

# The Invention

A magazine for adventure

## Law and Order Special

Interview with the producer of Criminal Intent  
Preview of Law and Order: Justice is Served

## Games Convention 2004 Coverage

Information on Still Life, Runaway 2, Tony Tough 2  
Myst IV, Nibiru and many more adventures

## 4 Reviews and a new column

Sherlock Holmes: The Silver Earring, Dark Fall 2  
CSI 2: Dark Motives The Apprentice 2 &  
a new hardware column Bits and Bytes

**Contents:**

<b>Prologue</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Previews</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Law and Order: Justice is Served</i>	2
<i>Games Convention 2004</i>	5
<b>Gossip</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Lounge</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Craig Brannon</i>	10
<i>DTP</i>	16
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>22</b>
<i>Sherlock Holmes: The Silver Earring</i>	22
<i>CSI 2: Dark Motives</i>	26
<i>Apprentice 2</i>	29
<i>Dark Fall 2: Lights Out</i>	31
<b>Extra</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Bits and Bytes</i>	35
<i>Invento-mail</i>	38
<b>Epilogue</b>	<b>41</b>



## Credits

### **Editor:**

Dimitris Manos

### **Authors/Contributors:**

Dimitris Manos

Justin Peeples

Ben Keeney

Oliver Gruener

Jan Schneider

### **Host:**

www.justadventure.com

### **Layout:**

Dimitris Manos

### **Cover Art:**

Law and Order: Criminal Intent

## Contact Information

### **Address:**

The Inventory Magazine

Grankottrevägen 55 A

Örebro 702 82

Sweden

### **E-mail address:**

theinventory@yahoo.com

### **Phone No:**

+46702053444

## Other Editions

### **Italian:**

www.pollodigomma.net/~theinventory

### **Russian:**

www.questzone.ru

## **Copyright Note:**

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 somewhere without express written consent, then please contact us at: theinventory@yahoo.com

# Prologue

**B**efore I begin with the prologue, I would like to thank Andrew Poulos, Rene Schnoor, Vicky Harrison and all the rest of our fans who donated money before the summer for The Inventory. The new Inventory is dedicated to you guys. Now, I want to welcome you all to our new Inventory. As you will notice yourselves, we changed our layout once more. We also added a couple of new members in our team, Ben Keeney and Oliver Gruener. Ben wrote two excellent reviews this month (Sherlock Holmes and Dark Fall 2). Oliver has taken on himself the challenge of informing adventurers on everything hardware, in his new column Bits and Bytes.

Jan Schneider, editor of Adventure-treff.de, was kind enough to write a guest article about Games Convention 2004, a German games expo that probably featured more adventure games than any other expo in the world. We also feature special coverage on the Law and Order games. We preview the upcoming first person Justice is Served, that will be loyal to the previous L&O games, and we also feature an interview with Craig Brannon, producer of Criminal Intent. Criminal Intent will be different than the rest of the L&O games, as it will be seen from a 3rd person perspective.

But that's not all yet. The people from DTP, probably the biggest publisher of adventure games in Europe, are once more in our Lounge to talk to us about their upcoming games. And what a line-up that is. Tony Tough 2, Moment of Silence, Nibiru and Sherlock Holmes: The Silver Earring. Furthermore, Justin Peeples tells us what he thought of the sequel to the award-winning AGS adventure, The Apprentice. Last but not least, you can also read what the new installment of the CSI series has to offer in our review.

Well, I'd better stop rambling on now and let you enjoy the 17th issue of The Inventory. I hope you enjoy it.

*Dimitris Manos*

# Law & Order: Justice is Served

**L**egacy Interactive have established themselves as one of the leading companies in the adventure genre with their Law and Order series. Every new installment seems to be improved in many ways compared to its predecessors and the people from Legacy Interactive appear to take criticism into great consideration.

Justice is Served is now the 3rd game of the series. The gameplay is divided again in two parts, investigation and trial. The game starts when 20-year-old tennis star Elena Kusarova is found dead in the locker rooms, one week before the beginning of the US open. The autopsy reveals she is loaded with one of the new, almost undetectable performance drugs. The only problem is determining if this is a murder, a suicide or an accidental drug overdose? You take the role of a detective and with the help of the detectives Lennie Briscoe and Ed Green you will have to find out the truth behind Elena's sudden death. As players track down leads, they will unravel a complex mystery involving bitter rivalries, overzealous fans, unhappy love affairs, and long-buried family secrets. Just like in a Law and Order TV episode.

When you have brought it down to one suspect, you will take the role of District Attorney and with the help of Serena Southerlyn you will try to convince the jury that the suspect is guilty. Those who have

already played the previous Law and Order games are already aware of the process and will probably feel right at home with Justice is Served. When it comes to story, 'More, more and more' is apparently Legacy Interactive's moto. The script this time is 500 pages compared to a 300-pages script of Law and Order 2. Players will also get to meet 40 characters (30 in L&O 2) and visit 30 locations (22 in L&O2). So it seems like we have a much longer game ahead of us .

As far as graphics are concerned Legacy has not changed much that would make us speak of something far better than the previous L&O games. The engine used



**One of the girls that discovered the dead body**

**Below: Jerry Orbach stars once more as Detective Lennie Briscoe in the new Law and Order game.**



**Below: When you have a suspect in custody , you will return to the court and attempt to nail a conviction with the help of Serena Southerlyn**





**Top Left:** Jimmy, one of the 40 characters that you will meet in Justice is Served  
**Bottom Left:** Justice is Served will feature much more problem solving than its predecessors.

**Right:** Another character called Dmitri. Did you notice the large number of Ukrainian dolls in there...

is the same with the previous games. The character models look sharper due to an increase in polys (from 12000 to 40000) and the resolution of the game has increased from 640x480 to 800x600.

Furthermore the developers are using some improved rendering techniques. Apart from these improvements however, you will once more teleport from one predetermined spot to the next instead of walking through a real-time 3D environment. On the other hand the upcoming Law & Order: Criminal Intent game will use a different graphics engine, but more on that title in our Lounge later on.

The voice-overs of the L&O games have always been top-notch, since the developers have used the actors of the TV-series to cast their respective characters. Justice is Served is no exception to that rule either. This time around, additional cast member Jesse L. Martin has joined in to give his voice for the detective Ed Green character. Justice is Served will also feature a cameo role by professional tennis star Patrick McEnroe. We are assured therefore that Justice is Served

will reach the high levels of audio that its predecessors had.

The biggest changes though come with the gameplay. The interface has been redesigned from scratch. The biggest difference compared to the previous L&O adventures is that the case file has been completely eliminated! The evidence that the player will collect throughout the case will be stored in an inventory area at the bottom of the screen that will be available at all times. These items are broken up into the categories of evidence, witnesses, documents, and reports. This allows the player to more easily find what they are looking for, rather than going to a full screen case file that contains all types of evidence grouped together, something that takes them out of the environment of the game. Players will be able to ask people about anything in their inventory, in addition to asking them interview questions. The forms for requesting lab tests and submitting warrants are now located on the desk in the precinct and A.D.A's office, so the player will drag items from their inventory into these forms.

One more important diffe-

rence is that this time you won't be able to select skills in the beginning of the game. The mobile phone will have increased functionality and it will play a bigger role than what it used to do. Players can dial out and conduct interviews by phone in addition to receiving incoming messages. Some witnesses will only be available by phone, and some will only be available in person. In order to complete the game the player will need to call certain witnesses once they find their phone numbers.

The developers promised also more variety in tasks and problem-solving. They claim to have more creative puzzles in this game, including a musical puzzle to open a music box, an audio puzzle that requires the player to assemble bits of recorded surveillance audio, a pattern puzzle involving antique Ukrainian dolls, an anagram puzzle, a puzzle involving matching an old typewriter to a document typed on it, and many more.

One similarity with the previous games is that it is possible to loose. To begin with, it is possible to arrest the wrong suspect. Something which will make your case impos-

# PREVIEWS

Law and Order: Justice is Served | GC 2004

Developer:  
**Legacy Interactive**  
Perspective:  
**1st person**  
Interface:  
**Point and click**  
Site:  
**www.lawandordergame.com**  
Release Date:  
**20/9/2004**



You can't have a L&O game without dead bodies



Detective Ed Green will help you in your investigation

sible from the first day in trial. So be careful before you issue that arrest warrant! But even if you do arrest the right suspect you might not win the game. You have to present the jury with a very strong case.

Legacy Interactive only recently released an online demo on the official website of the game. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from that short demo, but a few things we noticed is that now you can send an item to the crime lab automatically as soon as you pick it up. The inventory on the bottom of the screen seemed much more intuitive than the previous case file. The case file used to be rather problematic and it is a great advantage for Justice is Served that the developers got rid of it.

In the previous Law and Order games there were not so many obstacles apart from finding the right evidence and asking the right questions. Now immediately after you start playing, you are faced with a problem, involving a locked cabinet. You have to find the right combination in order to gain access to Elena's cabinet. How this is going to work remains to be seen. I hope the developers didn't go out of their way tacking in pro-

blems and puzzles all over the place just for the sake of making the game longer. But as already stated, this is not possible to make out just from the short demo.

I am also reluctant to comment on the new interface, since the online demo uses Flash and I expect the interface to be completely different in the game. In one of the screenshots however you can see that although the notebook has been replaced with a frame featuring questions, the frame still takes up half of the screen.

Despite these little issues however, it seems like Legacy Interactive might have found the right formula for the L&O series and they continue to improve it with each new installment. Hopefully when they develop the fourth one they will update the graphics engine as well. Nevertheless, Justice is Served seems to shape up an one more solid experience with a complex plot, top quality acting and an improved interface. If the gameplay is also on par, then we don't have much to worry about. Look for Justice is Served in your local stores this month.

- Dimitris Manos



Above & Left: Tennis players will be a prominent type of characters in Justice is Served. The notepad has been replaced, but the questions unfortunately still cover almost half of the screen.

---

---

# Games Convention 2004

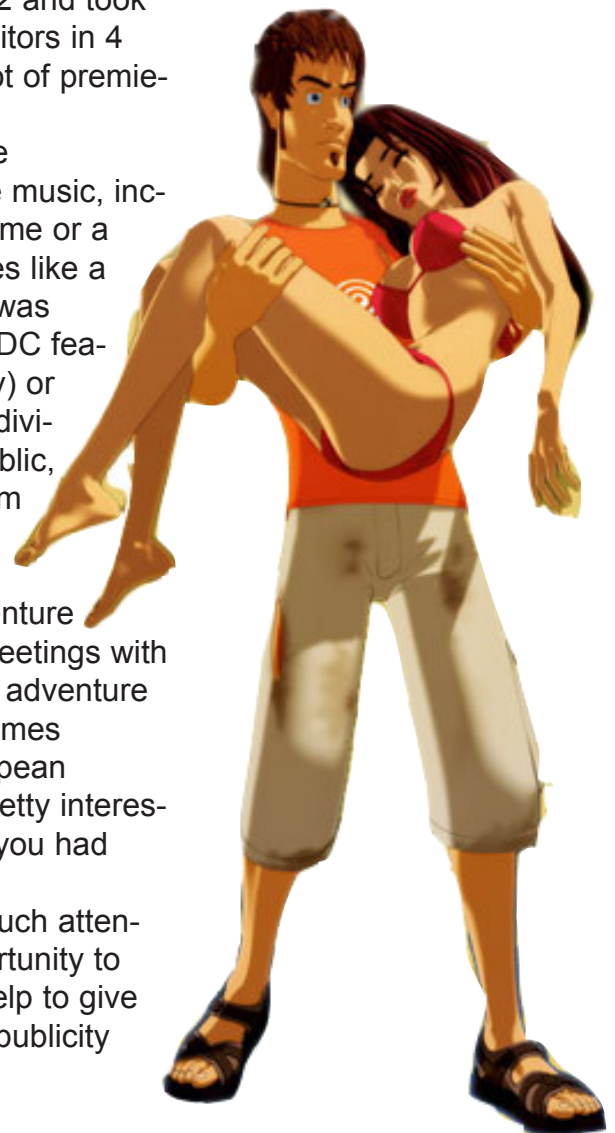
Jan Schneider from [Adventure-treff.de](http://Adventure-treff.de) brings us the latest news from Games Convention 2004, the expo that is probably the richest in adventure games than any other around the world.

Everybody knows E3 and ECTS, but what is Games Convention you might ask? It's a large trade show in Leipzig (Germany) for PC and console games which was founded in 2002 and took place for the third time this year, with 105000 visitors in 4 days, 1700 journalists from 21 countries and a lot of premieres.

The GC was opened with a concert by the Filmharmonic Orchestra of Prague playing game music, including classics like the Super Mario Brothers theme or a Monkey Island medley (yes!) and world premieres like a piece from Stalker. Also the Games Convention was accompanied by the developers' conference GCDC featuring speakers like Bob Bates (Eric the Unready) or Cevat Yerli (Far Cry). The trade show itself was divided into two parts: A loud part for the general public, like the E3, and a business center for people from the industry and journalists to meet and talk about the games.

I was there to report for our German adventure gaming site [Adventure-Treff.de](http://Adventure-Treff.de) and had some meetings with publishers and developers. Since the majority of adventure game developers come from Europe and the Games Convention took place before the other big European gaming show in London, I think Leipzig was a pretty interesting place to be for adventure fans, especially if you had access to the business center.

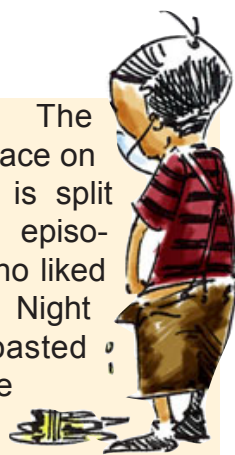
Some of the news from there didn't get much attention internationally so Dimitris gave me the opportunity to write an article for The Inventory. Maybe it will help to give the Games Convention even more international publicity next year.



## Tony Tough 2

Probably you remember that funny old school adventure about the smart ass detective Tony Tough who recovered his purple tapir from an evil guy with a pumpkin on his head. On this year's GC the German publisher dtp, who is responsible for many adventures here, announced together with Prograph Research, the Italian developer, that a prequel is in development and will hit the German shelves in February 2005. "Tony Tough: A Rake's Progress" will tell a story from Tony's youth, more precise his first case. Some questions from the first game will be explained, e.g. why Tony is attracted to wigs or why he has a

purple tapir. The game takes place on one day and is split into 15 small episodes. Those who liked the humor in Night of the Roasted Moths won't be disappointed from the next game. Technically A Rake's Progress will use the engine of Prezzemolo, Prograph's last game, so backgrounds and characters will be pre-rendered. Tony will be controlled by a classic point & click interface. So prepare for a classic adventure game that looks better than part 1.



## Runaway 2

Still not much was revealed about the highly anticipated sequel of Runaway: A Road Adventure. The game starts in Hawaii where Brian and Gina spend some days off, but there is not much time to relax: Brian will have to save Gina's life, he will wander through thick forests, beautiful beaches and snowy mountains and solve mysteries of ancient civilizations. There are 25+ characters in the game (including Sushi), 6 chapters and 100+ backgrounds. The sequel will be longer than Runaway, feature better videos and lip sync dialogs. But what exactly happens to Brian and Gina is still a secret.

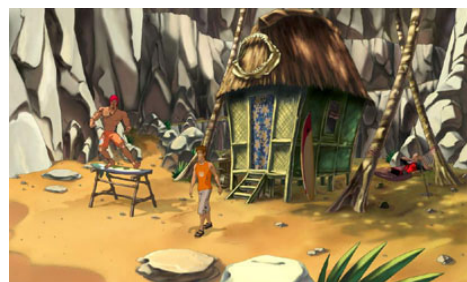


## Nibiru: Messenger of the Gods

The development team of Black Mirror now uses their great point & click engine to do a modern remake of their first adventure, Posel Bohu aka The Messenger of the Gods. It is about a Czech archeologist who examines an old tunnel from World War II and soon finds himself drawn into a complex adventure story, inspired by legends like Indiana Jones. In Leipzig we had a look at the first playable version of the game and it



looks pretty much like Black Mirror: Excellent background graphics, less pretty pre-rendered characters. The puzzle we played was about getting into a hotel by convincing an old woman to help us. Very old school adventure type. In English speaking countries Black Mirror stayed behind its potential due to a weak localization, but that aside it was a very good game. So keep an eye on Nibiru, although it might change its name before the release. At least my expectations are pretty high.



Runaway 2



Nibiru



# Myst IV and something...else

Genevieve Lord, the producer of *Myst IV*, gave us a presentation of her new game at the booth of Ubisoft. There are many pre-views around the net, so there is probably not much new to say about it except that most *Myst* fans will love it and most, but not all, *Myst* haters will hate it. Same procedure as every *Myst*. I was very impressed by the amount of motion they put in the prerendered backgrounds. Many animations, fog, water ripples, insects, animals, wind in the plants and much more movement create a living world. I was also impressed by the amount of data: *Myst IV* comes on two DVDs with 13 GB of data. Wow. I also asked Genevieve Lord if she can tell us anything about *Something Else*, the super secret next game Cyan is working on since finishing *Uru*. She wasn't allowed to tell us anything, but she said that it will be "really something else, something completely different". Draw your own conclusions, but my hopes to see a new adventure game by Cyan sank.



Genevieve Lord, producer of *Myst IV*



## Still Life

The very stylish looking *Still Life*, which is developed by the *Syberia* team, was not only shown but even playable in the public part of the Games Convention. As far as it was possible to experience in the hectic environment of the exhibition hall it has a great atmosphere and is graphically on par with the beautiful *Syberia* - although it has a completely different setting. The part we played seemed to be the beginning of the game. The player character, a not so much stereotype female, had to investigate a crime scene in a very run down, shabby apartment, a very sad and depressing place. The walls are smeared with graffiti, naked dolls are dangling from the ceiling, this is not a place you'd like to be. The gameplay in this part was a bit Sherlock Holmes style: You have to use your investigation tools to collect evidence and search the place for interesting stuff like hairs and blood. When *Still Life* is released in Q1 2005, it could be a very good game.





A panoramic view of the place where the exhibition was held.

## Adventure Mayhem

Below: *Clever and Smart*, an adventure based on the famous comics characters



Playing adventures on the go? Just make sure you don't run out of battery.

And there was more. **Clever & Smart** (aka Fred & Jeff) is a very charming 2D comic adventure from Spain featuring the two cartoon detectives who are famous especially in Europe. The game will have a weird story, the exact same look as the cartoons, very interesting puzzles and a multiplayer option: you will be able to play both main characters simultaneous with a friend over a network or the internet. We also saw an early playable version of **Sentinel**, the next game by the developers of Schizm 2, using the same engine and being less linear. If you liked Schizm 2, you will like this one.

**The Moment of Silence**, a very promising conspiracy thriller developed in Germany, was first shown to journalists two years ago at GC 2002. Now, almost done, it was shown at GC for the third time. When House of Tales, the developer, puts in some more characters to make the world more lively, then this will be a truly great game. The German version

will feature the German voices of Bruce Willis, Julia Roberts and Guybrush Threepwood (yeah!) and hit the shelves October 1st, many international deals are already signed. So keep an eye on it!

And finally we had a look at an adventure for mobile phones by the same developer. It's called **X-Files: The Deserter**, features Mulder and Scully solving a mysterious case and is distributed by Elkware.

Oh, and a fully playable version of Larry 8 was available to the public, but the two live action strippers promoting the game were really the best part. Expect some serious laughs if you like puberal humor, but don't expect an adventure game.

I hope I was able to convince you that Games Convention in Leipzig is more than a national gaming event but really has international relevance, also and especially for adventure gamers. See you next year at GC 2005.

- Jan Schneider

## TAC publishes the Westerner

The Adventure Company announced recently that they have acquired the rights for The Westerner. For some... reason TAC has also decided to rename The Westerner into Wanted: A Wild Western Adventure for the North American market. Why? We will never know. No matter how much you think about it, you won't find much logic in the decision. Anyway, the good news is that the game (no 2 in our most awaited adventures list in issue 16) is being published. The Westerner will be available in the end of September. For more info on The Westerner read our preview and interview with the developers in the 12th issue of The Inventory.

## News on Benoit Sokal's Lost Paradise

White Birds Productions has informed us that things have been progressing well with Lost Paradise. They are currently in negotiations with publishers and they hope to make an announcement in September.

## Boyz don't cry announced by JA

Randy Sluganski from Just Adventure recently previewed a new point and click cartoon adventure from Poland, called Boyz don't cry. Its offbeat graphics style make it stand out from the rest of the upcoming adventure games and their homepage is certainly worth checking out at: [www.boyzdontcry.com](http://www.boyzdontcry.com)

## New website for 8, a new 3D adventure

Tale of Tales have launched their new website for their upcoming 3D adventure called 8. You can visit their website and check out the beautiful screenshots from the game as well at: <http://tale-of-tales.com/8/> . 8 looks wonderful and the developers are currently in search for publishers.

## Publisher looking for adventures? Developer looking for publishers?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions then we might be able to help you. Since we started writing The Inventory we have managed to come in contact with a lot of developers and publishers and we have helped developers to find publishers for their adventures. So if you are a developer looking for a publisher, or a publisher looking for adventures to sign, send us an email at:

[theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com) and we will make sure to bring you in touch with the right people. All this is of course free of charge. After all, when more adventures are being published it is better for all of us. We currently have some very active publishers in the European market looking for 3rd person story-based adventures. So if you fit the bill you might want to give it a go!

## Announcements:

### The Inventory is looking for Public Relations Staff

We are looking for Public Relations staff. Your duties will include creating and maintaining agreements with advertisers that will financially support our efforts with the magazine. Salary will be given in the form of commission. All applicants interested, send an email to [theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com) with the title 'PR Staff'

### New European website for adventure games

The last couple of years the adventure market has literally boomed in the European Union. There are two or three publishers in many European countries fighting over new titles, something that we could not even dream of some years ago. Therefore the team behind The Inventory is preparing a new website for adventure games, with a strong focus on the European market. If you come from Europe and you would like to join our efforts please send us an email at [theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com) with the title 'Adventure Europe'. We are looking for:

- programmers
- designers
- writers
- translators
- forum moderators

# Interview with Craig Brannon

The Law and Order games have been some of the most successful adventures recently. Legacy Interactive have decided therefore to continue publishing titles based on the Law and Order franchise. This time, they go even further by producing two adventures based on the Law & Order franchise. The first one, called Justice is Served is based on the Law and Order series and is similar to the previous L&O games. The second one, is a brand new series based on the popular L&O spin-off, Criminal Intent. Criminal Intent will be the first adventure in the L&O series that will be seen from a 3rd person perspective. We invited Craig Brannon, producer of L&O: Criminal Intent to answer some of our questions about their upcoming adventure.

## **Yourself**

### **- Craig, could you give us some background on yourself?**

I'm the Director of Development for Adventure Games here at Legacy Interactive. I have a doctorate in Educational Psychology and have been involved in this industry for over 15 years. When I first started in this business, I was developing educational software. As the industry has shifted toward more entertainment products, I've gone along for the ride.

### **- Have you worked on any of the previous L&O games?**

I was one of the producers on the original Law & Order game along with Christina Talyor Oliver. She has taken the lead on producing the second and now the third Law & Order games, but I've still been involved in the development of those games while working on other projects, including Law & Order: Criminal Intent.

### **- Do you play adventures games in general and if so could you name some of your favourite ones?**

Yes, I do play adventure games

whenever I find the time. Grim Fandango and The Seventh Guest are two of my favorite classic adventure games. Syberia and Runaway are probably two of my more recent favorite adventure games.

## **Law & Order: Criminal Intent**

### **- Could you tell us what is the story of the game about?**

There are actually three different stories to tell. One thing that is quite different about Law & Order: Criminal Intent from the other Law & Order games is that there are four different cases to solve. The first three cases feature three totally different situations with various victims from all walks of life. The twists really come in with the fourth case when you will have to try to connect them all together. Here's a little sample of the story: Ambitious prosecutor Martin Ramirez is found floating in the East River, with multiple stab wounds in his body. A beautiful young woman, Lisa Shipley, is murdered in a hotel room. Her wrists are slashed with a razor, a plastic bag tied around her

**One thing that is quite different about Law & Order: Criminal Intent from the other Law & Order games is that there are four different cases to solve.**

head and, interestingly, a pillowcase draped over her face. Bank Executive James Walton is bludgeoned to death by a baseball-bat wielding assailant, in the foyer of his home. Once all three murders are solved, Detective Goren begins to realize that the cases are somehow connected and must track down his most ruthless adversary to solve the final case.

**- The previous L&O games were written by professional writers who had worked for the L&O TV series before. Are you going to use professional writers from the TV-series this time as well?**

Absolutely. Maintaining the integrity of the brand is always important to us. One of the things that makes the Law & Order television series so great is the smart writing. You never know what twists and turns the story might take. The storylines and dialog for this new game were written by Elizabeth M. Cosin, who was one of the original writers on the Criminal Intent television series.

**- On your website there is mention of Detective Robert Goren and Captain James Deakins, voiced by the respective actors Vincent D'Onofrio and Jamey Sheridan from the TV-series, but there is no mention of Detective Alexandra Eames. Does that mean that she won't appear in the game? And if so, why did you decide to keep this character out of the game?**

The Detective Eames character works great on the TV show. However, we had a hard time figuring out a meaningful role for that character in the game, when the player is taking on the role of Detective Goren. Remember in Broken Sword 3 how Nico would

follow you around without much purpose when you played the role of George? We didn't want to do something that. We want to make sure that each character in the game is as meaningful and important as they are in the show. If that can't happen, it's better just to leave that character out and stick to what will make this game great.

**- How many characters will we get to meet and how many locations will we get to visit in Criminal Intent?**

Interaction with a multitude of characters is very important to this game. There are about 60 speaking characters and 70 different locations in the game. Don't worry, there will be plenty of people to meet and places to go!

**- In what ways will the story of the game be similar to the story that is being portrayed in the TV series?**

Just like the TV show, there are many twists and turns in the plot with multiple suspects. The cases focus on tracking down each killer and ultimately getting him or her to confess. There's no trial aspect to the game, as the TV show does not focus on that portion either. The situations, characters and dialog are very faithful to how they are on the television show.

**- A big difference compared to the previous L&O adventures is that this time we will get to control one of the main characters of the series instead of controlling an imaginary intern. Why did you take that decision and do you think that in the long run it will be positive in terms of immer-**



**Everything will be seen from a third person perspective in Criminal Intent**

**The cases focus on tracking down each killer and ultimately getting him or her to confess. There's no trial aspect to the game, as the TV show does not focus on that portion either.**

## sion?

For one, we wanted to distinguish this game from our other L&O games, which are all first-person perspective. Also, the heart and soul of the TV show is the Detective Goren character, so we wanted to make this character as prominent as possible. Seeing and controlling a character on screen certainly allows for more opportunities to identify with that character, which can help a game feel more immersive.

**- Another difference this time around is that we will get to solve four cases instead of working on one case. Are these cases connected with each other in any way or are these cases completely separate.**

As I mentioned earlier, the three initial cases seem unrelated at first. After solving them, you learn how the cases are connected and must solve the fourth case. And yes, I'm being a little vague on purpose so that I don't give too much away!

**- In the website it is also stated: Utilize Goren's instincts for interrogation by selecting his psychological approach to witnesses and potential suspects. Decide if Goren should try to deceive the suspect, intimidate him into talking or take another approach altogether. Does that mean that the game's story will be non-linear? Can the player witness multiple endings depending on the choices made earlier in the game?**

There will be some non-linear aspects to the game, in that some things can be performed in any order whenever possible. However, as you'd expect, it's often the case that one thing will lead to another thing, so it's necessary that you do



Detective Goren at the cigar bar

the previous thing first. There is a single "best" ending to each case, which players will hopefully find very satisfying. A unique feature in this game can be found in the dialog with witnesses and suspects. Dialogs will be topic based, but the player must decide what technique to use when asking about that topic. For some witnesses, the player will get the best information by being empathetic or by flattering the witness. For others, the player may have to be deceptive or confrontational. Players will have to switch modes multiple times within interviews to obtain all the relevant information. If the player isn't being strategic, the witness will become annoyed and abruptly end the interview before all the relevant information is obtained.

**- The most obvious difference that Criminal Intent will have compared to the previous adventures produced by Legacy Interactive, will be its graphics. It is the first time that you are using a 3rd person perspective. Could you tell us what factors led you to that decision?**

Since we have produced other Law

& Order games, we didn't want people to think we would be just switching out the characters to create this new game. We wanted the entire game-playing experience to be different. We also wanted to allow the player to be able to see and interact with the main character of the show as much as possible.

**- Are you going to use real time or pre-rendered backgrounds?**

The backgrounds will be pre-rendered to ensure that they will be of the highest quality.

**- What is the highest resolution that the game's graphics will reach?**

The standard resolution of the game is 800x600.

**- Could you tell us how the camera is going to work in Criminal Intent? Will the camera angles be fixed or will the player be able to change camera angles? Do you plan to use different camera angles for each dialogue or will the camera angle stay put throughout each dialogue?**

The player will not control the camera, as is standard in most third-per-

son adventure games. For visual variety, the camera angles will change during some of the longer dialog sequences.

**- Could you talk to us about the music of the game? The previous L&O adventures by Legacy featured very few (to almost none) music tracks throughout the game. Is this going to happen in Criminal Intent as well, or do you plan to use more tracks this time?**

This game will have more music than in the previous Law & Order game, in part because there are many more locations.

**- Except D'Onofrio and Sheridan, do you plan to use more professional actors that have appeared in the TV series for the rest of the characters?**

The other two characters on the TV show (Detective Eames and A.D.A. Carter) will not appear in the game, as I discussed earlier. However, the roles of Detective Goren and Captain Deakins are prominent, making it feel very authentic to the television series.

**- Do you have any contact with the actors? Do you know what they think about the idea of themselves being characters of a computer game?**

I have not met Vincent D'Onofrio yet, but I have heard that he likes to play computer games. We will be recording his voice-overs in a few weeks, so hopefully I will be able to meet him then and ask him what he thinks.

**- Let's talk about the gameplay now. Could you describe to us how the interface is going to work in Criminal Intent? Will we have a normal inventory this time around or will you use something**

**similar to the case folder of the previous L&O games?**

The interface is a little more high-tech than in our previous Law & Order games. The inventory, map and cell phone are all contained in a PDA device. Also, as the player explores the environments, the player can choose to perform a variety of actions (look, use, collect, analyze, talk) on objects and people.

**- On your website you make mention of 'easy to mind bending puzzles woven into the compelling storylines'. Are these puzzles going to be inventory-based or something similar to 'put the shredded pieces of paper together' puzzle we saw in L&O: Double or Nothing? Could you give us one or two examples of puzzles that the players will have to solve in the game?**

Given that our games take place in modern-day New York (in which the TV series is set), coming up with puzzles that work within that world is challenging. There's more puzzle freedom when the game is set in a magical or ancient world. With that said, I think we've come up with some fun and organic puzzles given our constraints. There are a variety of puzzles, from some simple inventory-based ones, some classic ones (jigsaw, password, keys) as well as some non-standard puzzles (such as a partially completed crossword puzzle).

**- It is also stated that before solving each case, players will get to build a profile based on real-life criminal profiling techniques. Could you describe to us in detail how will that work? Could you also tell us what kind of research did you have to carry out to**

**come up with this kind of information for the purposes of the game?**

As the player collects evidence, witness testimony, and test results, the player can submit those things to a Criminal Profiler computer. Items that are relevant will help build a criminal profile for the case (such as the killer's personality, characteristics and motive). Once a strong profile is created, the player can compare suspects to the criminal profile to see if a strong match exists. A match must be made in order to complete the case.

We worked closely with a forensic psychiatrist to create these criminal profiles. Since real criminal profiles are quite long and detailed, we had to simplify them somewhat so that they would work within the framework of the game. We hope that building these criminal profiles will be interesting and entertaining for players.

**- Will you use some similar feature to the choice of skills that players had to go through in the beginning of the previous L&O games?**

Because you play Detective Goren who already has a strong personality, we didn't feel that choosing skills or characteristics would be appropriate for this game. We really wanted to feature Detective Goren and all of his unique personality characteristics that you watch each week. That great thing about Detective Goren's personality is that it is ever changing to match the person he is interrogating. We think this is a fun aspect of the character that we didn't want to muddy.

**- When will Criminal Intent be released?**

The game will be released in Spring of 2005.

**- Do you plan to release a playable demo before that?**

Yes, we plan on having a demo in early 2005.

**- When you designed Criminal Intent which demographic did you mostly think of? The people who are avid gamers or the people who watch the TV show?**

We are trying to please fans of the show, adventure gamers and casual gamers (who may have never seen the TV show) simultaneously. Adventure gamers like puzzles a little more challenging than casual gamers and fans of the show, so we hope we have a balance that pleases most people.

**- One thing that Legacy Interactive has excelled at is the promotion of their titles by aiming at the right demographic for their games. What kind of promotion strategies will you use for Criminal Intent?**

Thank you for the great compliment! Like with many of our games, we have strong relationships with the brand licensor and the networks that the shows air on. We will again try to leverage these opportunities to put forth as many promotional partnerships as possible. Additionally, things like the online demo game and the executable demo are great ways to promote to fans like you. Our goal in our promotional strategies is to really come up with things that will reward the audience with great content, and that is what we will try to do again.

**- Do you think there will be a sequel to Criminal Intent in the future?**

We hope so!

**- Is there something else about Criminal Intent that you would**

**like to add?**

One of our goals is for players to feel like they've stepped into an episode of Law & Order: Criminal Intent. We hope that the game is enjoyable for not only fans of the show, but for anyone who likes psychologically oriented mysteries.

## General

**- Legacy Interactive has already produced two adventures and is already producing two more as we speak. Does that mean that you are satisfied with the adventure genre and do you plan to release even more adventure titles in the future?**

We are happy with how well our Law & Order games have done so far. We plan on doing more adventure games as long as they are successful. We are also expanding the types of games we do as well. In addition to Law & Order: Justice is Served, we are also releasing a game based on the TV show ER that will be more of a sim/strategy game. Across the board, regardless of genre, what Legacy always strives to do is produce great games that are high in quality and entertainment.

**- What do you think of the current state of adventures? What has to happen for adventures to generally improve in quality and appeal to a wider audience as well?**

I think adventure games have room to grow from where they are now, but they will never be the "king" of computer game genres like they were many years ago. For adventure games to reach a wider audience, I think they will need to try different types of stories and characters with innovative gameplay, and not

***We are happy with how well our Law & Order games have done so far. We plan on doing more adventure games as long as they are successful.***



just Myst-wannabes. It's a tough time, as we watch the PC game market continue to shrink. At the same time, expectations for quality are increasing and production budgets for games are decreasing. Game developers need to become more and more efficient about producing games, which isn't easy!

**- We have seen quite a lot of adventures being based on TV-series of the investigative form such as Law and Order and CSI. Do you think it would be possible to expand the horizons and even develop adventures for other series genres? For example, comedy has been the theme for a lot of adventure games in the past, so could it be possible to make a high-quality adventure based on a sitcom such as Everybody Loves Raymond or Friends that would appeal to a large audience?**

I would love to see a good humorous adventure game again. Runaway showed that it still can be done. As far as something based on a TV series, I think the show would have to have some problem-solving or mystery aspect to it in order to work. The examples you gave are great comedies, but the shows' plots don't inherently have something to solve in them, so placing them in an adventure game wouldn't seem authentic. When working with a TV license, we always want to make sure that the game makes sense and that it will appeal to both gamers and fans of the show. It's easy to imagine a comedy like Scooby Doo as an adventure game since a mystery element is inherent (although THQ decided to make them action games, as that's probably a better fit for that audience).



**You can choose how to treat an individual during a conversation**

**- A series of adventure games that could be described as very similar to the Law and Order games is CSI. Have you played the CSI games and if so what do you think of them?**

Yes, I've completed both CSI games. I liked the fact that the developers made improvements in the sequel (such as difficulty level and length of gameplay) as well as added some new features. They did a good job of being faithful to the TV show.

**- Is there anything else you would like to add?**

We are hard at work building an adventure game that you and your fans will love. Criminal Intent will offer a different feel from our other adventure games. We hope to bring the core adventure fans a game that is classic in style, yet full of fresh and innovative ideas that adds to the genre as a whole. Criminal Intent will definitely bring some diversity in gameplay to our adventure game line-up. Our goal is to make sure we are providing adventure gamers everywhere with an engaging selection of titles, each one getting better and better. We can't wait to share more with you as Law & Order: Criminal Intent develops!

# Interview with DTP

DTP has been in our Lounge more often than any other guest. So are they passing us big stacks of cash to receive such treatment? Emm, not really. If you take a look at their line-up you will see why they are invited so often in the Lounge. Tony Tough 2, Nibiru, Sherlock Holmes and the Silver Earring, The Moment of Silence are some of their upcoming titles, while recently they have published The Westerner, Runaway and Black Mirror, all well-received in the adventure-friendly community of the German-speaking territories. Let's see what they have to tell us about some of their upcoming titles.

## Tony Tough 2

**- How come there is a sequel of Tony Tough? Were the sales encouraging enough for such a decision?**

The sales of Tony Tough were satisfying, but I would lie if I talked of a "hit". Tony had several problems, the most important of it was that we got into the pre-Christmas business, were Tony had to fight against strong adventures like Uru and Broken Sword. But in some magazines he got better marks ;-). At the end we got out very well. And then we came up with the idea to have Tony 2 developed and told Prograph "Go for Tony 2!".

**- Is it going to be developed by the same team that developed Tony Tough 1?**

Yes, it will be Prograph again.

**- Could you describe to us the story of Tony Tough 2?**

It's very complicated. Basically, it's one day in Tony's life as a teenager in New Mexico - Tony's first case. It's about a mysterious kidnapper, aliens, wigs, purple dogs and - as the subtitle says "A rake's progress".

**- Will we get to see characters**

**from the first game?**

Tony will be there naturally, but as far as I know none of the other characters.

**- Are the graphics going to be improved compared to Tony Tough 1 and if yes in what way?**

Tony goes 3D! The graphics won't look like 1995 any longer...

Prograph uses the same engine as in their kid's game Prezzemolo. It's a modern 3D engine.

**- What about the interface, will it remain the same or do the developers plan to change it in some way?**

The interface will be classic point & click, it won't differ much from the interface in Tony 1.

**- The main criticism made by those who played Tony Tough 1 concerned its gameplay. Some players thought that the puzzles were illogical. Do you know if the developers have taken this criticism into consideration? Will Tony Tough 2 be easier or harder than its predecessor?**

Tony Tough 2 will be easier, because the developers took the criticism seriously.

**- When will Tony Tough 2 be**

The Tony Tough promo poster



**released?**

It will be out in the German-speaking territories around the 1st of March. I don't know when it is going to be published in other countries or by whom.

**- And after Tony Tough 2 are there any plans for a third instalment as well or will this depend on the sales of the second one?**

We think that Tony Tough 2 will sell more than Tony 1 as it avoids many difficulties we had with Tony 1 from the start. So nothing speaks against a third part. But that's far away in the future.

**Nibiru / Black Mirror**

**- How has Black Mirror done so far? Are you satisfied with it?**

Black Mirror sold extremely well in the German-speaking territories. In fact, it's been a real hit around here, selling high numbers of copies many months after release. Everything went - and still goes - well with this title. We are also satisfied with the ratings, but it was hard to get the coverage we wanted, as adventures are still not seen as triple-A products around here.

**- \*Spoilers\* The main character of Black Mirror kills himself in the end of Black Mirror \*End of Spoilers\* Does that mean there is no way that we will see a second instalment of Black Mirror? Or do you think there is a way to continue the story further on?**

\*Spoiler\*The fact that Sammuell Gordon dies in the end - and we don't really see it, we just guess it as he jumps from the tower - \*End of Spoiler\* doesn't mean there is no possibility of making a sequel to it. Or maybe a prequel. We will talk

with our Czech partners about that.

**- Nibiru is developed by the same developers who gave us The Black Mirror. Are the two adventures similar with each other in some way or is there any connection between the stories of the two games?**

Nibiru is a totally different story. It's not as dark as Black Mirror, but there are some deep mysteries in it as well. It's more an Indiana Jones-like story than Black Mirror.

**- Nibiru was published in the Czech Republic some years before The Black Mirror. Is the version you are going to publish a remake? If it is what do you plan to enhance in your version compared to the version sold in the Czech Republic?**

It will be a remake of this old adventure. It basically uses the same engine as Black Mirror, but it's enhanced, so there are more details and you can play it in 1024x768 - Black Mirror was limited to 800x600. As the character models were subject to criticism, there are new 3D models for all characters.

**- Could you tell us a few words about the story of Nibiru?**

The main character is called Martin Holan. He is studying archaeology in Paris, when his uncles asks him to come to the Czech Republic to investigate a mysterious tunnel. He finds his contact person murdered in Prague, and the adventure starts. It will lead him to many, many dangerous and mysterious places all around the world, from the tunnel - which is said to be built by the Germans in World War II - to ancient Maya temples.

***Black Mirror sold extremely well in the German-speaking territories. In fact, it's been a real hit around here, selling high numbers of copies many months after release.***





Backgrounds from Nibiru

**- Is there one playable character or more? Could you tell us some things about him/her/them?**

Martin Holan is the only playable character as far as I know. He's a young man studying archaeology in Paris.

**- How many characters will we get to meet and how many locations will we get to visit in Nibiru?**

There will be 30 characters and around 80 locations.

**- What is the interface going to be like? Is it going to be similar to The Black Mirror?**

It will be very similar to Black Mirror.

**- What is the release date for Nibiru?**

It will be out in the German-speaking territories on 1st February.

**- Is there something else you would like to tell us about Nibiru?**

We hope that it's going to be as successful as Black Mirror. It will definitely be better in many aspects.

**- Future Games also have another adventure in development called Ron Loo. Do you know about this adventure and do you plan to publish it as well, once it is completed?**

We know it but we are not interested in publishing it right now. Never say never, but right now I'd say we won't publish it.

## **The Moment of Silence**

**- What is the game's story about?**

New York, 2044 - The countries of the earth are united under the regime of a world government. In the

metropolises everything's the same as before. Weird gurus preach doom, yuppies in glass skyscrapers develop marketing strategies, gangs and prostitutes hang around in the ghettos, terrorists throw bombs and old men are getting nuts on conjuration theories.

Peter Wright doesn't care much about that, because his wife has been killed by an aircrash. Since then he has been living isolated, drawn back and without a distinguished goal from day to day. This changes rapidly when some day a special force of the police storms the quarter of his neighbours and arrests his neighbour, an online-journalist - without giving reasons. Peter starts getting interested in the accident - and discovers terrifying, frightening things.

The game's story is about us becoming so comfortable with technical development, that we simply don't recognize how dependent we are on it. It's about the dangers that lie within the technical development and human abuse of it. Basically it's the old wizard's apprentice theme: Can we control the ghosts we conjured - and if not, how can we get rid of them? So the game has a strong note of social criticism, an aspect most other games lack.

**- Players will be able to get control of 3 characters. Could you talk to us about these characters?**

The player will control Peter Wright and Deborah Oswald.

**- How many characters will we get to meet and how many locations will we get to visit?**

There are around 25 characters and 80-100 locations.

**- In our preview in issue 10 there was mention of 2 different**

endings depending on the players' actions throughout the game. Is one of them the 'right' ending and the other one the 'wrong' ending or are they just two different ways to finish the story?

Well, I would speak of a "wrong" and a "right" ending. If you are a sadist, maybe it's the other way round;-)

**- Are the graphics of the game 2 and a ½ D like Syberia or are they in full 3D?**

The graphics are 2,5 D as in Syberia, but they are more detailed. The locations are pre-rendered, but there are several "levels" in each location. Sometimes the camera will "drive into the location", that means if you go "into" the location or come up to into the player's view, the camera will follow Peter. If he passes a well, he will be shown correctly behind the water.

**- What is the highest resolution that the graphics will reach?**

As far as I know you can play it in 1024x768.

**- In our preview in issue 10 there were mentions of different camera angles during dialogues and focus on facial animation. Will all dialogues feature dynamic camera cuts and close-ups or are these techniques only going to be incorporated during cutscenes?**

Not only in cutscenes, also in ingame-dialogues there will be different camera-angles.

**- Will the game feature a lot of cutscenes?**

The action and key scenes are transported in really excellent cut-scenes. On the whole we have a total of around 30 minutes of cut-scenes.



Peter Wright and Debora Oswald from The Moment of Silence

**- What kind of music will you use for the purposes of the game?**

There is a mix of relaxed, ambient ingame.music, house & techno when you visit the underground hacker-guild, and an epic classic-metal mix in the cutscenes. There's on basic theme featured throughout the game. If you want to listen to music similar to the game, visit our official website [www.momentofsilence.de](http://www.momentofsilence.de) - and turn up your speakers!

**- How much time will the total soundtrack last?**

It has a total length of around 80 minutes.

**- DTP usually signs famous German voice-actors for their adventures. Have you already found actors for the German version of TMOS?**

Yes. The two main characters - Peter Wright and Deborah Oswald - are spoken by the German voice actors of Bruce Willis and Julia Roberts. The rest of the set will also be spoken by high-professional voice-actors.

**- There was mention of a mix between inventory-based and mechanical puzzles. Will the distribution of puzzles be equal between mechanical and inventory-based or are you going to focus on one of them mostly?**

Most of the puzzles will be invento-

***The locations are pre-rendered, but there are several "levels" in each location. Sometimes the camera will "drive into the location", that means if you go "into" the location or come up to into the player's view, the camera will follow Peter.***



Here is an example of the point and click interface of TMOS

**Most of the puzzles will be inventory- and dialogue-based. So the focus is on classic adventure-gameplay rather than on mechanical, Myst-style puzzles.**

The developers have managed to create beautiful backgrounds for TMOS



ry- and dialogue-based. So the focus is on classic adventure-gameplay rather than on mechanical, Myst-style puzzles. There will be some of them, too, but not too many.

**- Could you describe to us how the interface is going to work?**

It's as basic and simple as an adventure-interface can be. Left Click - action and walking, right click - analyse. You can run with a double click, and I think you can show all exits by hitting a certain key, maybe the Tab-key.

**- Will the game contain any action?**

There will be a lot of action in the cutscenes, but no action-sequences ingame.

**- Could you describe to us how is the dialogue interface going to work?**

It's a basic multiple-choice dialogue system. If you have already spoken about topics and there is nothing new, the lines will be marked in a different colour, similar to links on web-sites. This is very comfortable.

**- If you had to pick one of the two, would you say that The Moment of Silence would be an easy or a difficult adventure?**

Rather difficult. But in fact, it's somewhere in the middle.

**- How long do you think it will take for an average adventurer to**

**finish Moment of Silence?**

Around 25-30 hours.

**- The game will be released soon. How are the last steps for Moment of Silence?**

We are now (mid-August) starting with the voice-recordings. After that, we're going into the test-phase.

**- Is there anything more you would like to tell us about The Moment of Silence?**

We really hope to climb onto the throne of the genre with this. And I hope that all adventure-fans all around the world can enjoy it. As you know, we Germans tend to do any job very correctly - I think you can see and feel that in The Moment of Silence.

**Sherlock Holmes and the Silver Earring**

**- This is the second game that Frogwares develops based on Sherlock Holmes. The first time they chose to create an adventure focused more on puzzles and less on story with a first person perspective, but the results were not very encouraging. This time they seemed to have changed their philosophy and The Silver Earring seems to focus more on storytelling. Do you think this is the right way to go and do you think that Frogwares has found the right formula for their Sherlock Holmes games?**

As far as we - and many others who downloaded the demo - have played the game, Frogwares definitely goes the right way now. There is really a dark and mysterious story behind it, written by a true Sherlock Holmes fan.

**- Will we get to control Watson**

## **this time around or is Sherlock the only playable character?**

In some scenes you will also control Watson. I think you can even change between them in some locations, and you'll probably have to in order to solve some riddles.

## **- What is the case that Sherlock will have to solve this time?**

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson are invited to the cocktail party of a millionaire who wants to welcome back his daughter in England. During his speech, he suddenly drops dead to the ground, with a bullet-hole in his chest. Sherlock doesn't wait for the police and starts investigating.

## **- In the first Sherlock Holmes that Frogwares released there were not many characters around, but instead players got to learn about the story by reading documents. Has this changed in the sequel?**

There are many characters around now. I spoke to around ten characters only in the first location. And there will be many more throughout the game.

## **- Could you tell us a few words about the graphics of the game?**

It's an engine similar to that of The Moment of Silence or Syberia. There are realtime-shadows for the 3D-characters, the animations are very good, and the settings really let you feel to be in London, around 1900. The lead artist must be a fan of Fin de Siècle and Art Nouveau.

## **- Could you describe to us the interface of the game?**

It's a basic point & click interface again. You have an inventory-bar in the lower part of the screen, which vanishes when not needed.

## **- What kind of music will we get to listen to in the Silver Earring?**

The music will fit to the époque of

the game. It's like being at the Vienna Opera Ball or in a small Coffee House in the 1890ies. It will mainly be of the 19th century composers Felix Mendelsson and Nicolo Paganini.

## **- What is the release date of Sherlock Holmes and the Silver Earring?**

It will be out in the German-speaking territories in November. In UK, it might be out earlier.

## **- Is there something else you would like to add for Sherlock Holmes and the Silver Earring?**

I would recommend for German-speaking players to wait for the German version. There's much talking and difficult documents in it, and to pursue our path we need the help of the German players. We will definitely do a good job in the localisation, choose voice actors that really fit to the characters and keep an eye on them in order to let them speaking some kind of "Oxford German" to resemble the sound of the original voices. That's not too difficult if you have voice actors who know what they are doing - and Germans from the northern part of Germany (not like myself;-) can speak in a very British manner ;-)

## **General**

## **- You have based your business mostly on 3rd person point and click adventures and you seem to be flourishing. Do you intend to keep this up in the future?**

After the past successes we will definitely pursue the path of becoming THE adventure-publisher not only in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, but maybe in all of Europe. But we don't stick to 3rd person adventures, we can easily imagine 1st person adventures as

well. But up to now we haven't seen one that would have the quality requirements. Most 1st person adventures tend to be boring graphic-artworks.

## **- You have published numerous adventure games in the recent couple of years like Runaway, The Westerner, The Black Mirror, Tony Tough etc. Which one of all the adventures you have published would you call the most successful one?**

Runaway was the most successful one, but it already feels Black Mirror's hot breath in its neck;-).

## **- Are you in discussions with even more adventure developers right now?**

Yes, we are in negotiation with some very well known people and we are talking about very well known and highly desired titles. But I would risk sudden death if I said more.

## **- How many adventures do you publish per year (in average)?**

Around four to five, maybe more. Not much time for going on holiday next year ;-)

## **- Is there anything else you would like to add?**

We are always interested in new ideas and titles from all over the world. If you are a developer of adventures or want to sell the licence for one and read this interview and thought "Wow these guys really do something for the genre, whereas others don't care", write me an email (c.kellner@dtp-ag.com). And don't worry about us being focussed on the German-speaking market. We have very good contacts to highly-recommended publishers all around the world, so we can talk about international things as well.

# Sherlock Holmes:

## THE SILVER EARRING



Frogwares brings the most famous detective ever back in action.

In the interest of fairness, I'll be revealing all of my personal bias from the get go. I'm a huge fan of the Gabriel Knight series as I love deep characterization foremost, a rich plot of any kind, and a good "curl up to read by the raging fireplace in winter" mystery. I also love the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the Sherlock Holmes TV shows/movies (Jeremy Brett is the quintessential Holmes, not Basil Rathbone), and two of the previous games based on the great detective; *The Case of the Serrated Scalpel* and *The Case of the Rose Tattoo*, naturally.

I can even admit to having a soft spot for the time period itself. One of my all time favorite films, the uncut version of Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander*, is set in the early years of the twentieth century, where the little Swedish village and fashions in clothing don't seem very far removed from the styles in 1897, the year of Sherlock's latest case. And biases proudly admitted, what a case it is...

**Story:** It all begins, in deceptively simple fashion, at 221b Baker Street with Dr. Watson reading a letter of invitation to Sherlock Holmes. The event: a reception at Sherringford Hall celebrating the return from a Swiss boarding school of Sir Melvyn Bromsby's daughter, Lavinia. Moments after

arriving, our heroic duo watches Bromsby take the stage to make an announcement, but a gunshot cuts his speech short. Sir Bromsby dies instantly, and Sherlock insists that Watson fetch the police and prevent the guests from leaving. The game is afoot for Sherlock as he begins his investigation mere moments after the crime... Years ago I remember thinking how well the spirit of Doyle's stories was captured in *Serrated Scalpel* and *Rose Tattoo* (and how pathetically in *Consulting Detective*). Well, they've finally been bested. Frogwares, after a less than majestic attempt with *Mystery of the Mummy*, has nailed it. They've taken everything up a notch from what's been done in past Sherlock games. Sherlock and Watson, both playable, are fantastically realized, as is Lestrade. The interaction between the three of them is pitch perfect, and I can see why Frogwares chose this particular fan written story to work with. It simply has to be among the best fan made things ever done (no longer will I think of those horrendous Star Wars fan videos that make me want to gouge my eyeballs out with a spoon).

At any rate, all of the major players new to this particular story are wonderfully brought to life, while Wiggins, Mrs. Hudson, and Mycroft are accounted for in their

Watson and Lestrade absorb Sherlock's wisdom.





own ways. I will say this: if you don't like a linear game you won't care for Silver Earring. It's not like the earlier Sherlock adventures where there seem to be hundreds of places to go, resulting in the loss of a more intimate, character driven storyline. To the contrary, this game requires you to collect all the evidence and testimony in a location before leaving and going to the next. You have a map, but there are never more than four locations on it at any one time. Before you decide if that's a bad thing or not, let's examine what it results in...

Sherlock Holmes: The Case of the Silver Earring possesses the best plot ever seen in a Sherlock Holmes game, and one of the greatest in any adventure game. Period. From beginning to end the game is consistently gripping, supplying you with new information in every chapter and allowing you to draw your own conclusions. To make things even better, the ending is absolutely fantastic (with a quiz beforehand so you can try your detective skills at solving the case yourself). It's very lengthy, wonderfully executed, and thoroughly jaw dropping as the whole solution comes together. In fact, the ending inspired me to replay the game to see things with a newfound understanding from the opening scene, and I enjoyed the experience even more the second time. I was very impressed with the storyline in this game, to say the least. I believe it crushes Serrated Scalpel and Rose Tattoo put together. How's that for high praise?

**Gameplay:** Here is the greatest compliment I can find: there is but a single truly awful sequence in this game. In an age where entire games are terrible, I

should think this can be respected. Granted, there is also a certain puzzle that most players will require help for, as it is pretty vague, but even that is nothing compared to...the Super Dog. Those are the only words that can be said for this foul beast from Hell itself. You must avoid this guard dog on two separate occasions, and the damn thing can see through walls and detect you with what can only be described as the psychic powers of an incredibly advanced canine mind (or just bad design). And if he detects you: it's Game Over. Reload. Try again. After you do that about twenty-five times you will finally figure out how to pass it.

There is another portion, a timed sequence in a maze of sorts, that may cause problems though I found it very easy. It's barely a maze in my estimation, if at all, and I would not mind mazes in adventure games if they were all like this one. If you've played Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster, King's Quest (V and VI), or The Riddle of Master Lu; you will breeze right through the far easier "maze" in Silver Earring.

Despite complaints to the contrary by fellow players, I never had any significant trouble with the control in this game. You click your desired destination once and begin to move there (or click twice to run in sequences where it's allowed), and the changes in visual angles are clearly labeled by the cursor becoming a pair of footsteps. To me it was pretty simple, and though it could have been more responsive, it gets the job done. It's annoying the way Sherlock will do a half-circle spin sometimes before moving, however. Occasionally he'll turn one way and then another, as if deciding on whether or not to follow



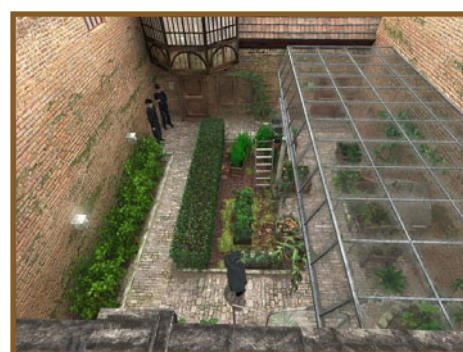
Sherlock could fill a novel with his analysis of this scene.



"Holmes! I deduce that she's intoxicated!"



Watson keeps watch while Sherlock stares at the wall...



"What do you notice about this garden Watson. Yes, I can see that it's green..."

# REVIEWS

Silver Earring | CSI 2 | Apprentice 2 | Dark Fall 2

Developer: **Frogwares**  
Perspective: **3rd person**  
Interface: **Point and click**  
Difficulty: **Medium**  
Site:

<http://www.frogwares.com/sherlock&watson/>

System Requirements:  
*Pentium III 500Mhz, 128 MB RAM, 16mb graphics card, DirectX 9.0 compatible (NVIDIA Geforce or ATI Radeon chipsets), Sound card, DirectX 9.0 compatible, Windows 98/2000/ME/XP, 1.2GB free disk space*

your instructions. This doesn't happen too often though, and it never occurs when time is of the essence. Additionally, as another part of the gameplay, I quite enjoyed the quizzes at the end of each chapter. All but one of them are logical and easily passed with a bit of researching your evidence and memory. The one that may halt a gamer's progress is a bit unfair because several pieces of evidence support one of the answers equally well, but the game will only accept a particular one. This part and the aforementioned "vague puzzle" were the only places I was ever stuck for an unacceptable period of time. The Super Dog sequence took me longer than it should have, but it wasn't a matter of being stuck so much as a matter of having a four-legged foe that rivaled Jet Li with Night Vision and X-Ray goggles.

The rest of the gameplay is a mixture of finding items and clues, talking to people, and solving a fairly small amount of inventory puzzles. I can't speak for all gamers, but in my opinion the lack of inventory puzzles to solve isn't a

problem. There weren't a lot of puzzles of that nature in Jordan Mechner's *The Last Express*, and to my mind that's one of the five greatest adventure games ever made. One of the things that strikes me as being very real in *Silver Earring* is the fact that many of these inventory puzzles are solved with the same item. I know that sounds incredibly boring, but it's really not. Personally, I think Sherlock Holmes is above having his pockets filled with all manner of trinkets that he's going to use to solve puzzles in the various places he's searching for clues. Indeed, I like the fact that Sherlock has a small inventory, and effectively uses what he has even if some people think this was laziness on the part of the designers. Unfortunately, the laziness accusation is defensible since there is evidence of it elsewhere, like the sequence where Sherlock must wear a mask, but you don't actually see the mask on his face. Sherlock's clothing will also inexplicably change from time to time between being outside a location and then entering. To make a long story short though, I personally think the puzzles and design in this game fit the characters and the story.

**Graphics:** This third-person adventure game really shines in the aspect of visuals. The 3D character models are nicely done across the board, and the high resolution pre-rendered backgrounds, while not featuring as much animation as *Syberia II* to liven them up, feel convincing and architecturally impressive regardless. The details are many, and it's obvious the designers took great care to be respectful and faithful to the time period they represented. I really

**Below: Sherlock + abandoned theater = criminal doom.**



enjoyed the atmosphere, which is heightened at several points by weather effects, shadows, and other nice touches. Of course, the game is an extra treat for real Sherlock Holmes fans. Many items from the novels and short stories are lovingly displayed throughout 221b Baker Street. The only thing I really missed, for authenticity's sake, was the syringe for Sherlock's seven-percent solution of cocaine. The word from Frogwares is that the novel version of this story features three times as much text. However, adventure games, like cinema, are a primarily visual medium. I recall the phrase, "A picture is worth a thousand words." The visual richness and texture of the world in this game more than make up for the loss of extra words. There's a lot to be said for subtlety and not beating the player over the head with excessive information, anyway.

**Sound:** Of course, in addition to the visuals there is always that constant companion; the audio. Here the music is a very fitting selection of classical compositions by the likes of Tchiakovsky, Dvorak, and Schumann. The music never feels out of place or annoying like it was prone to in *Mystery of the Mummy*. The only flaw of the music is that there just isn't enough of it. Many of the selections are heard at several different locations, and it made me wish there was even more variation. Oh well, we can't have everything I suppose. Generally, the voice acting provided for the characters is of high quality, but there is the occasional misstep. While I think Sherlock's actor is generally excellent in the role, he trips up on certain words. One character's last name is Fowlett, and Holmes runs the gamut with

this thing: Fowler, Fowler, Flowlett, etc. At another point he says "pheasant" instead of "peasant", and during another he says "white" instead of "wet". Frogwares simply needs to limit the amount of hard liquor imbibed by the actors during lengthy voice over recordings, and all of this could be a thing of the past. For the most part the acting is very good though, despite the occasional bit part here and there, or a mispronounced word now and again. One should never scoff at the fact that I take voice acting very seriously, especially anyone who has played *The Black Mirror* where prostitutes and people living in boxes in the alley next to the recording studio were apparently employed to portray all of the major roles. Thank goodness that game allowed players to turn the voices off or click through them because yes, terrible acting can ruin a game.

In closing, I just want to commend Frogwares for a job very well done. They've captured the magic of Sherlock Holmes, visually and audibly, and supplied a truly well written mystery storyline as well. Though there were a few little rough spots along the way, everything is paid back with interest by the end, in my view. I even appreciated the length of this adventure. It's not too long, nor is it too short. It doesn't overstay its welcome like *The Longest Journey* (affectionately known by me as "The Shortest Journey Extended Indefinitely By Characters That Never Shut Up"). *Sherlock Holmes: The Case of the Silver Earring* is a real winner. Certainly not everyone will agree, but as far as I'm concerned, *Myst IV: Revelation*, *Still Life*, and *Fahrenheit* have a lot to live up to.

- Ben Keeney



Sherlock stuns the crowd as only he can do.



Gee, I wonder if that blood points to foul play.

***"Frogwares have captured the magic of Sherlock Holmes, visually and audibly, and supplied a truly well written mystery storyline as well."***

**Highs:** Wonderful story, memorable characters, beautiful visuals, plenty of fun

**Lows:** The Super Dog, control could have been more responsive, one unfair puzzle and quiz

### The Verdict

<b>Story:</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Gameplay:</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Overall:</b>	<b>89</b>

\*Overall = ( Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2 ) / 6

# CSI: Dark Motives

Developer: **369 Interactive**  
 Perspective: **1st person**  
 Interface: **Point and click**  
 Difficulty: **Medium**  
 Site: [csidarkmotives.ubi.com](http://csidarkmotives.ubi.com)

System Requirements:  
 Windows 98/ME/2000/XP,  
 Pentium III 600 MHz,  
 256 MB RAM, 16 MB DirectX  
 Video, DirectX 9.0 Sound, 16X  
 CD-ROM, 650 MB free HD

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation was one of the best selling games of 2003, something that is certainly unusual for adventure games. And when a game sells well, sooner or later (more often sooner than later) you are prone to see its sequel on the game shelves. Therefore 369 Interactive, the developers of CSI, got the green light from Ubisoft, for CSI 2.

**Story:** As in CSI 1, you play the role of an intern. You are about to solve five different cases with the help of a CSI agent in each one of them. The five cases are all separate from each other **\*Spoilers\*** although as in CSI 1, in the last case you will find a link to a previous case **\*End of Spoiler\***. The scenario is generally well written, with the usual red herrings and twists and although it is nothing phenomenal it will certainly please fans of the show as they are quite loyal to what you usually get to see on the TV-series.

**\*Spoilers\*** The cases include 1) an accident caused during a stunt act, 2) a homeless person that was found dead 3) body remains found in a construction site 4) an actress who was shot during the rehearsal of a theatre play and 5) a dragon gone missing! **\*End of Spoilers\*** It is very likely that most adventurers will find different cases more interesting than the others.

My personal favourites were cases 2,4 and 5, with 4 being the most interesting one.

Something that could be considered as a flaw is that in each case, you get to meet and interrogate only a few characters (I would say 3 to 6 as an average) and almost all of them are presented as suspects by the game. This formula is used over and over again in each case which makes the way of storytelling slightly repetitive. It would be more fascinating to be able to talk with a wider variety of characters and it would feel more realistic if some of them were not necessarily suspects.

The characters that you do get to meet however are well written. The same cannot be said about the CSI cast however. Sometimes it felt like they are automatic machines who are there in case you are in need of a hint. The highlight of the game is once more the dialogues. With Greg's (the lab guy) hilarious tongue in cheek comments, Grissom's words of wisdom and even the things that the non-CSI cast characters say, you are guaranteed some entertaining hours in front of your monitors. And the high quality of the dialogues really saves the day for CSI because otherwise the stiffness of the graphics would probably make long dialogues of average quality hard to stand. One more thing that is fascinating is how rich the cases

**Below: You meet your partner in the beginning of each new case**



are in small details. It seems like the writers spent a fair amount of time on research for the purposes of the game.

**Graphics:** This was the main problem of the first game. The graphics of the game are just way too static. The game is seen from the first person perspective. The models look a bit more detailed than in the first game but they are as stiff as they used to be, making you wonder if all the characters of the game suffer from hemorrhoids. They always stand at the same spot. The funny thing is that in different cases where you work with different agents each time, in common rooms (like the interrogation room and the lab) agents will stand or sit at the exact same spot where the rest of the agents were standing/sitting in the other cases. This shows clearly that the developers did not bother to put much effort in the graphics of the game, apart maybe from using a few more polys on the characters.

The lip-synching is once again non-existent with the characters opening and closing their mouths in a random fashion. Combined with the stiffness of the models' bodies, you are prone to spend more time looking at the subtitles rather than the characters talking.

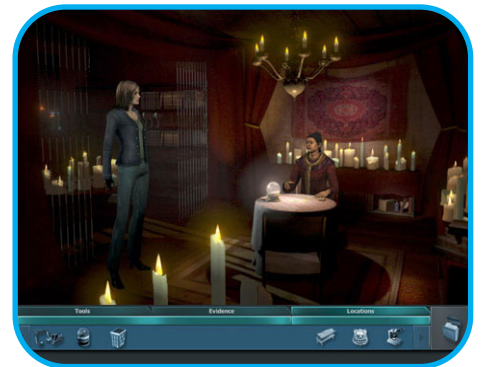
The reconstruction videos are used once again, to visually depict the agents' speculations or the witnesses' answers. They resemble those seen on the show and they are very interesting to watch (although if you are a sensitive person avoid eating something while watching them).

The backgrounds, although well designed, are unfortunately way too static. There's no animation whatsoever, giving you the

impression that you are looking at a photograph rather than a real environment. I certainly hope that the developers will drop this engine when they decide to work on the next installment of the CSI series. The overall quality of the game would increase at least a couple of notches altogether if the graphics were better.

**Sound:** Compared to the average adventure release that uses cheap and sometime totally unprofessional actors, CSI seems like an oasis amidst the desert. The actors from the show were called in once more by 369 Interactive, and they had a stellar performance this time around as well. Music tracks used throughout the game, although scarce, are also of high quality, making CSI a real treat for your ears.

**Gameplay:** Well, as in the previous installment, CSI would really benefit if the graphics allowed for more freedom. Really, the first thing you feel like when you enter a crime scene is exploring around the area, and this game just doesn't let you do that. You're stuck on a cer-



Sometimes science is not enough to solve a crime



Greg is always willing to help you out in the lab

**Below:** Gathering evidence can be a tough job. But sometimes the dead have more to say than the living. So the autopsy room is a place you will have to visit often.

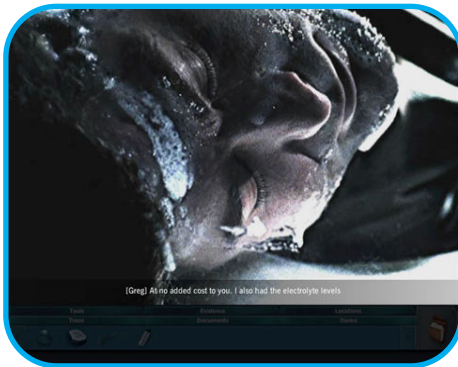


# REVIEWS

Silver Earring | CSI 2 | Apprentice 2 | Dark Fall 2



Lip-synching is something that the developers didn't care for



The reconstruction videos are once again very interesting

***“CSI 2 feels more like an add-on to the first game than a sequel. Don't expect something totally new, but be prepared instead for more of the same.”***

**Highs:** Excellent dialogues, some interesting cases, professional voice-overs.

**Lows:** Use of a restrictive and non-immersive graphics engine, pixel-hunting.

## The Verdict

<b>Story:</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Gameplay:</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Overall:</b>	<b>72</b>

\*Overall = ( Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2 ) / 6

tain point, predetermined by the developers and you have to find all clues from there. It would be much much (and I don't know if I can emphasize this anymore) MUCH more immersive and entertaining if you could walk around the crime scene and look for hints from up-close.

The interface had some problems, which I do not recall facing in the previous installment. Sometimes you have to click twice or even three times on an object before you can successfully select it and drag it on the screen. The several hotspots on screen would get activated when your cursor would be even up to 1 centimeter away from them, which caused some confusion occasionally – as in you clicked on the same hotspot twice thinking that it was a separate object the hotspot was referring to.

The unfair criticism that the first game had by some reviewers, that it was too easy - by the way I am still looking around for the official rulebook of adventure games to find that specific rule where it is clearly stated that adventures MUST be hard - had its usual impact ... that is developers trying to come up with ways to make the game more difficult for the sake of making the game more difficult. In CSI's case this translates to \*drum roll please\* pixel hunting. So you should better dust off your pixel-hunting techniques whether those are vertical pixel-hunting, horizontal pixel hunting, diagonal pixel-hunting or random pixel-hunting because you will sure need all of them! And the fact that you cannot move anywhere apart from the point where the developers have decided that you will stand, makes pixel hunting even more annoying. On the other hand, the nature of the game

(investigation) sure justifies pixel-hunting and thorough observation, but the way it is being handled due to the graphics' incapacibilities, makes the whole experience rather cumbersome.

As for the tasks you have to accomplish in the game, they usually consist of collecting and analysing evidence with appropriate tools, interrogating suspects and only a few times you had to combine some of the objects you find. Pretty straightforward and very similar to the first one of the series. The only issue I had when it comes to tasks is that sometimes it is not clear what you have to do next. It felt like the developers first thought of what the CSI agents would use to prove their case in the end and then they inserted this evidence in the gameworld, but during this whole process they forgot to clarify the objectives to the player.

**In a few words...** CSI 2 feels more like an add-on to the first game than a sequel. Don't expect something totally new, but be prepared instead for more of the same. Which is not necessarily a bad thing, since CSI 1 was a descent adventure with an entertaining storyline. I can't help but be disappointed however that developers who have such a strong and financially successful franchise at their disposal, did not use an up-to-date graphics engine. And this is of even greater importance if one considers that titles like this one are more prone to attract an audience that are not avid gamers but would potentially be attracted to adventure games. Let's hope for improvements in future sequels.

- Dimitris Manos

# APPRENTICE 2

## The Knight's Move

Look, I'm gonna save you some time here, and just tell you to go and download this game already. I know I wrote this whole article explaining what I think about it, and you don't want to be rude or anything, but seriously just take my word for it here and don't bother. Just go and get it already. Why are you still reading?

Anyway, last year Herculean Effort released Apprentice for free on their website. The game was very well received, earning many accolades for animation and music design, though fans reluctantly complained about how short it was.

Fan response was so strong, in fact, that the developers decided to continue the story and turn it into a trilogy. The second chapter was released a month ago, and provides a much more satisfying chunk of delicious and high-fiber gaming goodness.

**Story:** Mortimer "Pib" Pibsworth is still bothered by his troubling dreams, but those turn out to be the least of his problems, because the town of Willowbean is under attack, by its own ruling lord! Lord Ironcrow, fighting a war in a distant land, requires more men to join his army, but has no takers. Forcible conscription is outlawed with the exception of the destitute and homeless Willowbeaners, so Ironcrow's solution is clear: destroy

all the houses and enlist the townsfolk. The wizard's tower is not at threat of destruction, but unfortunately Pib, not being a full fledged wizard, can still be drafted. Pib now has a mere 24 hours to earn his own pointy hat if he wants to survive.

Yes, now *here* we have a story. The previous game didn't have much of one, and what there was focused on soup of all things. Here we have a compelling opening premise, which pans out into a rich little story and, ultimately, a cliffhanger ending that sets up the third and final chapter (due in 2005). As in the first installment, the writing is marvelous, and the only story-related problem last time, its shortness, is no longer an issue in this installment, which is at least four times as long.

**Gameplay:** Players of the first chapter may be briefly off put by the change in interface, but it is a change for the better. Verbs are not selected from a menu, but cycled through with the right mouse button, and the inventory book now has two items per page, making item use noticeably more convenient.

If I have to pick out a gripe (and it's kinda my job to) then it would be just to say that a combination of both systems is probably the best; a verb menu bar that is cycled through with the right mouse



Somebody should talk to this guy about skin cancer...



75% more pirate goodness than the leading brand

Developer: **Herculean Effort**  
 Perspective: **3rd person**  
 Interface: **Point and click**  
 Difficulty: **Medium**  
 Site:  
**[HerculeanEffort.AdventureDevelopers.com](http://HerculeanEffort.AdventureDevelopers.com)**

System Requirements:  
 Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP,  
 VGA Video Card, HD



**Above:** You will have to release the prisoner but you can't do it from over there  
**Right:** Pib and his master are overlooking the burning village.



**Below:** The weather is not on Pib's side



button for instance. Not a big thing, and the game is still very playable besides. A longer game, of course, means more and bigger puzzles, and here the game does not disappoint either.

Not very simple for the most part, but a challenge in a way that keeps from being frustrating. Though a few are a bit obtuse, and there are one or two brief instances of pixel-hunting (tsk-tsk) it is still fun to work through solving most every puzzle in the game. There's even a bonus puzzle for the more thorough adventurers among us.

**Graphics:** The graphical style from the first episode is carried over into the sequel. Characters are visually distinct and memorable, character animation is fluid, backdrops are detailed, and all done in a soft cartoonish style, which is funny without being ridiculous or "zany."

The only problem I'm having is with the walking sprites, the legs all just look a bit off, like their facing just to the side of where they're actually going. I wouldn't be saying anything if it weren't such an odd thing considering how well everything else is drawn, and it is just another little, and ultimately inconsequential flaw.

**Sound:** The original Apprentice won numerous accolades and awards for its musical score and sound design, and we can expect no less from this installment. A song for each scene, and each one performed superbly.

None necessarily stand out, which is a bit of a mistake for a cartoon atmosphere, where characters and places typically have separate and distinct, if not exactly memorable themes, but all the songs are marvelous ambient pieces that serve to amplify the tone for the scene, complementing the game outstandingly.

**In a few words...** More than anything else this game shows growth, not simply in terms of the Apprentice storyline and universe, but for the brothers Schlaepfer as game creators.

It very nearly boggles the mind that a product of such quality and depth can be produced by a mere team of two, and leaves you wondering what more they may be capable of. There, we're done with the review now, so quit stalling already and get this game!

- Justin Peoples

***"It very nearly boggles the mind that a product of such quality and depth can be produced by a mere team of two, and leaves you wondering what more they may be capable of."***

**Highs:** Rich and compelling story, challenging gameplay, detailed cartoonish graphics

**Lows:** Walking animation

## The Verdict

<b>Story:</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Gameplay:</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Overall:</b>	<b>93</b>

\*Overall = ( Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2 ) / 6



# DARK FALL 2

## Lights Out

What's in a name? Well, quite a lot when that name is Jonathan Boakes. Coming out of nowhere, he has quickly established himself as an inspiration to all who dream of one day designing games in this genre. When his late twenties arrived he created, by his lonesome, a little title called *Dark Fall: The Journal*; wowing many a hardcore adventure gamer as a result. One could argue that Boakes is this decade's singular version of Robyn and Rand Miller, the creators of *Myst*.

I have an awful lot of respect for independent game productions (as long as the end result is nothing like the lackluster *Conspiracies*) because they tend to be driven by passion rather than profit. *Dark Fall* was a game like that. It wasn't perfect by any means, but it was a well above average game (around an 80 should I have reviewed it) that provided a haunting atmosphere, clever puzzles, and an interesting storyline. Now that the sequel has finally arrived, does it measure up?

**Story:** It all begins with a knock on the door. Benjamin Parker, our playable hero, wakes up from a strange dream and goes to see who is outside. No one is there. The year is 1912, and Parker has been summoned to this small Cornish harbor town to map the

coastline. Due to his father's influence, Parker is a cartographer by trade, but his true love is painting. So, needless to say, he's not thrilled about this latest commission, spearheaded by a local doctor named Robert Demarion.

Things only get worse when his host begins to act strangely, weaseling his way out of answering Parker's questions. As it turns out, something bizarre is going on at the Fetch Rock Lighthouse nearby. Parker takes a small boat out, under cover of darkness, with the intention of checking on the three lighthouse keepers; Oliver Drake, Robert Shaw (homage to *Jaws*?), and James Wolfe. What he finds at Fetch Rock sends him on a quest through time itself, where horror and science fiction collide.

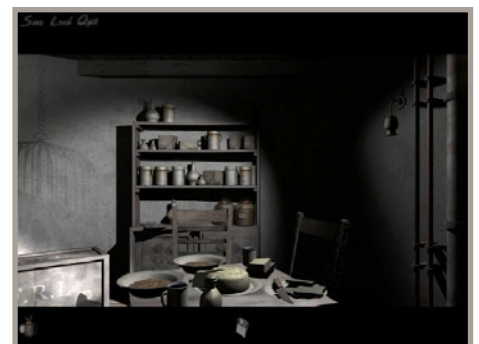
To put it simply, this game had me hooked for the vast majority. It begins masterfully, and I was convinced that *Lights Out* was well on the road to annihilating its predecessor. Without a doubt, the main character is a definite improvement on the original.

In *The Journal* we played "the brother of a guy in trouble", but now Boakes lets us step into the shoes of a real character. Unfortunately, despite this fact and regardless of the very strong first three-quarters of the game, *Lights*

Developer: **Jonathan Boakes**  
 Perspective: **1st person**  
 Interface: **Point and click**  
 Difficulty: **Medium**  
 Site:  
[www.xxvproductions.co.uk/darkfall2/](http://www.xxvproductions.co.uk/darkfall2/)

System Requirements:  
*Windows 98/ME/2000/XP*  
*Pentium III 450 MHz, 128 MB RAM, 24xCD-ROM Drive, SVGA Graphics Card with 32-Bit Color at 800x600*  
*DirectX9 Compatible Sound Card*

Someone left here in a hurry... Hmm the food still looks tasty.





What do you mean the party was last night?!

Out ends up feeling somewhat incomplete. The story is nicely done for the most part and we get to know the characters fairly well (though not as well as in the original game), but the fifteen second ending completely robs the player of a satisfying or sensible conclusion, undermining the game as a whole. Boakes needs to release some kind of special edition version where he actually pads out the story a bit and wraps things up with the satisfying flourish the game deserves.

Actually, my guess would be that Boakes is confident in his skill, and believes his best intentions are all to be found in the work itself. However, speaking as a guy who loves games like *Silent Hill 2* and movies like *2001: A Space Odyssey*, there's a difference between making a person think for themselves and not quite playing fair.

*Lights Out* has the unmistakable feel of an incomplete script that went into production a few drafts too soon (this game actually made me think of *Hellraiser: Bloodline*, only much more beautiful and artistic). I understand the over-

all story of the game, of course, but how exactly am I leaping through time at will? Am I physical or metaphysical (evidence seems to contradict both)? Where is the closure to my own character's story? What is the point of having so many "red herring" books and notes in the game that tell silly stories? And on and on...

So, you see, I'm quite trapped. The plot is gripping and effective for so long, that in the end I respect what Boakes has done, while I can't rate it as highly as I thought I would. Let me be the first to say, there are many wonderful, creative touches in this game. One involving a camera had me grinning from ear to ear, and there's a brilliant sequence in the first few minutes where reading your journal takes you back, allowing you to play the events Parker wrote about (I was reminded of the best portion of *Post Mortem*, where you play through a character's testimony).

When all is said and done though, the more intimate setting of the first game provided us with better characters overall, and a creepier world to explore. For all I know, these two games cost the same amount to make, but I can't help but see them as the low budget success, and the somewhat overly ambitious, bigger budgeted sequel.

**Gameplay:** Anyone who enjoyed the first *Dark Fall* will be right at home with part II. They play identically. For everyone else, *Lights Out* is a first-person adventure where you can essentially move forward, turn right, turn left, and occasionally look up or down, all with the click of a mouse. There will also be moments when you can zoom in on certain points of interest, usually when interaction is a possibility. Unfortunately, the game

is designed in such a way that there will be times when you must enter a room and turn all the way around to see something hidden in the arch of the doorway you just walked through.

Plus, after you get a certain pair of special goggles, you will have to wander around checking every single angle in each time period for puzzle hints that only appear through the goggles. For a game this "angle-dependent" it is quite frustrating that 360-degree panning isn't allowed for convenience.

However, like *The Journal*, the puzzles are very nicely done. One of my biggest gripes is that there just aren't enough of them. Frankly, *Lights Out* is a very short game. I've heard the rumor that it's longer than the original, but I barely see a noticeable difference. The puzzles aren't very difficult either, to be honest. Try as I may, I can't see any veteran adventure gamer spending more than a day or two on this game, of which the most time will be comprised of searching every single angle for missed clues.

The puzzles are a mixture of several types, including those involving inventory items and others where you must decipher codes with the various clues you've acquired. You will never amass a very large inventory though, nor will you have to worry about combining items. There is also precious little direct character interaction, but by now one should expect that from this type of game, and it works very well. Surprisingly, in the beginning, there is a conversation with another character where you select how to respond, and this adds flavor to the setup of the story.

One thing I would have liked to see more of, to spice up

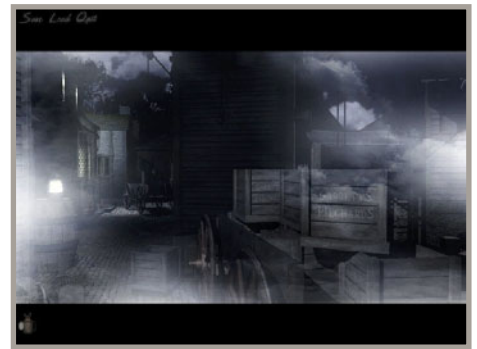
the gameplay, would be the ability to use more of the collected items in other time periods. There are precious few occasions where you will find an item in a certain time period and then get to put it to use in another.

I'm not the world's biggest fan of the *Journeyman Project* games, but I loved how they made time travel itself a part of the gameplay experience. An item found in the distant past would somehow be useful solving a puzzle in the future, and vice versa. I thought *Lights Out* could have benefitted from such design. However, as it stands, *Lights Out* still isn't too shabby.

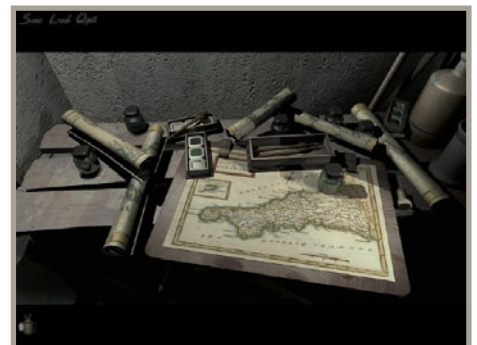
**Graphics:** Visually, one could argue that *Lights Out* is a touch more impressive than *The Journal*. Still, the difference is slight, and once again you are limited to a low resolution. Also, though there are some very pleasing atmospheric touches this time around, like the fog when you first leave your room, animation in the environments is generally non-existent. Anyone who played *Myst* eleven years ago can expect more of the same; a jaunt from one static computer generated image to the next.

I will say this: Jonathan Boakes worked very hard on the graphics of this project, and I can see the effort. I know he visited and photographed a town in Cornwall as an inspiration for the game's settings, and that he even went so far as to make sure the textures were accurate on the walls of buildings. I genuinely admire his work, particularly since he is a one man team.

However, I can't absolutely praise the graphics in this game simply because the low resolution, static nature of the CG images has



**When you stroll on a night like this, you deserve what you get**



**If I cover my desk with this stuff, the locals will think I'm an intellectual**



**The goal: Walk across this village without having your scalp removed**



**"Turn back Dave, there's nothing at the end of this hall!"**



Was this what actually happened on that fateful night? You must find out.

***“I suppose I can only speak for myself here, but even though Lights Out is a really good game, it’s not a great one, and I know Jonathan Boakes is capable of even more.”***

**Highs:** Interesting worlds to explore, solid main character, some nice puzzles.

**Lows:** Not enough of those nice puzzles, some holes in the story

### The Verdict

<b>Story:</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Graphics:</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Sound:</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Gameplay:</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Overall:</b>	<b>74</b>

\*Overall = ( Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2 ) / 6

computer. If only it were still creepy...

The voices work well, and there are quite a few roles requiring them. It’s shocking to me that Boakes got what I assume are family members and friends (and himself) to do the acting, yet the result is far more professional than that of many high budget American games. It just goes to show what people can accomplish when they really believe in what they are doing. I’m sure that the enthusiasm of Jonathan Boakes is quite infectious.

So what’s the final verdict? If you liked the original game, buy the sequel. If you didn’t like the first game or if you never played it, this one retails for \$19.99 in the states, and it’s very much worth the money. Having said that, it’s not quite what it could have been. A few hours into the game I still expected it to top The Journal, and I was admittedly upset when it failed to do so. It comes close, and the game is very well made; extraordinarily so when one takes into account that it’s all the hard work of a single human being.

Still, we know what Boakes is capable of now. Those of us who played The Journal are now spoiled. We expected a large step forward instead of a small step back, whether he’s still working solo or surrounding himself with a huge team. I suppose I can only speak for myself here, but even though Lights Out is a really good game, it’s not a great one, and I know Jonathan Boakes is capable of even more.

- Ben Keeney

been around for over a decade and provides nothing particularly amazing. The graphics get the job done effectively and I personally enjoyed the environments, but there’s just nothing here to set Lights Out apart.

**Sound:** One of the strengths of the first Dark Fall was the excellent use of sound, and Lights Out maintains this high quality. Yet, the audio isn’t quite as effective or powerful as it was in the original. The music here is superior and better implemented, but the sound effects themselves, which are the most important audible element in this series, don’t evoke any fear or dread.

Occasionally a voice will call for you from the darkness or footsteps will be heard behind you, but the tapestry of menacing sounds from The Journal are not matched here. However, the game does a great job of immersing the player in the natural sounds of a harbor town and lighthouse. Seagulls, a distant bell, the sound of water lapping against a nearby dock; you’ll be hard pressed to believe you are just sitting at your

# BITS AND BYTES

## THE HARDWARE CORNER



In this issue we'll start a new series presenting new computer hardware, alternatives to Windows-PCs, tricks to tweak hardware and useful configurations or practical additional equipment. We will also explain technical terms and give explanations why you need the latest graphic controller for recent and future games. But for our initial article we'll start with...a brief history of computing

**W**hen people today think of a computer they usually first imagine a grey box with a keyboard, mouse and screen and therefore refer to the offspring's of the IBM PC from 1981. But when having a closer look one gets to know that the Personal Computer wasn't even the first nor only of its kind. Since the very first "electronic brain" the Z1 from Konrad Zuse (1934) to today's fastest computer, the Earth Simulator Center from NEC (Japan 2002, <http://www.es.jamstec.go.jp/esc/eng/ESC/index.html>) with a performance of theoretically 40 Terra Flops a lot of time has passed and technology has advanced in a speed not many people would have dreamed of. With the eye of the PC user and gamer we'll have a look at the most important inventions and machines of the short time of computer history and will also keep an eye on our beloved (adventure) games.

After the Z1 Konrad Zuse continued his work and presented in 1941 the worlds first freely programmable computer - the Z3. The Z3 contained 2600 relays and managed one multiplication in three seconds. The first American computer was the Mark 1 (1944) by Howard Aiken, it was capable of calculating the four fundamental operations of arithmetic's and had a weight of 35 tons. Still famous is Eniac, and this giant truly was the first digital computer not using relays anymore but 18,000 tubes. It was built by John Presper Eckert and John W. Mauchley in 1946 and was about 1000 times faster than the Mark 1.

Tubes had some big disadvantages; they needed tons of power, had to be replaced often and were pretty slow. Only one year after Eniac William Bradford Shockley, John Ardeen and Walter Hauser Brittain invented the transistor and started a revolution in the electronics field. But it still took another eleven years

until Jack St. Clair Kilby from Texas Instruments - not Intel(!) - developed the first integrated circuit, the basis for today's microchips. In 1971 Intel finally stepped into view presenting the first "central processing unit" (CPU), the Intel 4004 and two years later the Intel 8008 that came to use in the first Personal Computer ever, the MITS Altair 8800, the first computer that was "cheap" and small enough for home users. Computer games or lets say video games had no place on such "serious" machines like the first PC's even though the first "game" was invented by a physician, Willy Higinbotham, a passionate pinball player and chain smoker who worked at the Brookhaven National Laboratory a nuclear research facility in Upton, New York. For the open house day of 1958 he wanted to present the visitors something special so he came up with the idea to connect an oscilloscope with their "small" laboratory computer, built two boxes each with a button and a knob and with the help of Robert V. Dvorak programmed a little piece of software: A long horizontal line on the bottom was the court, a small vertical line in the middle the net and the imaginative name of this almost unknown revolution was "Tennis for Two".

In 1966 the German born US-American Ralph Bear scribbled down the concept for something he had in mind for a long time already, the so called Home TV Game that was built one year later and included several games including table tennis (ping pong), volleyball, football and even had a lightgun for some "big pixel shooting" but never came on the market in its early form. A company called Magnavox bought the licence in 1970 and in 1972 after some technical changes released it as first video game console ever: Odyssey. In the same year a guy called Nolan Bushnell founded a company called Atari (Japanese for "checkmate" in

**Shortly after, still during the same year, W. Crowther programmed the next step in a language called Fortran: Adventure**

Go) and coincidentally visited a presentation of the Odyssey and adapted its ping pong game for a standalone system after already having a complete flop with "Computer Space" which was based on "Space Wars!" a game created in the early sixties at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). With Pong the arcade games were born and became an instant success.

While video game systems during the 70ies and 80ies were made for low-resolution television screens and used bright colours, computers typically were only capable of displaying text. The computer screens usually had a higher resolution and often were just monochromes demanding a totally different style of games. Also the audience was different. People who had access to computers were generally adult professionals while the arcades aimed at teenagers. Gregory Yob developed "Hump the Wumpus" a text based game in Dartmouth, 1972. Armed with just five arrows the player explores a cave-system. Each room contained clues and the goal was to shoot an arrow at the Wumpus. A "modern" online version with graphics can be found here: <http://scv.bu.edu/htbin/wcl>.

Shortly after, still during the same year, Willie Crowther programmed the next step in a language called Fortran: "Adventure" aka "Advent" aka "Colossal Caves". Crowther was a fan of the board game "Dungeons" and sent the player on a treasure hunt through a loosely display of the Mammoth cave system in Kentucky. Just as "Hump the Wumpus", "Adventure" became famous through the Arpanet, a military and later also scientific computer network constructed in 1969 and as we all know the precursor of the Internet.

The first desktop computer

that became far spread and was loved by users and gamers alike certainly was the Apple II. This machine appeared on the market in 1977 and went through various changes keeping its popularity alive till around 1984. But who are the brains behind Apple? Steven Wozniak born 1950 in San Jose and Steve Jobs born 1955 in San Francisco knew each other since high school. Both were outsiders, nerds as some would've stated and had a common interest in electronics. While Wozniak after his graduation started working for Hewlett-Packard, Jobs joined Atari. Already in '75 Steven Wozniak wanted to construct his own home computer at the Homebrew Computer Club in Palo Alto. He had already developed a Fortran compiler and Basic interpreter but had no money for his prototype. At First he took a glance at the Intel 8080 but the price of 179 Dollars was way too high so he thought about using the Motorola 6800 but it did cost almost the same. Searching for an alternative he discovered the 6502 from MOS Technology a CPU almost as good as the one from Motorola but only 25 Dollars in price! This machine only had 8 Kbytes RAM and used a keyboard and a TV screen for in- and output instead the usual punch cards. It was sold 220 times! During the meeting of the Homebrew Club where he showed his self made computer, Steven Wozniak meets Jobs and they decide to take the risk and start their own company. So on April 1st 1976 Apple Computer was born. The Apple I was a slow seller and even though the basic hardware was quite "cheap" with 666.66 Dollars it caused lots of operating problems so Wozniak was working the whole time on improvements and was able to present the Apple II only one year later. This machine was capable of colour grap-

hics and sound and had between 4 Kbytes to max. 48 Kbytes RAM. A nice feature were the eight extension slots for additional hardware like a tape recorder and later a floppy disc drive (fdd) or a printer. And very unusual by today standards is that the operating system (OS) had no bugs except one wrong error message! But what was Jobs job? Wozniak designed both hard- and software and Steve Jobs did the marketing stuff like designing a fashionable case. The starting price of the Apple II is pretty high in the end with 1298 Dollars but Wozniak and Jobs are able to sell over 300 computers during the first few months. Over the years many (adventure) games were published and so especially in the United States the Apple II was the first choice when it came to gaming even though this mostly took place at work.

The biggest computer manufacturer in the world, IBM, noticed late that small desktop computers were becoming more and more popular. In a "crisis meeting" in August '81 the managers decided to give it a half heartedly shot and sent Philip Estridge into the desert of Boca Raton giving him one year to present his prototype. With very limited resources Estridge had to use third party hardware and even software. Another problem was the CPU. The Motorola 68,000 was very fast - practically as fast as IBM's industrial computers with costs of 100,000 Dollars or more so Estridge who wanted to construct a 16 bit machine to compete with the 8 bit computers that were already on the market had no choice but to choose the slowest(!) 16 bit CPU he could get, the Intel 8086. On August 12th the IBM PC was introduced to the market and its open concept, all parts were exchangeable and only the BIOS was copyrighted by IBM, made it quite successful right from the beginning.

During the 80ies the global computer markets were quite diverse. While in the new world serious gamers played on personal computers like Apple II and IBM PC and its clones and the kids played on consoles the situation in Europe was different. Apple was almost nonexistent and the IBM PC was only used for work, very few PC games were released on the old continent and after the great crash of the console market before Nintendo released its NES, that never actually became really successful in Europe, either home users/gamers bought so called home computers and two models from one certain company in particular: Commodore Business Machines (CBM). The man behind this company was Jack Tramiel. Born as a Polish Jew he came

to the US after WW2 and businessman all over founded his first company in 1958 producing typewriters and also office furniture and some years later after a visit to Japan the first American pocket calculators. In 1977 Commodore released its first computer, the PET (Personal Electric Transactor). Five years and some models later CBM introduced the most popular home computer of all times, the Commodore 64 that sold, depending on the source, between 20 to 30 million units.

In the same year the C64 was presented to the masses a company called Hi Toro was founded by Jay Miner, Larry Kaplan and David Morse with the goal to produce a new video game system, that's what the investors sought, the developers on the other hand wanted a new computer and in the year of the great crash, 1983, they had an almost finished PC that looked like a video game system and they renamed their company to "Amiga" - the Spanish word for girlfriend. In 1984 the new computer still wasn't finished and the funds were becoming tighter and tighter. Jack Tramiel on the search of a successor for his C64 took this opportunity and bought Amiga's stocks making him the new owner. In July 1985 the brand new Amiga 1000 was introduced to an astonished audience at the Lincoln Center in New York. Tramiel never was happy that his most successful products were mostly famous in the (home-) entertainment area he wanted them used by professionals for businesses and that lead to a growing number of wrong decisions finally causing the bankruptcy of CBM in 1994, yet the Commodore home computers share a huge fan base that even today is still active.

Certainly this article couldn't display all the great events that happened around computer systems during the last decades but merely gave a little overview of the inventions that have shown the way for today's achievements in hard- and software design and influenced us all often in many ways. Who doesn't remember her or his first own computer or game? How would Windows look like without great GUI's like Apple OS or Amiga Workbench? Even though many of the pioneers have vanished over the years it is still fascinating to see all the new discoveries that came and come up anew every few years from the Gameboy to 3D displays. And we all know it's a still a long way until we'll be able to solve our adventures in a holodeck or plug our brains into cyberspace.

- Oliver Gruener

# Invento-Mail

This is the part of the magazine where you can make yourselves heard. Send your emails to [theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com) and we will reply to you in this section in one of our future issues. Now let's move on to some of the mails we received during the summer.

Hello you adventurous boys and girls (if there are any). I only caught glimpse of your proposition concerning the user-made articles about 2 days ago (that's good considering I've only known about you guys for couple of weeks now), but not to worry as I've already prepared some material for you. I think it's a really good idea that you are asking the casual gamer to write about his/her favorite games and not just any games, those that are part of the adventure genre, the only genre that has always had its privileged players. Initially I only wanted to send you a sample of my review dedicated to Syberia II but then I thought about your own review and the lousy grade it received and I knew I had to set the score straight.

Mr. Dimitris Manos you were more than mean. You just took the game and started tearing it apart piece by piece while readers just got more and more enraged (me). Well, you were right when you said the first Syberia game had many faulty parts and again you were right when you said that it become very popular in a very short time. The thing is Syberia II suffers from the same problems. You were displeased by the action orientated elements so why not just stop playing it. Go back to your 80s game. And even some of them were faced paced (Indy series).

The first game in the series was so enjoyable because it was accessible to every one whether they liked the adventure genre or not. The same with Syberia II, 'accessibility' being the key word alongside 'fun' and 'entertaining'. Syberia II is the rightful and logical sequel to the hottest adv. game of 2002. Adventure games tend to evolve (just like everything else) and it seems that there are headed more and more towards the action titles. With games like Largo Winch, Broken Sword 3 there's no doubt about it. Hey, even the guys at Funcom said that Dreamfall would be filled with action elements. They are after all the ones that revitalized the adv. genre and if it's OK with them, why not?!? I love TLJ and I think it's the greatest game of our times. How did you think I felt when I heard that they were going to implement platform elements?!? I didn't like, but still. Let's face it.

This game type is on the verge of extinction. If some compromises have to be made in order to keep it alive then I support the producers, if not a 100% - who are giving the genre a face-lift. Leisure Suit Larry Magna cum Laude is the best example. On the other hand you should be upset because this nasty turn of events. Who knew this would happen?!? I'm actually extremely pissed myself. But it's the numbers that count and if the average gamer doesn't like them then there is nothing we can do. It's all up to a bunch of people who have probably never even played any of these games that made our lives so much better. There just aren't all that many ppl to stand against this change. I suppose this is the natural way too go and I kind of like it. Maybe I'll hear from you so you can chat about this intriguing subject.

Adrian M.

**The Inventory:** Dear Adrian. Thank you for your nasty follow-up letter telling us how much our publication sucks because I didn't reply immediately to your letter. Apparently you are some sort of special person that I should have replied to immediately. Now on to your points. I'm sorry but I fail to see if you have any. You bring up as examples Largo Winch and Broken Sword 3, that are arguably two of the worst selling adventures. Actually I think it is pointless arguing about whether the genre is on the verge of extinction when we don't have time nor space to write about all the adventures coming out nowadays. Should adventures change? Sure. This doesn't mean however that they have to change into action-adventures, just because your developer-gods told you so.



Hello,

I saw your magazine at Just Adventure. Very impressive! I also run a PDF magazine and know what goes into it. Keep up the good work.

Best,

Chris Cavanaugh  
Editor-In-Chief  
Classic Gamer Magazine  
www.classicgamer.com

**The Inventory:** Likewise Chris! I checked out your magazine and it was impressive as well. Great source of information for older classics. I urge the readers of The Inventory to try out Classic Gamer. It's also for free and it is a great read.

I am a huge fan of adventure games, who has been deprived of good games to play for years already. That's because it is very difficult for me to find information, not just about adventure games... but a 3rd person perspective adventure. Many times I have bought games only to find out that it's 1st person. I end up wasting my money because I have severe motion sickness and usually end up vomiting 5 minutes into the game.

And in my country, it's rare to find people who are fans of adventure games, like I am. They usually give reviews about RPG games and action-adventure... which I don't really fancy that much. It's really frustrating when nobody around you knows about classic games like King's Quest and Leisure Suit Larry.

It's a pity that I found out about "The Inventory" only today. Coz it's an AMAZING website/publication. On just this June 2004 issue, I have already managed to learn about over 20 games! The magazine also mentions whether a game is in 1st or 3rd person, which is exactly what I need to know. I just wish I knew about this publication long ago.

However, it is sad to know that a subscription fee might be implemented starting from the month of September. If I wasn't a college student surviving on meagre allowance, I would definitely make some huge donations. I understand that the need to implement a subscription fee is crucial... but please please, try to make it free. Websites like yours are just so rare and it's tailored so well to my interest.

Thank you for reading my mind.

From,

Eva, from Singapore.

**The Inventory:** Hello Eva and thank you for writing to us. I hope you are happy to see that we are still providing The Inventory for free. We are going to try a new strategy to approach sponsors. Believe me when I say that we try our best to keep this publication free-of-charge. But creating The Inventory is a very very difficult process which takes an awfully large amount of time. When it comes down to spending so many hours of one's day it is not possible to do it for free. But as I said previously, we will try our best to keep it free of charge for our readers. I am glad you enjoy The Inventory so much.

Greetings!

I have just discovered your publication while snooping around at JustAdventure.com. I have enjoyed reading through the back issues and realized that you might be able to answer a couple of questions for me. Over the last several years there have been two adventure games which claimed to be massive, epic games. These were to be released as a series of games requiring six to ten installments. Each claimed that the story was written and complete and much of the graphics were ready. They just had to be polished up and released.

Each released the first episode, a short introduction, and was never heard from again. These games were The Forgotten and Zelenhgorm. It has been over a year for Zelenhgorm and several years for The Forgotten. Yet all that remains are the websites which have not been updated since the first intro was released. Could you please use your mystical journalistic powers to contact the creators of these games and find out what happened? Or what is happening? I have never broken the shrinkwrap on these two games. I wanted to

have at least the next installment in hand so I could continue from the intro without a long wait. Do I wait in vain?

Thanks much,  
Bob Washburne

**The Inventory:** Hello Bob, and thanks for your email. I don't know anything about the Forgotten and have never played it. As far as Zelenhgorm is concerned, my impression is that it has been cancelled. I sent an email to its creator, Michi Lantz, something like a year ago, asking what has happened with Zelenhgorm but I received no reply. So my guess is that unfortunately we will never see another episode of Zelenhgorm.

Hello, Dimitris, and all the heroes, who take part in creation of such an interesting magazine about adventures (or "quests", as we in Russia usually call them).

The production process of any computer game becoming more and more expensive. To win the customers, developers must spend a huge amount of money, and must be 100% assured, that they will return their money with obvious profit. Of course, adventures are not so profitable, and, to say the truth, much less predictable in the terms of marketing. "Gabriel Knight" series were natural masterpieces, but also too sophisticated, too serious to be a game. For me, it is a plus. But is it so for the man, who just wants to play an interesting game in the evening? He plays games only at Sundays, for example, and needs approximately 15-20 minutes to remember the plot of an adventure he is currently playing. It is like you read an interesting book only once a week. But this man just wants to play, to relax, not to remember, who's who, and what to do next!

When I was a student, I had a great amount of free time, which I could spend on adventures, or rpg games. But now I became a leading manager of the marketing/Pr department, and have a very short amount of time to play games. I began to play EURO 2004, Need for Speed, Splinter Cell, Metal Gear Solid 2, etc (Shame on me!) Why? I have only 40-50 min, and it is impossible to play an adventure for this period of time.

You just understand, what's where, you began to LIVE in a fantastic world of game... and it is time to turn off the computer (because my wife also needs a great part of my attention, and she isn't a computer games fan). For example, in Splinter Cell you can start playing and having "fun" even after 1-2 minutes. And you can play it for 20-30 minutes, and then turn it off.

How could I make this with Myst 3, for example? So I turn on Myst 3 not for playing, but for a short mysterious journey in a strange and beautiful world. I have no time to think about the riddles, I have only time to wander around and listen to the wind, the sea, the music... But it isn't a game, you see? Ow, ow, it was (and is) so hard to explain...

Maybe I'll try to continue my thoughts in the next letter, if you don't mind. As for now, I just want to ask: is it possible to read in the next "Inventory" issues about "The Last Express" (and an interview with Mehner), about "Broken Sword" trilogy? It is very charming to read the interviews with the creators of famous adventure games, with great animators, just to see the inner side of the games. Every such interview in your magazine I read with an open mouth :)))

With respect, Sergei.

**The Inventory:** Hello Sergei. First of all, thank you for your kind comments. I totally understand what you mean. Adventures are games that require a lot of time and dedication. As people grow they have less and less free time available. This is why adventures have to evolve as well. Developers have to realize that they can't continue creating puzzles that require from people to spend 1 or 2 hours to solve them. Most people who have a job and a family would not be willing to spend that time on a single puzzle.

As far as your requests are concerned... We recently acquired some new staff members and one of them will write a review of Broken Sword 1 for our next issue. The other one has already asked to write a review for The Last Express so you might see this review as well quite soon, if not in the next issue. As for the interview with Mehner... we will try, that's all I can promise :)

# Epilogue

**W**ell that was all I am affraid. Until next month that is. If you want to join our mailing list, send us an email with the title 'Subscribe' and you will be the first to know when the new issue of The Inventory will be out and what its contents are going to be.

Those of you who would like to support our efforts financially, you can always donate money through paypal ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)) to [theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com) . As for the contents of the next issue, well we can never be certain but we might be able to provide you with reviews of The Westerner, The Last Express (we've been requested to feature a review of this game a lot of times already) and Jane Jensen's BeTrapped. We will also feature a review of Broken Sword 1.

You can also expect a preview of one of the most awaited games (not only by the adventure community) plus a small little surprise but nothing has been decided yet so no promises.

I would also like to mention here, that someone applied for the position of a writer and he had submitted a review of Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis. When I tried to reply to that email however, the email bounced back to me, telling me that the email address is corrupted. So if you are reading this, please drop us an email from your new address.

Dear readers, don't hesitate to send your suggestions, questions or complaints to [theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com), we love hearing from you. Until next month then...

*Dimitris Manos*

# The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SPONSORS

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN LINK TO  
A WEBSITE FROM A PDF DOCUMENT?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADVERTISE  
YOUR PRODUCTS IN THE INVENTORY?

IN THAT CASE SEND US AN E-MAIL AT

[theinventory@yahoo.com](mailto:theinventory@yahoo.com)