try my hardest to look cooler than you. *Indiana Jones & The Fountain Of Youth*, (and yes, I know, after reading this issue of *The Inventory*, FoY has almost become a house-hold name) tries to work on deprecating Artificial Impotence. I only learnt the word "deprecate" a few weeks ago, whilst learning XHTML at work, Cold-Fusion kept telling me that almost every HTML tag I was using had been "deprecated" or was in the process of being deprecated. This, if you didn't know, means thrown out. Removed. Terminated. So now it's my favourite word, (along with 'mandatory') and the FoY team are going to hear it a lot from me. And if they don't like it, they'll be deprecated.

So, how are we taking out AI and replacing it with AI? Imagine a pub, bar or restaurant with a bar – or for that matter, any public place where you can drink alcohol and are guaranteed to stand next to or near a tipsy customer. How often, providing you show some form of interest, do they start talking to you?

Very often, especially if it's the pub I drink in. Therefore, something I don't recall ever seeing in an adventure game is idle conversations. We have idle animations – where other characters in a game will pick their nose, scratch their bum or blink, (that one took the animators ages) yet never do we experience other characters taking an interest in you. With FoY, we're incorporating an element where if you stand around, you may well become the centre of attention. When someone walks past you in the park, they often bid you a good morning. This never happened in *Beneath A Steel Sky*.

Although I'm not going to go into detail about what our system does exactly, I think you get the idea that interaction should not just be solely player-character driven. In a movie, the protagonist doesn't make *all* the moves. So the message is really simple.

Developers, deprecate your artificial impotence.

AdventureX

It's been a long time since anyone has seen a point and click adventure featured at a computer game exposition. That's why *Mark Lovegrove* intends to dedicate one entirely to the genre.

“There is so much potential behind the point and click adventure again that *AdventureX* could showcase, and show people that the point and click is alive and kicking. The number of independent developers is always increasing and there are still some larger names in the industry who are determined to develop point and clicks too. This is great, and it needs to be exploited in such a way that everyone else can see and experience. *AdventureX* hopes to be it.”

AdventureX is to be the perfect opportunity for amateur, independent and commercial developers to showcase their work, whether they're developing freeware or commercial point and click games.



You can already check out the preliminary website which has more information about *AdventureX* at <http://screen7.adventuredevelopers.com/adventurex/> If you're interested, drop the *AdventureX* team an email!

- **Mark Lovegrove**

The Inventory is proud to introduce to you the creator of the legendary Larry games, and one of the funniest game developers in the history of the adventure genre, Al Lowe. Unfortunately for us, he has retired from game development and is now spending most of his time updating his humour site, www.allowe.com Al sends two jokes everyday to people who subscribe to his Cyberjoke 3000 project, and from now on, he is going to make a compilation with the best jokes of the month, for the readers of The Inventory. So welcome to... The Al Lowe Show!



If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving is not your sport!

A woman was concerned about her husband's smoking, but finally got him to agree to only smoke at home when they had finished making love. After about a week, her friend asked her how it was going. "Well, not too bad," she said with a big smile. "He's down to about a pack a night!"

A woman, pregnant with her first child, was being examined in her obstetrician's office. "Doctor, my husband wants me to ask you..." "I know, I know," said the doctor, "I get asked this all the time. It's okay to have sex until late in your pregnancy." "No, that's not it," she said. "He wants to know if I can still mow the lawn."

Emy Lu passed away and Bubba called 911. The operator asked his address. Bubba replied, "At the end of Eucalyptus Drive." The operator asked, "Can you spell that for me?" There was a long pause. "How 'bout if I drag her over to Oak Street and you can pick her up there?"

After the executive hired a hot new secretary, it was only a few days before he put the moves on her. She readily agreed and they had a great time. But after a week or so, she started taking advantage of their relationship, showing up late for work, being

surly to clients, losing messages, turning out sloppy work. Finally, he pulled her aside for a little talk. "Listen, baby, we may have gone to bed together a few times, but who said you could start slacking off on the job?" She gave him a sly smile and purred, "My lawyer!"

Why waste time with marriage? Just find a woman you hate and buy her a house!

On the way home after dinner at the White House, the Gores were chatting in the limo. Al said to Tipper, "How can I convince the American people that we're serious about cost-cutting when Bill buys himself a solid-gold urinal?" "What?" said Tipper? "You're joking!" "No. I saw it myself when I went to the restroom!" "There must be some mistake. When we get home, I'll call Hillary and find out." So she did. "Hillary, is it true that Bill's bathroom has a solid-gold urinal?" Hillary put her hand over the receiver and yelled to her husband, "Bill! I know who pissed in your saxophone!"

The beautiful young co-ed closed her professor's office door and took a seat opposite his desk, being careful to let her tight skirt expose an ample expanse of creamy thighs. She stared into his eyes and softly purred, "Professor, I will do anything to pass your class." "Really?" he responded cautiously. She leaned

over his desk, brushed back her hair, played with the top button on her blouse, and whispered, "I will do anything." He got up from his chair and walked around behind her, bent over and asked softly, "Anything?" "Anything." His voice turned to a whisper as he spoke just one word, "Study!"

A grandmother was helping her granddaughter learn her colors by pointing to something and asking her what color it was. Time and time she got the right answer. But after a few minutes of this, she had had enough. The granddaughter headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, it's time you figured out some of these yourself!"

After the plane reached cruising altitude, the captain announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the Captain speaking. The weather ahead is good and I expect a smooth and uneventful flight, so just sit back and "OH, MY GOD!" Silence followed for a few moments while the entire plane held its breath until the intercom clicked back on. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm sorry if I scared you earlier, but while I was speaking, the flight attendant bringing me a cup of hot coffee spilled it right in my lap. You should see the front of my pants!" One of the coach passengers shouted, "Oh, yeah? You should see the back of mine!"

I am happy to announce that we received lots of e-mails since our last issue. I want to reassure all of you that took the time to write us, that **all** your e-mails will be answered through the Invento-mail. This month we will answer two e-mails that we got very soon after the release of the 7th edition and they are both praising the efforts of the KQIX developers. Those of you that have not read our 7th issue yet, might want to take a look at the KQIX preview. The guys who wrote us have a good reason to be excited!

Now all of you who want to comment on adventure games in general or on our magazine, or those of you who might have a question do not hesitate to contact us at: theinventory@yahoo.com We will make sure that your e-mails are going to be featured in the Invento-mail and be read by thousands of adventurers around the globe! Now let's go to our first friend, Nicodemus Caine from South Africa who only recently discovered our magazine. Later we are going to continue with Eriq who was writing an adventure newsletter himself some years ago and harmensz who needed a clarification on something that was written in the last issue.

First of all - thanks for a great magazine. I hadn't read any of your issues, until this one, because I wasn't sure of what I might find there, and everything else I'd read about the inventory [a review on the just adventure page] gave me the impression that it'd be something for me to pass on, but, seeing the fact that you got screenshots of king's quest nine in this issue, I decided I'd finally download a copy and see what you were up to.

*I must say that I was pleasantly surprised - in one sense [in a very real sense, at that] it reminded me of *my* days of youth, when I used to read advanced computer entertainment every month [particularly the adventure section] to get the news about what was going on in the adventure gaming world. It's been my belief [ever since coming back to the community, after a hiatus of several years] that I think the genre is slowly creeping back to life - and with it, it's bringing a slew of new games. A magazine like the inventory is, once again, something that's becoming more and more viable.*

Regarding the king's quest nine feature, in inventory number seven, when I saw the first page of the preview, was that it reminded me a lot of a final fantasy box cover, which was a pretty strange reaction. So far, the first look that we've gotten from your magazine is very interesting indeed and it'll be good to see the folks over at kq9.org pull it off.

Ultimately, as you've pointed out, I think our future [as a community] now lies with the fans - the people for the people - if we don't step in and do something, then we're going to be wondering about the genre for years to come - it's great to see that folks like Jane Jensen are getting involved again, but, hopefully this will not force all the small developers away from making new [or re-doing old] titles. Personally [and I've expressed my opinion about this in the Tierra forums] - I think that small houses like Tierra - and like the "space quest seven" project are good for breathing life back into the genre - and I can't help but hope that some of the reasons some of the old-time veterans of the genre are coming back has to do with the fact that they can see that their audience never left.

Some commentary about the magazine: the one thing that I think would be interesting is for you to caption your screenshots. The other thing that I also think would be interesting is adding a walkthrough/solution category to the magazine, but these are all comments - as it stands, I think the magazine is a great endeavour and I hope that you go from strength to strength. Have an enjoyable summer and I'll be keeping up with the inventory from now on.

Thank you, from South Africa.

Nicodemus Caine

The Inventory: Thank you Nicodemus (nice name by the way, did you know it is ancient Greek?) for your kind words. I am glad that you were pleasantly surprised by what you saw in our magazine. I hope we can surprise you again in the future. I agree with you that the fans are indeed the brightest **continued->**

light shining through the adventure community right now. We have already seen that they can do (Tierra) and we have been impressed by what can come next (KQ9, Tierra again, SQ7, Indiana Jones FOY etc...). On the other hand though, I would not rule out completely the commercial companies. For example Microids, Pendulo, Razbor and Future Games seem like staying loyal to our genre and add to that the new company of Jane Jensen and there you go. Ok, we have not seen yet any concrete information on Jane's new game but she has expressed in past interviews her views about how she does not believe in hybrid games etc.

I am afraid we are not going to add a walkthrough section in The Inventory since it is much simpler for someone to find a walkthrough on the Internet than searching through past issues of a magazine to find one. As for captioning our screenshots...consider it done ;)

Dimitris,

I remember back in 1992 or so I put out a local newsletter all about adventure games and the software stores let me keep them at the counters so people could take them for free. I was just so dedicated to graphic adventure games that it was a hobby. I just spent an entire afternoon reading the latest issue of "The Inventory" and I just wanted to drop you a line saying Thanks! It's obvious... Your passion for graphic adventure games.

I know that when people picked up my newsletters, it made me feel really good so I just wanted to do the same. Keep up the good work!

And King's Quest IX looks pretty fun!

eriq

The Inventory: Hello Eriq and thank you for your kind words. I am sure that 1992 must have been an exciting year to be writing an adventure newsletter, with Sierra and Lucasarts producing impressive line-ups. I am happy to report that 11 years later it is also a good time to be writing an adventure magazine since there are loads of adventures in development.

King's Quest IX looks amazing, right? I feel some kind of certainty that it is going to be a great adventure, and the source for this certainty is the fact that it is a labour of love and not just a job. Hope you enjoy our future issues.

Hi theinventory,

Please clear for me this phrase (TI #7, p. 34): "Despite these shortcomings though, Amerzone's story will leave a sweat taste in your mouth when you finish it. and they become brighter and brighter as you proceed in the game. The direction during the"

a sweat taste - mean a "sweet taste", i.e. "sugar" or "honey" ('idioma' of good impression in 'quotation marks' - nice like a baby's smile) ?

harmensz

The Inventory: Hello Harmensz. Yes I meant sweet...sorry about that. Now that we have more people on The Inventory writing for us, I will try to spell check the magazine more thoroughly. Not that I did not do that before, but it is quite easy when you have a deadline and you have to read 40 pages that you are going to miss some of the mistakes while reading fast. Hope it doesn't happen as often anymore.

THE HYDRA

The Hydra was a fearsome monster in ancient Greek mythology with many heads. If somebody cut one of its heads two more would grow out of its place. The Hydra represents the adventure genre that simply will not die no matter how much it is being fought.



The Hydra will be a column where you will be able to read thoughts and opinions on the current proceedings in our genre. Last month The Hydra was talking about the invisible adventure genre that will just not die. This month the topic of the Hydra is:

THE 'BAN PIXEL HUNTING' CAMPAIGN

I have always thought that pixel hunting was a thorn in the adventure genre's side, but I think Runaway has made me say NO MORE. It is a pity that a game that could have been a classic is bothered by pixel hunting. I have never, ever, ever read in any review 'the game had pixel hunting which was great. I had so much fun hunting these poor pixels'. On the contrary, most reviewers will nag, complain, scream and shout about an adventure's extreme pixel hunting and their reaction is absolutely justified. By the way if there is anyone who enjoys pixel-hunting, feel free to write an e-mail about it. It would be definitely interesting, cause I have never read of someone who actually does enjoy pixel-hunting.

So my question is, why in the year 2003 we still have adventures with pixel hunting? Shouldn't all adventures be pixel-hunting-free by now? Some will say that the answer to pixel-hunting is direct control, but direct control on the other hand, while it might bring an end to pixel-hunting it gives birth to table-wall-hunting, which is as cumbersome and tiring and looks awkward as well. So what could developers do to prevent pixel-hunting or wall-table-hunting?



Well the first thing developers could do, would be to pay attention while staging each screen of the game. They should not just start drawing beautiful backgrounds without caring about what the player will need to interact with on those backgrounds. Don't hide little items in dark small corners, or behind other non-interactive items. It feels like you are toying with the gamer if you do that. When planning the viewpoint of a certain screen, make sure that all necessary items are visible from the viewpoint you chose.

Another thing that is possible to be done, is what was used in Shadow of Memories with the help of the system used in The Longest Journey. In Shadow of Memories, there was an option to highlight the objects that the player would need to pick up or interact with. If you chose to have that option then a green light would appear on the several hotspots of the game. In The Longest Journey, if you pressed a key (it was X if I remember correctly) all the exits in the screen you were at that time would be highlighted as well.

So what the developers could do, would be to give the player the chance to highlight all necessary objects and exits in the current screen by pressing a specific button. By that way, if someone enjoys pixel hunting then they simply do not have to press the button at all, while the rest who do not enjoy pixel-hunting (and I have a feeling we are talking about the big majority here) could just press the button and be relieved, without having to stop the game and surf the net in the Quest for the Walkthrough.

- Dimitris Manos

Epilogue

The Inventory 8 is finitto and we are back on track for the cold winter. The news of the push back of Syberia 2 kind of ruined our plans for the winter holidays but what the heck, if it is going to be a better game I guess it is for the best.

It feels good to be back to writing The Inventory. Anyway, adventures are definitely doing much better than a couple of years ago. I went yesterday to the most popular game store here in my town, and right beside the Enter the Matrix games, which had taken the best place of the shelves, there were several boxes of CSI!!! A little bit lower (but still among the best selling titles) you could find boxes of Syberia and Runaway. Things are definitely looking up!

On the next issue of The Inventory you will find a review of Thorgal: Odin's Curse as well as 2 more reviews, two interesting interviews (as usual), the next episode of the comic strip based on the upcoming adventure, more jokes by his humour-majesty Al Lowe, and 2 previews of upcoming adventures plus much more. And since Word has started giving on my nerves with its limitations, there might be a new layout once more due to use of new software. This is not sure at all however, mostly because it will make things much more difficult for the translators. But we will see what will happen finally.

Did you know that in 2 months from now (November) The Inventory will celebrate its 1st birthday? We want to do something special about it and although we have already thought of some extras for the 1-year anniversary edition we could also use some help. So if you have any ideas about what would you like to see on our 1-year anniversary issue in November write to us and let us know.

As you probably read in our gossip area, we are looking for one more author to join The Inventory team. Could you be ... *thunder strikes in the distance* ...*cheesy/trailer kind of voice*... **THE ONE?** If you want to contribute in some other way apart from writing, we could also need a co-ordinator for the localized versions of The Inventory, as well as someone with specialized knowledge in layout and design. If you are interested in doing any of the above just send us an e-mail and attach 2 reviews (one of a game you like and one of a game you don't like) if you are interested in being an author. Otherwise just give us some background on yourselves.

And as you also probably noticed in the gossip area, we are looking for sponsors as well. So if you want your products to be advertised in our magazine, do not hesitate to contact us. If we manage to find sponsors, then expect an even better The Inventory in the future, as we will be even further motivated (apart from our own obvious love for the genre) to go overdrive and work on The Inventory 24-7.

If you own or work in a games/computer magazine and want to include past issues of The Inventory in the CD accompanying your magazine, drop us an e-mail and we might be able to come to a deal. Dear developers, if you would like your adventure games featured in The Inventory, let us know about it and we will make sure that your adventures get the attention they deserve. Also if any of you are interested in making a comic strip based on your upcoming/past adventures for our Adventure Comics area, come in contact with us.

And last but definitely not least, dear readers of The Inventory, if you want to complain about something stupid we wrote/featured, if you want to congratulate us, if you want to suggest something, or if you simply have nothing better to do and you are trying your best to find new ways to kill your time, drop us a line, and we will make sure that you are featured in the next Invento-mail. (As for those that wrote during the summer and have not been featured yet, do not worry, all your e-mails will be answered in the next 2 issues). Now it is time for me to pack this whole thing up and send it through to the distiller!!! Till next month...

The Editor

Dimitris Manos

ROGER
WILCO

in

SPACE 7 QUEST



Be part of the sq7.org project!



The **SQ7** project is in need of some great talent, to help to create a Full 3d pre-rendered, Voice Acted, Multiplatform Adventure Game. Based on the Space Quest™ Series, the **SQ7** project is a fully collaborative project to create a freely distributable, and fun for all game. By the Fans, For the Fans.

Our project has exciting plot, Great Musical Talent, and Amazing programmers, but we need you!

-SQ7.org

If you are interested in helping with the [SQ7.org](http://www.sq7.org) project, please visit our webpage, <http://www.sq7.org>



Space Quest is a Registered Trademark of Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Inc. This is a fan-based program, and not an official product of Sierra On-line, or Vivendi Universal games.
May the Janitor gods always leave your floors streak-free. No Gophers were harmed in the production of our game.