



# THE VIDEO GAMES GENERATIONS NEWSLETTER

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## Issue #47 – October 10, 2026

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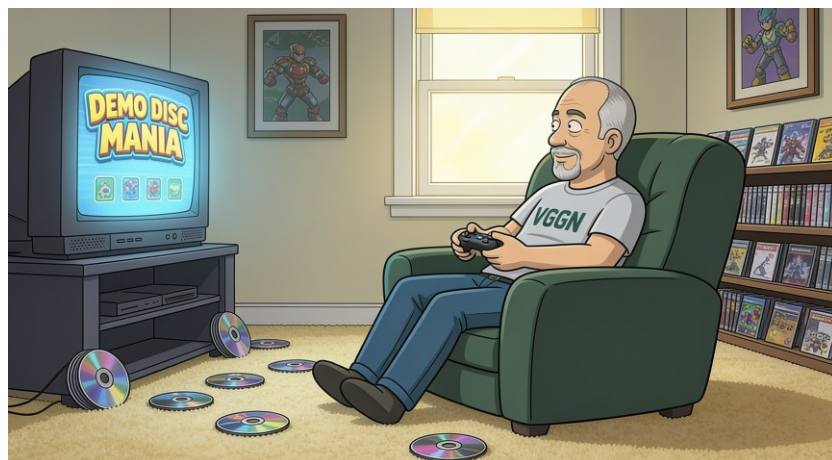
### Loading Screen

The time gets away from me. I've been trying to publish at least one issue a month, but the two or three big ideas I have for upcoming issues will take a bit more time. I'll talk about those ideas later, in *The Final Stage*. Some of it, I've mentioned before.

To avoid an even bigger gap, and so that new subscribers don't get the urge to unsubscribe, I've put together a last-minute topic idea: demo discs!

It was meant to be just a quick hold-over before I'm ready with other topics, but I went overboard again with a look at what's on several PS2 and Xbox demo discs.

Most of this issue's mini-reviews were already included in prior issues, but I'm including them again as an "encore" because they appear on those demo discs.

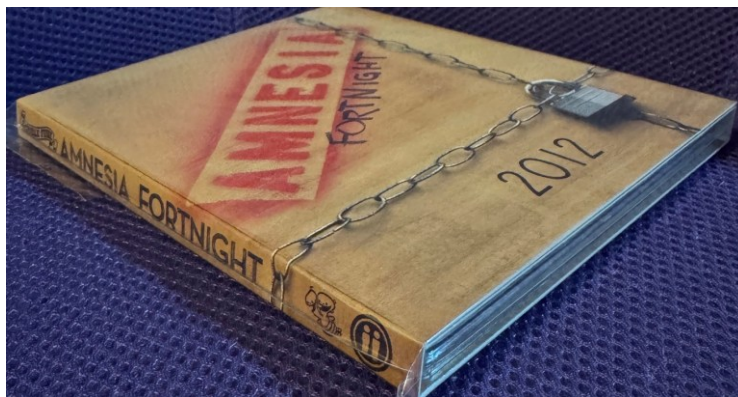


# Recent Events

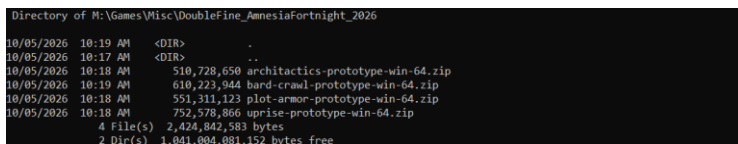
## Double Fine Kickstarter – Continued

Last time, I wrote about Double Fine going independent again (from Microsoft), and their ongoing Kickstarter campaign related to their *Amnesia Fortnight* event, where they crunch for two weeks on various game ideas to put together a few playable demos.

It's not the first time they've done a physical edition of games/demos from their game jam. I bought this one back then, just to collect:



I did end up backing it at the \$80 tier, mostly to get the documentary on Blu-ray. I ended up getting sidetracked during the demo phase and didn't vote, but the pitch that would have been my pick was chosen (*Plot Armor*).

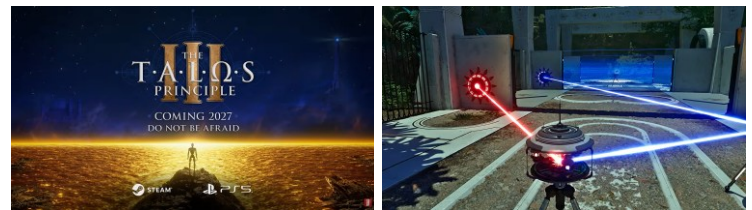


Source:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/doublefine/amnesia-fortnight-2026-indie-reboot>

## The Talos Principle III

I can't remember if I knew this had been announced and forgot, or if I just never knew, but one of the greatest first-person puzzle games (what I've been calling *Portal*-likes) is getting a third series entry next year. I hope with every fiber of my being that Devolver Digital (Croteam's publisher) will do a physical release on disc for PS5 while it's still possible.



Source:

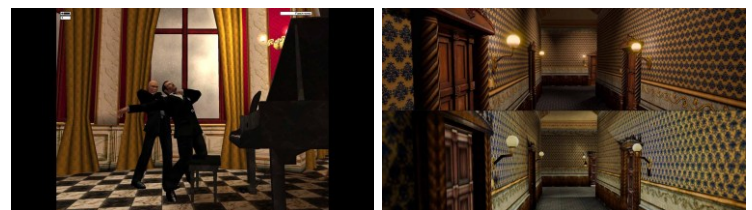
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT5ZQTzEBes>

## Hitman Classic Trilogy Remastered

This news is four months old, but I wanted to find something – *anything* – related to the *Hitman* series (he's "Agent 47") since this is VGGN issue #47. Snoop Dogg was an elusive target in *World of Assassination* recently, but that's already over.

The remastered trilogy will include *Hitman: Codename 47*, *Hitman 2: Silent Assassin*, and *Hitman: Contracts*. Maybe *Blood Money* and *Absolution* will get the "volume 2" treatment. I've never played any but the new trilogy.

This is coming from Saber Interactive, who did the *Soul Reaver 1 & 2* remasters (loved those), the six *Tomb Raider* remasters (split into two volumes, which I'd like to play eventually), and some others. I think they'll do a great job.



This is due out next year, too. If it gets a physical release (as their others have), I'll for sure get it.

Source:

<https://www.videogameschronicle.com/news/hitman-classic-trilogy-remastered-coming-in-2027-from-saber-interactive/>

# The AAA Gaming Blues

It's almost a cliché at this point. Somebody on social media comments that games are all the same now, and they're just not getting the enjoyment out of this hobby like they used to.

Inevitably, somebody will counter with AA and indie games that break new ground and don't adhere to the risk-averse nature of the bigger publishers. If I wade in (and I try not to), I'll usually say that AAA games are *not* all the same and offer some of the best experiences in gaming; or I'll add retro games to the topic.

Lately, though, I find myself lacking much enthusiasm for upcoming new releases. The cumulative effect of higher console prices (driven by component shortages and tariffs), Sony killing discs, and some publishers not bothering to put their games on disc at all (or as a "key disc" which is almost as bad) has taken a toll on me.

I saw an article just today that a *used* PS5 Pro at GameStop is now almost \$1,400:

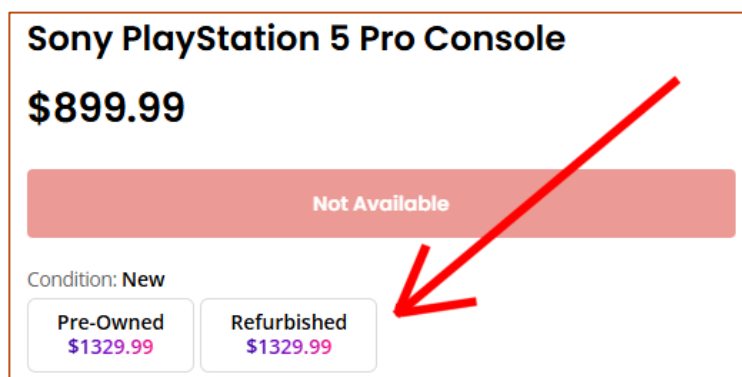
**Sony PlayStation 5 Pro Console**

**\$899.99**

Not Available

Condition: New

|                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pre-Owned<br>\$1329.99 | Refurbished<br>\$1329.99 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|



Marketing for *Grand Theft Auto 6* is ramping up, with the launch finally happening next month. It went from being my most anticipated game in ages, to just noise in my ear, and all because it's not getting a physical release. It's one of few games I could probably suspend my principles for on the basis of being "for the experience" rather than "also as a product I own", but my hype for it has been so fully extinguished that I didn't even watch that big reveal on Netflix a while back. The year's biggest release, and I'm planning to pass.

*Final Fantasy VII* is one of my favorite PS1 games, and I've really enjoyed the first two installments in the *Final Fantasy VII* remake trilogy. Square Enix released *Rebirth* on two discs, since it wouldn't fit on one. When *Revelation* launches next year, it will be a single disc that's worthless and unplayable without a mandatory download for the rest of the game. It went from being a day-one must-buy preorder, to a "well, maybe on sale."

Thankfully, discs aren't dead yet, and recent big releases like *Onimusha: Way of the Sword*, *Resonance: A Plague Tale Legacy*, and *Silent Hill: Townfall* released complete, even if additional patches might make them a little better. Even so, I find myself drawn more and more to older games and older platforms.

All of these concerns aside, there's just a growing toxicity in the discussions around gaming, whether it's the anti-woke crowd complaining because fictional characters aren't pretty enough, or the all-digital bros reveling in these recent developments because they like seeing the rest of us argue against it.

Then, I start worrying about older consoles and games too. Disc rot can happen, although it might be an overblown concern. I recently started opening up some of my sealed 3DS games to boot them up, given that NAND memory "goes bad" over time without use, possibly rendering the carts unusable. I even opened both of my original Xbox consoles recently to remove their clock capacitors, which are prone to leaking and can permanently damage the motherboard.



I didn't even watch the latest *PlayStation State of Play*, and that was over a month ago. I've just become so disillusioned with them, and with the direction everything seems to be going.

# The Rise and Fall of Game Demo Discs

For as long as I've been gaming (since the early 1980s or maybe late 1970s), I'm surprised I don't have an encyclopedic knowledge of the rise and fall of game demo discs. I hear fond memories from people on gaming podcasts about playing certain demos dozens of times in anticipation of the full game, or simply because they couldn't *buy* the full game, and it seems like an entire gaming subculture I just missed.



Part of that might be because I wasn't subscribing to gaming magazines (couldn't afford it). Demos were a huge draw of print magazines back then (in particular, the early 2000s), although I think demos on floppy disk predate CD and DVD demo discs.

An offshoot or precursor of the demo was shareware. It's a similar concept, with the idea being that publishers and developers would make the first part of their game available for free – for instance, the first level in *Doom* – and you'd send in money to buy the full game. I did a little of this back in my indie development days.

Shareware was particularly common on Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs), where you'd dial in with your modem, browse the board's file area, and slowly download the shareware version of whatever looked interesting.

I wrote about my own BBS games way back in [issue #10](#), but I tried my hand at selling other [DOS-based games](#) with a free shareware version back then and had no success at all.

To drum up interest in commercial games, though, the limited reach of BBSs and even the fledgling World Wide Web weren't enough. Publishers needed to put their demos out in a format everybody could use, and in places where everybody could find them. This meant magazine pack-ins (which were a boon to those magazines as well), as pack-ins with other games (with one of the most famous examples being the *Final Fantasy VIII* demo that came with *Brave Fencer Musashi* on PS1), at electronics and gaming stores, or even by way of marketing tie-ins with the likes of Pizza Hut, Pepsi, and others.

The demo discs I'll be focusing on in this issue were actually products of Microsoft (the \$7.99 *Exhibition* demo series) and Sony (the \$4.94 to \$7.99 *JamPack* demo series). For fun, I'm going to boot these up on my OG Xbox and PS2 respectively, grab a few screenshots, and write a little about what's on each one.

The internet did eventually make demo discs obsolete. It's a shame, because these serve as an interesting historical time capsule. Demos never went away, although for a while they did become less common. They just moved into internet-capable consoles' digital storefronts. Why would Xbox manufacture and sell a demo disc when everything is right there to download from Xbox Live?

Every once in a while, there was a demo for a game that was ultimately cancelled before release. No examples come to mind, and it's tough to trust AI-driven Google searches, but this seemed to have happened several times in the PS1 generation. Those demos might be the only playable version of those games in existence – a point in favor of physical media.

Even for games that did release (which was most of them), the demo version was often a work in progress for an unfinished game.

For PC games, even though the internet killed the demo disc, it also helped preserve them. I found this article from PC Gamer from earlier this year, linking to the [Internet Archive](https://www.pcgamer.com/games/the-internet-archive-has-preserved-758-old-pc-gamer-demo-discs-you-can-download-and-play) where a staggering 758 of their old demo discs are available to download and play:

<https://www.pcgamer.com/games/the-internet-archive-has-preserved-758-old-pc-gamer-demo-discs-you-can-download-and-play>

I'm going to do something a little different this time and combine this feature with *Collection Inspection*. Ordinarily, that's a separate section in each issue where I photograph and write a little about a few games from my collection that were mentioned in the main feature, or tie into it in some way.

## Xbox Exhibition

I added these to my collection years ago but never really checked them out until now. As best I can tell, they were originally sold in some of the same places Xbox games were sold – Best Buy, Target, Toys “R” Us, etc.

Microsoft's first offering came with several inserts, including a manual with information about each game. Demos included *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*, *Panzer Dragoon Orta*, *NFL Fever 2003*, *ToeJam & Earl III*, *Quantum Redshift*, *TimeSplitters 2*, *Whacked!*, *Madden NFL 2003*, and the big one, *Halo: Combat Evolved*.

They included some music and videos as well. There's a G4TV clip featuring game director Peter Molyneux, talking about *Project Ego*, which was later revealed as *Fable*. Interesting stuff.

### The Case



### The Disc



### Screenshots



# Xbox Exhibition Volume 02

I'm going through each of these in real time, so I haven't even looked to see what features were included in later volumes, but starting here, the bonus disc includes DLC for three other games, including *Toejam & Earl 3*.

This volume's nine game demos are:

## NBA Inside Drive 2003

Aside from a few NES sports games, I've just never been interested in them.

## MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael

A motorcycle racing game, I guess.

## Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon

Here's a Ubisoft series that's still going on today. The next game is codenamed *Project Over* and was recently announced or leaked.

## Kung Fu Chaos

I have this in my collection, but I know very little about it. It's a brawler/fighting game?

## Capcom vs. SNK 2 EO

One-on-one fighting games have also never been my thing, aside from a little experience playing *Street Fighter 2* and *Virtua Fighter 2* (arcade versions) at a movie theater lobby.

## Vexx

I got 100% competition in this action platformer when I played it on GameCube a long time ago. It might be among the first games of that style I can say that about.

## Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb

I played this one earlier this year and enjoyed it well enough. It was part of a 3-game *Indiana Jones* mini-marathon I did. My mini-review is included later in this issue.

## All-Star Baseball 2004

More sports. Bleh. Sorry, but bleh.

## MechAssault

I have this and its sequel, *Lone Wolf*. I've never played either of them, though.

## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



# Xbox Exhibition Volume 03

The idea must have been to sample a variety of genres so that everybody would find something in their proverbial wheelhouse.

This volume's nine game demos are:

## APEX

Racing cars.

## ATV: Quad Power Racing 2

Racing ATV 4-wheelers?

## Brute Force

I've never played *Brute Force*, but it comes up once in a while on podcasts and internet discussions. Over time, it seems to have become a small-time cult classic. It's a third person shooter with up to 4-player co-op.

## Gladius

I recently added the PS2 version to my collection. I already had the Xbox version.

## Inside Pitch 2003

Baseball, for the sports game fans.

## MotoGP 2

More racing; this time, on motorcycles.

## NBA Street Vol 2

More sports. This time, it's basketball. Sorry. I know sports games are huge and their fans are legion, and I don't mean to sound so dismissive. It's just... they're not for me.

## Return to Castle Wolfenstein – Tides of War

I tried playing a little of this demo. It opens in a sewer so dark I couldn't see the ladder at first. Once I made it out (after falling back in a couple times), there was significant controller lag. I was using a wireless Retro Fighters Hunter controller, but I'm not sure how much that contributed to it.

## Tao Feng – Fist of the Lotus

Here's a fighting game that never got a sequel or even much notoriety. I don't think I've ever heard anybody talk about *Tao Feng*.

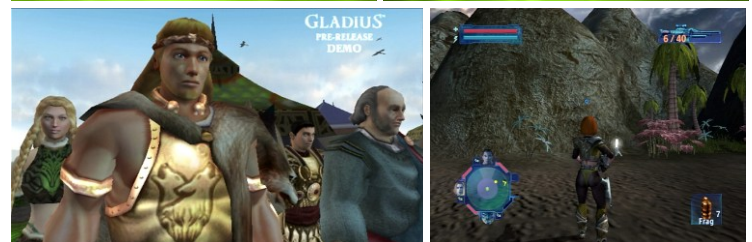
## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



# Xbox Exhibition Volume 4

More demos, music, DLC, and videos. This one features more of what interests me.

## ESPN NBA Basketball

The way I scoff (as somebody completely uninformed on the subject) about sports games being pretty much the same thing over and over, year after year, is probably the way sports game fans scoff at action games and shooters that – to them – all look alike.

## Grabbed by the Ghoulies

I played and enjoyed this several years ago in the *Rare Replay* collection. Am I the only one who didn't know that *ghoulies* is a British euphemism for *testicles*? Technically it's "goolies" making it a double entendre *and* wordplay. But yeah. It's a fun game.

## Magic: The Gathering – Battlegrounds

I didn't get far enough into this to see if cards are involved. It looks interesting, though.

## Metal Arms – Glitch in the System

I always thought this was a big mech game, but the demo shows it being a third-person shooter. It felt fun and responsive.

## Prince of Persia – The Sands of Time

What a gem. I finally got around to playing the second game in this trilogy a few years ago (*Warrior Within*) but the third, *The Two Thrones*, is still on my endless backlog.

## Project Gotham Racing 2

I understand this dormant racing game series has its fans. Microsoft *could* bring it back, but I don't see why they'd stray from *Forza* now.

## Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3

The only Tom Clancy-attributed game I ever played was the first *The Division*.

## Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Heroes in a half-shell.

## Voodoo Vince

I bet I'll enjoy this if I ever get around to it.

## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



# Xbox Exhibition Volume 5

My theory on the cover art change is that the first four volumes looked so similar, Xbox was concerned shoppers wouldn't realize the new edition was actually new. At the same time, they reduced the number of game demos from nine to seven, included no music or music videos, no DLC, and only a couple G4TV videos. Instead, there are a couple of walkthrough videos, but all in all, it seems like a slimmer package than their prior volumes.

## Psi-Ops – The Mindgate Conspiracy

To be fair, though, this is one of at least three games that turned out to be fantastic. I've heard mixed feelings about *Psi-Ops*, but it has an 84 on Metacritic. I enjoyed it a lot when I played it back in 2014 (and even then, it was ten years old).

## Ninja Gaiden

Not many gaming franchises have found success in reinventing themselves from the 2D 8-bit and 16-bit era into the age of 3D. A few others that come to mind are *Prince of Persia*, *Super Mario Bros.*, *Metroid*, and *The Legend of Zelda*, and three of those are from Nintendo. I loved the NES *Ninja Gaiden* games (even though they were tough as nails) and loved this “modern” reimagining back in the day (its two sequels less so, for some reason).

## Shadow Ops – Red Mercury

Never played it, but from the demo, it looks like what I'd expect: in the vein of *Call of Duty*.

## Metal Slug 3

I love the *Metal Slug* art style, but never got into the difficult side-scrolling gameplay.

## NBA Ballers

The demo disc wouldn't be complete without a sports game...

## Rallisport Challenge

...and the requisite racing game. I didn't know OG Xbox racing games looked this good.

## The Chronicles of Riddick – Butcher Bay

By many accounts (mine included), this is one of the best games on the original Xbox. I bet it still holds up, too. What a fantastic game.

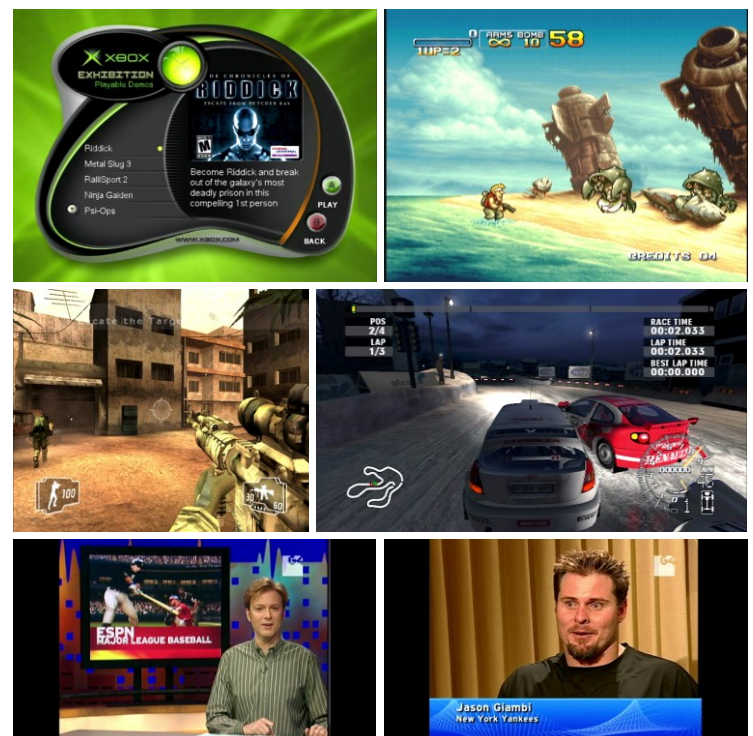
## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



# Xbox Exhibition Volume 6

I didn't already have this one, somehow. It arrived today from eBay, where I got it for a surprisingly low \$6 plus shipping. This means I'm only missing the final one, *Volume 7*, but I can't find it for sale anywhere.

Like the prior volumes, this features a few videos, primarily from G4. There's even a brief look at the game *B.C.* which never came out.

## Second Sight

I enjoyed this when I played the PS2 version many years ago, but I do get it confused with *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy*, which I played around the same time (and which had its own demo on the prior *Exhibition* volume).

## Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 – Black Arrow

I own nearly two dozen Tom Clancy games on the original Xbox, but I haven't played any. The demo starts out in some very dark alleys.

## Blinx 2

This demo spends a lot of time teaching you the controls – moving the camera, jumping, and all of that. I always wanted to play these. Being a “time-sweeping” cat, whatever that means, sounds fun.

## Men of Valor

The second military-themed game of the set, featuring a combat encounter in a jungle.

## OutRun 2

Arcade-style racing from Sega.

## NCAA Football 2005

College football. *PS2 JamPack Volume 11* (later in this issue) features the same game.

## Full Spectrum Warrior

The demo seems to start with the same intro level as the main game. I think this, because I recently added the PlayStation 2 version to my collection, and I got a sense of déjà vu playing through a minute or two of this demo. It's not your typical first-person shooter, because you're positioning your squad strategically, tactics-style. The series didn't make it past a single sequel, *Ten Hammers*.

## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



## PlayStation 2 JamPack - Summer 2001

The *JamPack* demo series started on the PS1, but I haven't (yet) added any of those to my collection. I think my PS2 set is complete.

They were trying to be fun and clever with the interface, but it's a little confusing the way it's organized as tiers on a space station that you navigate with the d-pad. I guess it's OK once you figure it out, but I had no idea at first how to get to the actual game demos, after finding videos and game save file downloads.

### ATV Offroad Fury

Probably fun if ATV racing appeals to you.

### Cool Boarders 2001

Extreme sports, snowboarding edition.

### MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael

This person who I've never heard of makes a second appearance on this list, having been featured in *Xbox Exhibition Volume 2* in the *MX Superfly* game. He must be a big-time biker.

### Zone of the Enders

I played the Xbox 360 HD editions of this and its sequel (interesting mech action games from Konami and Hideo Kojima of *Metal Gear Solid* fame) thirteen years ago.

### Klonoa 2 - Lunatear's Veil

I've always wanted to play this and its PS1 precursor because 2.5D action games appeal to me, but I've just never gotten around to it.

### Red Faction

Here's the start of another series I've never played but always wanted to. Someday.

### Legacy of Kain - Soul Reaver 2

I played this (and the whole series, aside from the more recent side-scroller) earlier this year and included my mini-reviews in [VGGN issue #45](#).

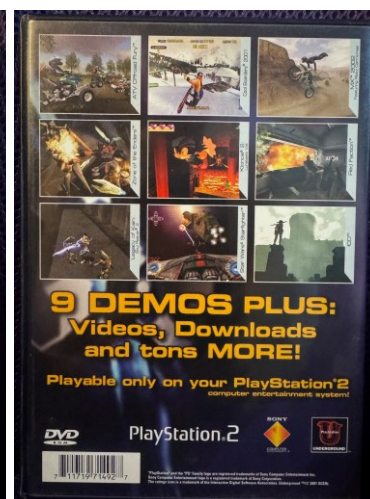
### Star Wars Starfighter

I've never been drawn to space/flight combat games.

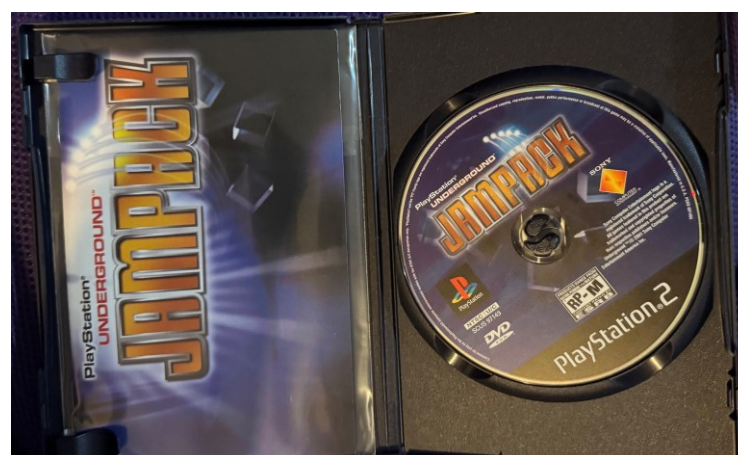
### ICO

A cult classic and an all-around great game from the makers of *Shadow of the Colossus*.

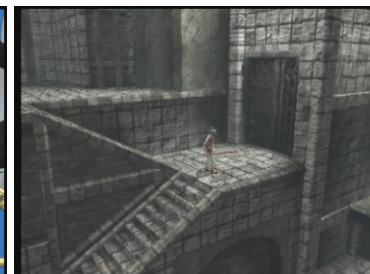
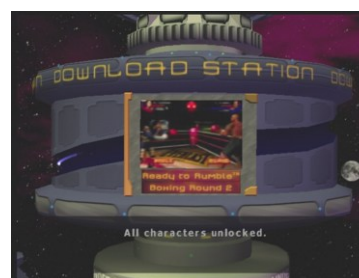
## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



# PlayStation 2 JamPack - Winter 2001

The menu is simplified in their second PS2 demo release (thankfully), but they do a tricky thing with wording (“demos *and* videos”). The packaging doesn’t make it clear which of the listed games are playable demos and which are just teaser videos.

I’m excluding those non-playable teaser videos, which are *Okage: Shadow King* (it was the same deal on the previous disc), *Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 3* (which was probably disappointing to many who bought this hoping to try it out), *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* (equally disappointing), and lastly *Splashdown* (which didn’t even get a mention on the case art).

## Kinetica

It reminded me a little of *F-Zero*, except you are the vehicle with wheels on your hands and feet. I wonder what that’s all about?

## Drakan – The Ancients’ Gates

I missed the tool tip explaining how to get off the dragon after landing, so I quickly gave up.

## Extermination

This looks interesting, even though it has a less than stellar 67 on Metacritic. It seemed to be a bit like *Metal Gear Solid* or some third person action adventure spy type game.

## Baldur’s Gate – Dark Alliance

This isometric D&D RPG looks interesting too.

## Dynasty Warriors 3

Add musou games to the list of genres I steer clear of. Huge all-out historical battlefields have never been my kind of thing.

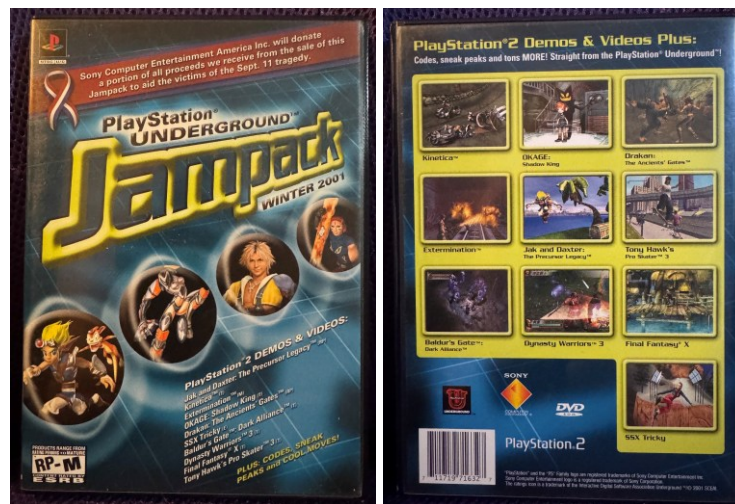
## Final Fantasy X

The demo appeared to be very limited, with the path I chose leading to a boss battle. A bit of personal trivia here, but *FFX* doesn’t even rank in my top 5 Final Fantasies, which is probably heresy to admit.

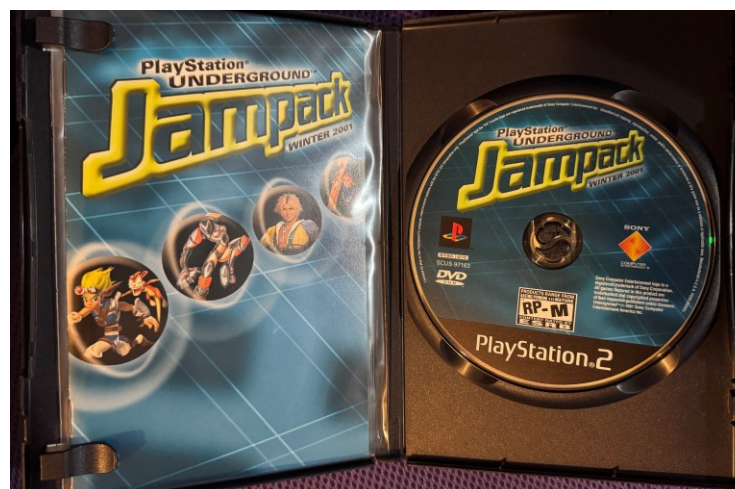
## SSX Tricky

Snowboarding, if that appeals to you.

## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



## PlayStation 2 JamPack - Summer 2002

The third PS2 JamPack demo disc is even more streamlined. It ditches the cartoon girl intro (which seemed to serve no purpose) and the case art makes the distinction between which games are demos and which are just trailers (*SOCOM* and *Kingdom Hearts*).

Imagine not knowing what *Kingdom Hearts* was and seeing that trailer for the first time. What a time to have been alive!

The nine playable demos are:

### *PaRappa the Rapper 2*

I feel like the first *PaRappa* on PS1 gets a lot of love, but nobody ever talks about *PaRappa 2*. If nothing else, this is a good game (or demo) to figure out just what level of latency there is in your DualShock controller.

### *Jak and Daxter - The Precursor Legacy*

It was just a video on the prior disc (and a second entry in the vault is a video), but it's also a playable demo now. Naughty Dog really knew how to cook. You can look at this – even just the demo – and see how great it was. For my review of the trilogy, see [VGGN issue #16](#).

### *Half-Life*

We console gamers finally got to experience Valve's ground-breaking first-person shooter when it came to PS2 in late 2001. I didn't play it until 2009, but let me tell you, I was blown away. I mean, it's not *Half-Life 2*, but still.

### *Crash Bandicoot - The Wrath of Cortex*

The demo includes two specific levels, one of which has you rolling around in a ball *Super Monkey Ball* style.

### *Frequency*

A cult classic rhythm game.

### *Hot Shots Golf 3*

A cult classic (maybe?) light-hearted golf game.

### *FreekStyle*

Motorcycle racing.

### *TimeSplitters 2*

I got stuck and gave up partway through *TS2* when I played it on GameCube. I think it was at some kind of big turret you had to control.

### *Star Wars - Jedi Starfighter*

Jedi star-fighting. I didn't boot up the demo.

## The Case



## The Disc



## Screenshots



## PlayStation 2 JamPack - Winter 2002

Things get tricky here, because PlayStation started releasing two editions of the same demo disc, *Pokémon*-style. One disc was for games rated up to “T” (for Teen) and the other was for games of all ratings (up to “M” for Mature). The “M” rated games don’t appear on the “T” rated disc (obviously), but the “T” rated disc has a couple additional game demos not present on the “M” rated disc. It’s confusing.

### *Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus*

It’s the only *Sly Cooper* game I ever played, although I want to remedy that someday. My most enduring memory of this game is that I was very sick and off work for a couple days (with the flu or something) when I played it.

### *Wils Arms 3*

This RPG series always looked interesting, but I haven’t (yet) made the time to play them.

### *Ratchet & Clank*

I only ever played the two more modern ones, for PS4 and PS5. I should remedy that as well.

### *Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 4*

People love these, but since real-life skateboarding was never my thing, I never gave them a chance. There are modern remakes.

### *Street Hoops* (Teal Version “T”)

Basketball, presumably on the streets.

### *Stuntman* (Teal Version “T”)

In the demo, I played a level set in a very obvious *Indiana Jones* spoof where you’re driving a jeep. I think they’re all about driving.

### *SOCOM – U.S. Navy Seals* (Blue Version “M”)

This was featured on the prior disc as a trailer. Now the demo itself makes an appearance.

### *Primal* (Blue Version “M”)

This has been high up on the “must play soon” portion of my backlog for months. Thankfully, the full game lets you invert (or un-invert) the camera X and Y axis, otherwise I’d skip it.

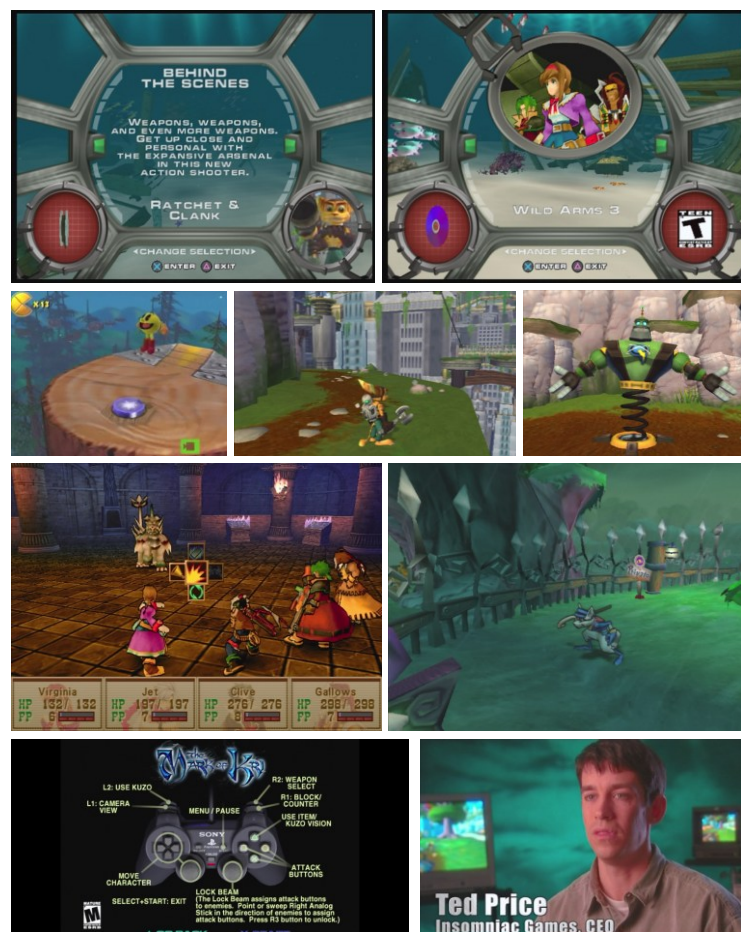
### *The Mark of Kri* (Blue Version “M”)

I remember trailers for this game back in the day. It also got a sequel, *Rise of the Kasai*. It’s another pair of games I never got around to playing. They’re on PS4/PS5 as PS2 classics.

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



## PlayStation 2 JamPack - Summer 2003

The interface driving the menu for this demo disc is their most simplified yet, after a slight detour with the underwater sub navigation theme in the prior one. A single menu lists all the games, which either have a demo or a video or both. Gone are the walkthroughs, tips and tricks, and downloadable content.

As before, this is just a list of the games with a playable demo available on each disc.

### War of the Monsters

In the demo, you battle another monster in a city-shaped arena. I never played this and was expecting something more like *Rampage*.

### Amplitude

It's the rhythm game follow-up to *Frequency*.

### ATV Offroad Fury

All-terrain vehicle racing.

### World Tour Soccer 2003

The world's favorite sport.

### MLB 2004

The American pastime: baseball; well, that and wearing dumb red hats with an ironic slogan while ruining the country, but I digress.

### Jet X2O (Blue/Red Version "T")

Jet skis are super fun, and this game seems cool. I'm not into racing games, though, so...

### Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell (Blue/Red "T")

After my 007 *James Bond* marathon and my *Legacy of Kain* marathon and my *Onimusha* marathon, I have my eye on *Splinter Cell*.

### Primal (Orange/Blue Version "M")

Did PlayStation forget they included the same demo on the prior disc, or was this a bonus?

### The Getaway (Orange/Blue Version "M")

If the demo (with its long, unskippable intro cutscene) is to be believed, this is a driving game where you flee the scenes of crimes. I was able to get out and run around on foot.

### Silent Hill 3 (Orange/Blue Version "M")

After last year's misstep with *Silent Hill f*, I'm finding more of that classic *SH* vibe in the new *Silent Hill Townfall*. Still, it's not *Silent Hill 1-4*.

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



## PlayStation 2 JamPack - Winter 2003

It's the second pair of demo discs in a row lacking the tips and tricks videos, behind the scenes videos, and so forth. The upside is, there are even *more* playable demos now, with some overlap between the two versions.

### NCAA GameBreaker 2004

College football.

### NFL GameDay 2004 2004

Not college football.

### Ratchet & Clank - Going Commando

The Ratchet & Clank series would probably make for a good gaming marathon too.

### DDRMAX2 - Dance Dance Revolution

I may have missed the memo that the face/symbol buttons work in place of the D-pad. I was confused on how I'd hit left/right or up/down simultaneously.

### Need For Speed - Underground

I didn't boot up this one. It's the demo for a game in a well-known racing game franchise.

### Whiplash

You're a weasel chained to a rabbit.

### Downhill Domination (Yellow Version "T")

Bicycle racing, I gather.

### Finding Nemo (Yellow Version "T")

I tried this one, and came away wondering who at the time would have booted this up and thought "yeah, now *this* is what I want to spend my money on." I kept getting killed by a dumb crab after passing over a couple steam vents. It's like a 2.5D side-scrolling platformer except you're swimming, so there really isn't any platforming involved.

### Prince of Persia - The Sands of Time ("T")

This appears to be the same demo included on the Xbox Exhibition Volume 4 disc.

### Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Yellow "T")

An isometric beat-'em-up. As best I could tell, the demo only lets you play as one turtle.

### XIII (Blue Version "M")

I always wanted to play this. It has a remaster.

### Rise to Honor (Blue Version "M")

This features Chinese martial arts master-turned-actor Jet Li. The demo starts out with a brief tutorial on melee (and armed) combat; context-sensitive and performed with a flick of the right thumbstick in the desired direction.

### SOCOM II - U.S. Navy SEALs (Blue Version "M")

It's the use case for the PS2 network adapter and headset. The only SOCOM I played was *Fireteam Bravo* on PSP. That was pretty fun.

### James Bond 007 - Everything or Nothing ("M")

See my review of every 007 game in [issue #44](#).

### Syphon Filter - The Omega Strain (Blue "M")

I played the two games on PSP, but that's all.

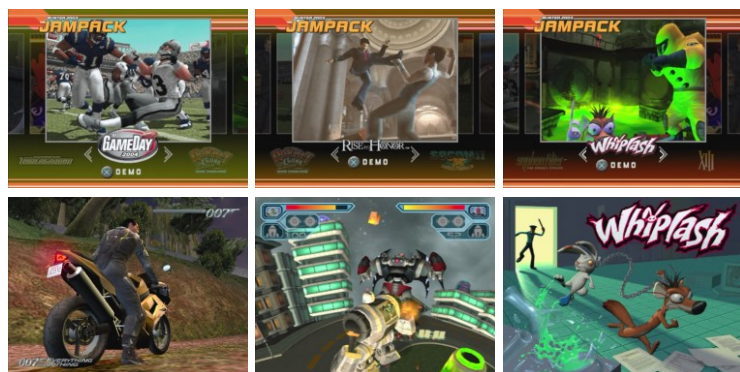
### Castlevania - Lament of Innocence ("M")

I still need to play this and *Curse of Darkness*.

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



## PlayStation 2 JamPack Volume 10

I haven't quite figured out why, after six twice-a-year seasonally-branded demo discs, they started numbering them instead. Why is this volume 10 and not volume 7? I think it's because of the PS1-era *JamPack* demo discs, but I thought there were more than three of those. Google suggests it was due to retailers not wanting to keep "winter" editions on shelves during the summer and vice-versa, and that they only counted three of the PS1 *JamPack* releases. It seems confusing to me.

This pair seems a little light on content, with fewer demos and (again) no extra videos aside from some game trailers – *Sly 2*, *EyeToy*, *Final Fantasy XI* (the first online one) and others.

### Front Mission 4

In the mech strategy series from Square Enix.

### Rise to Honor

They weren't branding it as *Jet Li: Rise to Honor* yet. I expected it to be the same demo included on the prior volume, but it's totally different. This one starts out with a cinematic foot chase, followed by crashing through a window and some martial arts combat.

### MLB 2005

Major League Baseball.

### Transformers

No subtitle. You play as a slow-moving robot in disguise although not in disguise in what looks to be a generic jungle setting where you jump up to cliffs and run up a ramp. I didn't get much further than that in the demo.

### NBA ShootOut 2004

Oh, goodie. Basketball.

### World Soccer – Winning Eleven 7

To me, listening to the Eiffel 65 [song](#) where he rattles off several PlayStation 1 games (this one included) is probably more entertaining than playing soccer in video game form.

As an aside, the games name-dropped in that song (they're the *I'm Blue Da Ba Dee* band, remember) are *Tekken 3*, *Metal Gear Solid*, *Resident Evil*, *Gran Turismo*, *Omega Boost*, *Bloody Roar*, *X-Files*, *Ridge Racer*, *Oddworld*, and *Winning Eleven*, in that order.

To be clear, that song is *not* on these demo discs.

### MX Unleashed

I have nothing clever or interesting to say here.

### Ghost Recon – Jungle Storm (Red Version “T”)

I don't know if this one is well-regarded or not, but there sure are a lot of Tom Clancy games.

### Mission: Impossible – Operation Surma (Red “T”)

If I'm ever in the mood for another spy game marathon after my recent 007 binge, I've got a few *Mission: Impossible* games I could play.

### Psi-Ops – The Mindgate Conspiracy (Yellow “M”)

This also appeared on *Xbox Exhibition Volume 5*, and it seems to be the exact same demo.

### Syphon Filter – The Omega Strain (Yellow “M”)

Another repeat, but this one looks to be the same demo they included last time.

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



# PlayStation 2 JamPack Volume 11

I'm not saying there weren't demos for a few good games on *Volume 10*, but it seems very lackluster when compared to what's on this pair. The only way it could be better is if the *Grand Theft Auto – San Andreas* entry was a playable demo instead of just a video.

Incidentally, Wikipedia had it [listed](#) as a demo, but I made my first ever edit there just now and moved it over to the *Videos* column.

## **ACE Combat 5 – The Unsung War**

First-person jet piloting, although with just a HUD (no internal cockpit view that I saw).

## **ATV Offroad Fury 3**

ATV and MX games must have been popular.

## **Burnout 3 – Takedown**

I'm not a fan of racing games, but *Burnout* was a well-respected and popular franchise for its crash modes (which I didn't see in the demo).

## **Champions – Return to Arms**

Seemingly an in-depth isometric RPG. I didn't make it out of the intro area in the demo.

## **Jak 3**

Each game in the trilogy took world design and gameplay in wildly different directions.

## **Ratched & Clank – Up Your Arsenal**

I have such a blind spot with the *R&C* series.

## **Star Wars – Battlefront**

A classic... that I never played.

## **Tak 2 – The Staff of Dreams** (Yellow Version “T”)

Only appearing on the yellow T-rated version, this was part of a short-lived mascot action adventure platformer series.

## **Suikoden IV** (Yellow Version “T”)

I only played the first two of these on PS1. The demo for this one starts by putting you right into the turn-based combat against a dragon.

## **NCAA Football 2005** (Yellow Version “T”)

College football, if that interests you.

## **Dog's Life** (Yellow Version “T”)

There are countless games where you play as a cat. I can think of very few where you play as a dog. This demo looked pretty cozy.

## **Crash – Twinsanity** (Yellow Version “T”)

Purchasers of the yellow “T” rated version got yet another mascot platformer with the latest *Crash Bandicoot* demo.

## **Robotech – Invasion** (Yellow Version “T”)

You pilot a big mech in third person and battle against other mechs, as you'd expect.

## **Killzone** (Red Version “M”)

Here's where things start getting interesting, if *Suikoden* and various mascot platformers weren't already enough. PlayStation's flagship FPS (the so-called *Halo*-killer) got a demo.

## **Area-51** (Red Version “M”)

Another first-person shooter, apparently. This is on my PS2 “must buy” list. I'm missing a few titles in my collection, although I have it on Xbox already (which is probably why I never bothered to buy the PS2 version before).

## **Ghost in the Shell – Stand Alone Complex** (Red “M”)

I actually did add this one to my collection just a couple months ago, after realizing I only had the PSP version. In total (with shipping and tax) it was \$140, but I feel like it's not going to get any cheaper at this point.

## **Metal Gear Solid 3 – Snake Eater** (Red Version “M”)

Another certifiable banger, as the kids say.

## **Silent Hill 4 – The Room** (Red Version “M”)

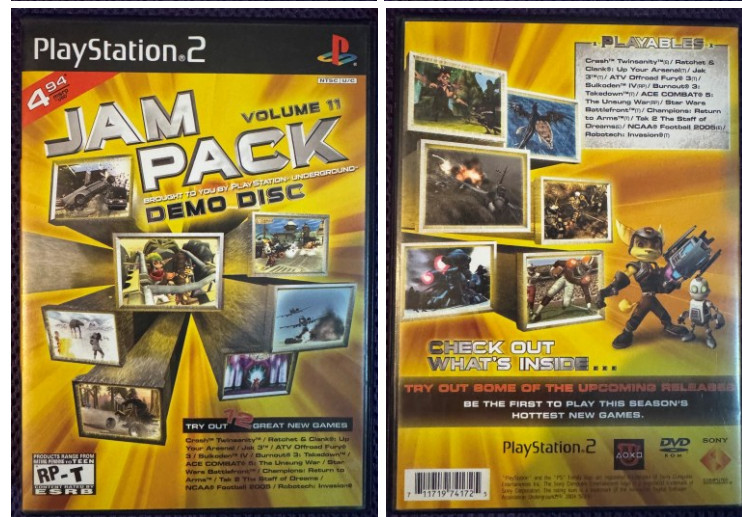
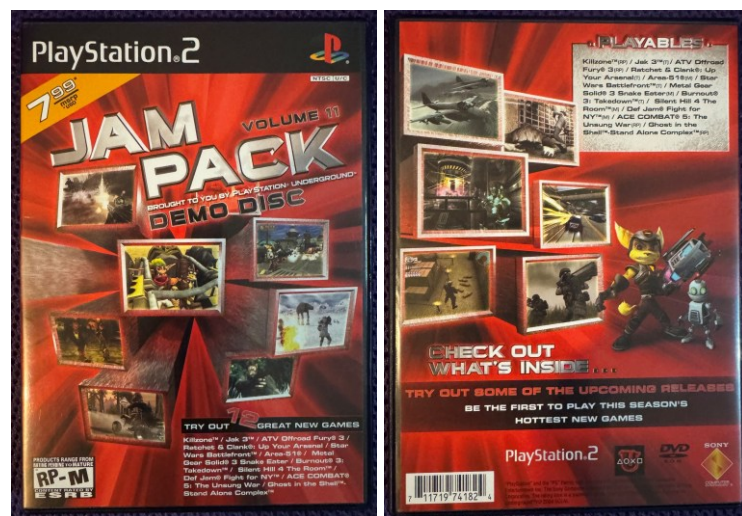
I remember this being divisive at the time, but I played it (finally) a few years ago and thought it was fantastic. Those first four games were really something special, weren't they?

## **Def Jam – Fight for NY** (Red Version “M”)

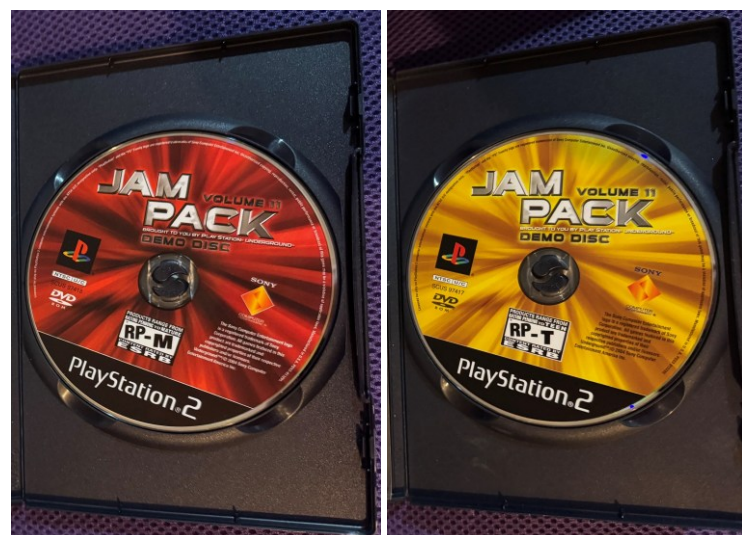
This never made it into my collection, although I've been on the lookout for a reasonably priced copy that's complete and in good condition. It runs about \$250 now (and will only continue to go up, I bet), but I haven't been inclined yet to spend that much on a fighting game I'll never play.

It's interesting that "M" was yellow and "T" was red in *Volume 10*. It's backwards here.

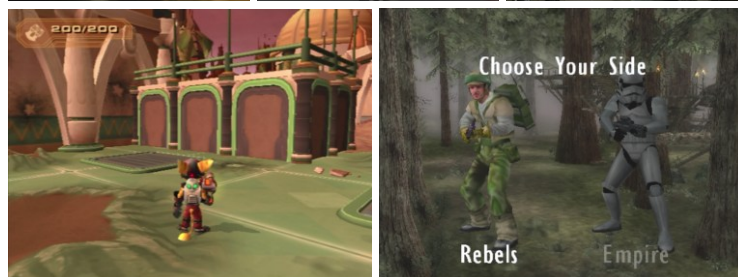
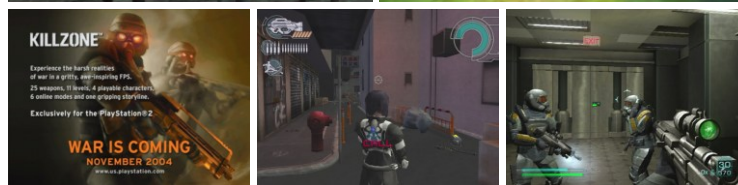
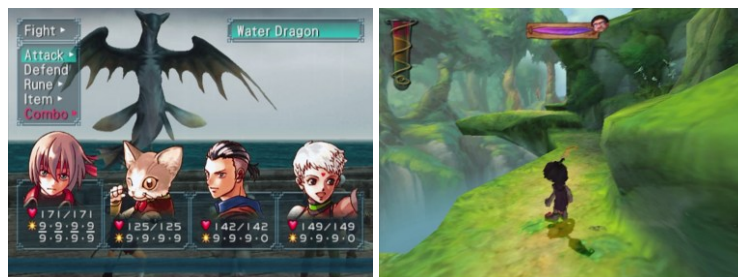
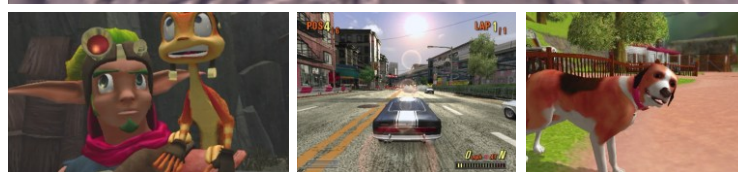
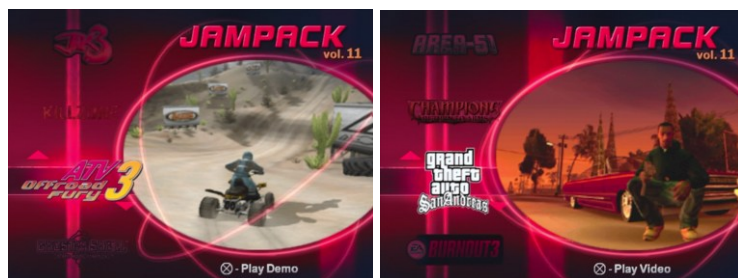
## The Cases



## The Discs



## Screenshots



# PlayStation 2 JamPack Volume 12

After the abundance of demos in *Volume 11*, it's jarring to see them scale back so far now.

## Delta Force – Black Hawk Down

The demo starts with an on-rails bit where you're leaning out of a helicopter.

## Fight Night – Round 2

I find boxing games fascinating; I mean, not fascinating enough to play, but fascinating in the sense that they're one-on-one fighting games, but grounded in reality so there are no fireballs, beast transformations, or over-the-top set pieces. They're also sports game-adjacent. I guess they're for *somebody*.

## Juiced

A racing game from a developer calling themselves Juice Games.

## Lego Star Wars – The Video Game

The demo opens with a scene from *Episode 1*.

## MLB 2006

More Major League Baseball.

## Stolen

It's the first demo in this volume where I'm actually interested in playing the full game. It's in my collection (along with most other PS2 games of note) and has been on my radar for a long time. I just never got around to it.

## Madagascar (Red Version "T")

Based on the hit DreamWorks animated film starring the voices of Jada Pinkett Smith, Ben Stiller, Chris Rock and others, this demo really illustrates how most movie tie-in games are pretty "meh" compared to the original greats like *Jak*, *Sly*, and *Ratchet*. This seemed *really* plain.

## Robots (Red Version "T")

Another animated movie tie-in, but this one from Eurocom. They did several of the best *007 James Bond* games as well (see all my mini-reviews in [VGGN issue #44](#)). The demo looked way better than *Madagascar*, yet the Metacritic for *Robots* is way worse (53 vs. 69) so go figure.

## Cold Winter (Blue/Yellow Version "M")

Here's another FPS I've had on my radar for quite a while. It's not high on my list, though.

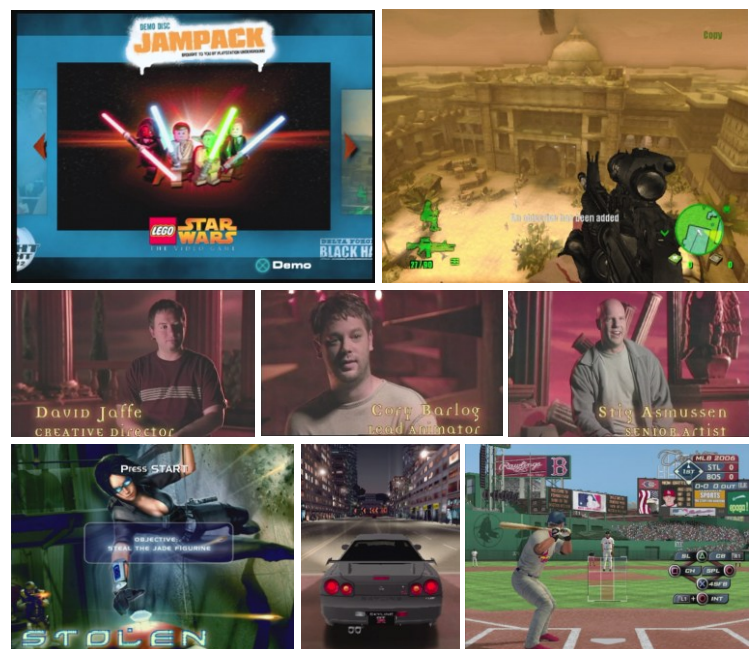
## God of War (Blue/Yellow Version "M")

Objectively the jewel of the set, this demo seems to be 1-to-1 with the intro to the full game, as best I can remember from when I played it. It also includes commentary and behind-the-scenes videos with David Jaffe (creative director), Cory Barlog (lead animator, who went on to direct *God of War 2* and now the new *God of War* games) and Stig Asmussen (senior artist, who went on to direct *God of War 3*).

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



# PlayStation 2 JamPack Volume 13

We're nearing the end of the *JamPack* series, and *Volume 13* features several good ones.

## *Burnout – Revenge*

A demo for the once-popular racing game series with its iconic crash mode.

## *Jak X – Combat Racing*

Another racing game, but this one in the *Jak and Daxter* series from Naughty Dog. I played a little of the full game a few years ago, after finishing the *Jak* trilogy, and was reminded of why I just don't enjoy racing games.

## *Ratchet – Deadlocked*

They dropped the "& Clank" from the title. The demo is a little weird. It's like you're on a TV show.

## *Sly 3 – Honor Among Thieves*

A *Jak*, a *Ratchet*, and a *Sly*, all in the same volume.

## *Shadow of the Colossus*

This is one of the greatest games of the PS2 era, and one of the first ones widely pointed to in discussions about video games as art. The BluePoint remake is supposedly great (my son played it), but I haven't gotten to that one yet.

## *Chronicles of Narnia*

This is based on *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. You can switch between characters, each with different moves. I didn't make it very far in the demo before losing interest. It might be fun, though.

## *Tiger Woods – PGA Tour 2006* (Red Version "T")

Golf, back before Tiger Woods was involved in a series of personal scandals.

## *NHL 2006* (Red Version "T")

More sports for the "T" version disc. The only ice hockey game I ever enjoyed was *Blades of Steel* on the NES. That was a fun game.

## *Peter Jackson's King Kong* (Red Version "T")

Seemingly a first-person action-adventure, based on the movie starring Jack Black.

## *Karaoke Revolution Party* (Red Version "T")

This one requires a USB microphone or headset. The demo launches, but you can't really do anything in it.

## *We Love Katamari* (Red Version "T")

Real talk here. I've never understood the point of the *Katamari Damacy* games. They're weird on purpose, but rolling stuff up into a ball? I just don't get it. This one seems to be a co-op demo you can't play without another person.

## *Genji – Dawn of the Samurai* (Blue Version "M")

Well, it looks cool, and the combat was pretty fluid. It might be worth a further look.

## *SoulCalibur III* (Blue Version "M")

The [Wikipedia](#) page doesn't denote this fighting game demo as being an "M" disc exclusive, but it is.

## *Brothers in Arms – Earned in Blood* (Blue "M")

You get two squads. It's an FPS from Gearbox.

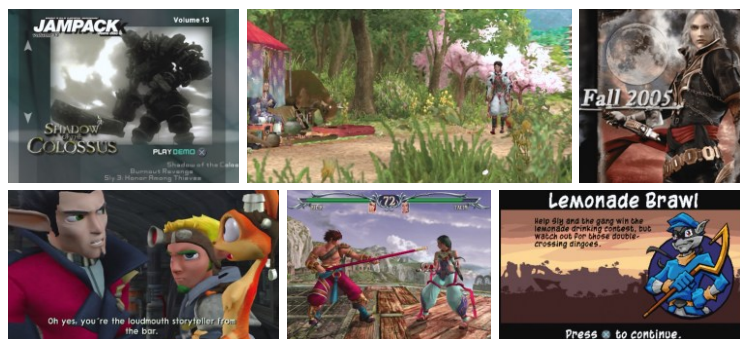
## *Castlevania – Curse of Darkness* (Blue "M")

I always wanted to play this, but what little I played of the demo didn't seem very fun.

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



# PlayStation 2 JamPack Volume 14

The penultimate *JamPack* features demos for several really good games.

## EyeToy – Operation Spy

You need the EyeToy camera to play this. Mine is in a box somewhere unknown, so I didn't try this demo.

## Shadow of the Colossus

The same E3 demo appeared in the prior *JamPack* volume. I guess for a game this good, you don't want people to miss it.

## Ratchet – Deadlocked

Another demo encore, I guess. It also made an appearance in *JamPack Volume 13*.

## Okami

I wrote about games I'm embarrassed to say I haven't played yet in [VGGN issue #45](#), and somehow I forgot to mention *Okami*, which has been described as a stylish *Zelda*-like.

## MLB 06 – The Show

I never knew what "The Show" meant until I looked it up just now. It refers to the baseball major league itself; a bit of baseball slang.

## Lara Croft Tomb Raider – Legend

I played this one on Xbox 360 a long time ago.

## Shadow Hearts – From the New World (Blue "T")

This inventive, high-quality turn-based RPG series should have continued past this final entry. These games are so, so good. An encore of my mini-review for this one appears later.

## Steambot Chronicles (Blue Version "T")

This is sort of an RPG adventure. I didn't get far in the demo, but I'm still interested in checking out the full game eventually.

## Beatmania (Blue Version "T")

I guess the developer, Bemani, was so focused on this rhythm game that they branded their studio as an abbreviation for it.

## Pac-Man World Rally (Blue Version "T")

It isn't listed on the case art, but a demo for *Pac-Man*'s cart racer is included on the blue "T" version.

## Hitman – Blood Money (Yellow Version "M")

The newer *World of Assassination* trilogy is great, but I never played these originals. This demo starts in a run-down theme park patrolled by guards.

## Black (Yellow Version "M")

I played this FPS on Xbox years ago. I liked it, but I remember nothing else *about* it. Naming it *Black* also ensured that it would be tough to find in a search.

## Drakengard 2 (Yellow Version "M")

It's somehow related to the *NieR* games, which also involve Yoko Taro. This should be on my radar, as much as I loved *NieR* and *NieR Automata* and *Drakengard 3* (well, until that last ridiculous "boss").

## Driver – Parallel Lines (Yellow Version "M")

From the demo, I gather this is less a racing game and more an open-world driving game. I think there *are* some on-foot sections (maybe not in the demo – not sure) but it seems like a driving-focused *GTA*-like.

## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



# PlayStation 2 JamPack Volume 15

It's the final volume. The RP-M rated disc is pretty slim, with only 6 demos; 9 on the RP-T.

## Destroy All Humans! 2

What a wacky, fun game. I played this a few years ago on a run through the whole series (including *Billy Willy Unleashed* for the Wii). An encore of my mini-review for this one is later in this issue.

## Lego Star Wars II

These released in "episode" order, with the prequel trilogy first and this, the original trilogy as the follow-up. The only one I've played is *Lego Star Wars III – The Clone Wars*, with my oldest daughter when she was six.

## MLB 06 – The Show

It's back. I don't know *for sure* that it's the same demo as last time, because I didn't boot it up.

## Need For Speed – Carbon

Any entry in the long-running racing series.

## Okami

The more I see of this, the more I want to bump it higher on my backlog. This looks to be a different demo than the prior one, because none of the three sections start by asking you to draw a sun. Capcom announced a new *Okami* is in the works a while back. I should at least play it before that.

## Bionicle Heroes (Blue Version "T")

This is somehow related to LEGO, and you play as a robot. I recently added the full game to my PS2 collection, even though I already had versions for GameCube and Xbox 360.

## One Piece – Grand Adventure (Blue Version "T")

I've really enjoyed the two seasons (so far) of the live-action *One Piece* on Netflix. The problem with many of these anime-based games, though, is that they tend to be one-on-one fighting games, which isn't my cup of tea.

## The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy ("T")

This one is more of an arena fighter; maybe something that would appeal to *Smash Bros.* fans. At least you can play against a bot.

## Kim Possible – What's the Switch? (Blue "T")

This and the prior game are based on popular cartoons that aired way after my time, so I'm not too familiar with them. This one is a 2.5D side-scrolling action game (maybe a platformer), and I liked what I saw of it here.

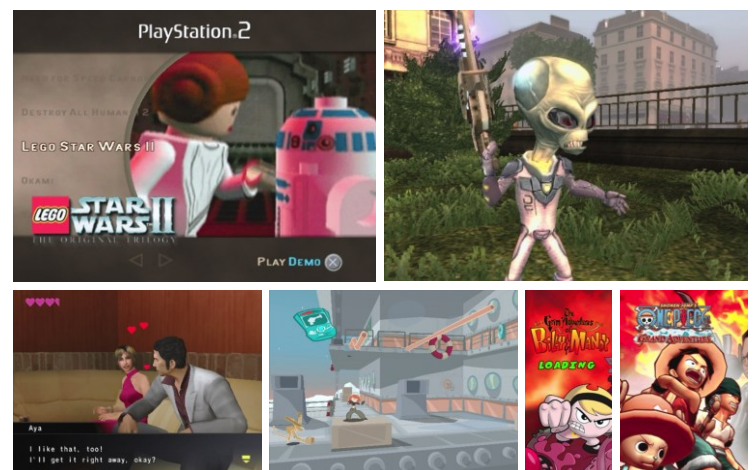
## Yakuza (Red Version "M")

The RP-M disc in this volume only has six game demos, and this is the only one of them not appearing on the RP-T disc too. I wonder if anybody could have predicted how enduring the *Yakuza* (now *Like a Dragon*) franchise would become, and that it would still be going strong two decades later. My mini-review of the *Kiwami* remake appears on page 31.

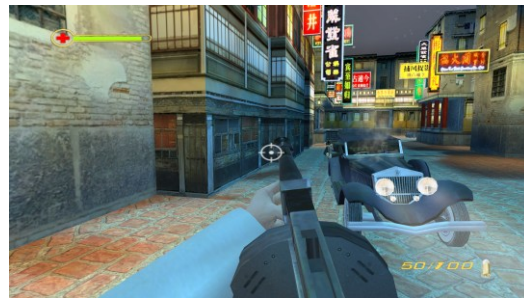
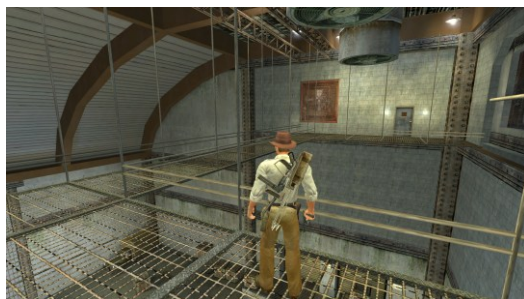
## The Cases and Discs



## Screenshots



# Mini-Review: The Emperor's Tomb



## Full Title:

*Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb*

I enjoyed this game enough to see it through to the end, but there's a lot about it I didn't like. Maybe that's because I recently played *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine* (N64 on Analogue 3D) and can't help but compare the two.

Doug Lee (in *Infernal Machine*) was an excellent Harrison Ford sound-alike, and while David Esch (in this game) was OK, he was just a bit off.

Indie's likeness was also a bit off somehow. Maybe it's the eyes.

They took the gameplay in a new direction, with puzzles simplified and in large part absent, in favor of fighting; lots and lots of fighting. I never got good at the hand-to-hand combat and even floundered a little with the platforming.

It was worth playing, but it might be my least favorite in the franchise.

OG Xbox played on Series X.  
Originally posted: 05/03/2026.

# Mini-Review: The Staff of Kings



## Full Title:

*Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings*

**Note:** This game doesn't appear on a demo disc featured in this issue, but I'm including it to go along with *The Emperor's Tomb*.

**Despite** its reputation as being one of the weakest games in the *Indiana Jones* franchise, I found myself enjoying this one a lot; well, at least more than *The Emperor's Tomb*.



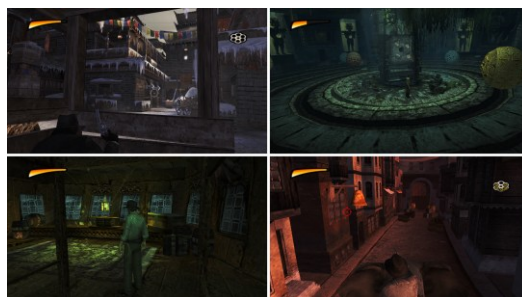
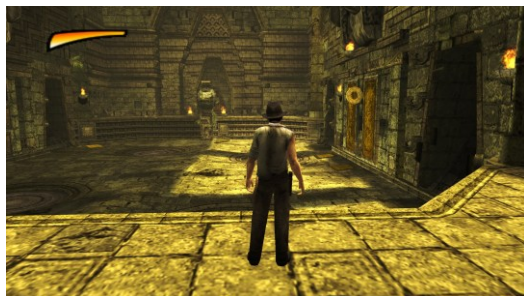
**This** one leans entirely into the action-adventure genre, with maybe 3 or 4 simple puzzles throughout its six chapters.

**It's** cinematic and streamlined, focusing on climbing, a few combat sections (I liked the hand-to-hand better this time around), on-rails shooting sections, quick-time events to avoid traps or run from danger, and a bevy of bonus features (unlockable movie trailers, concept art, outfits, and collectible artifacts).

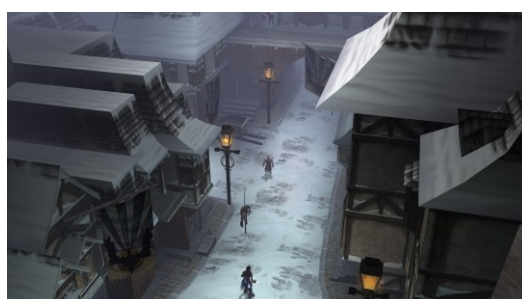
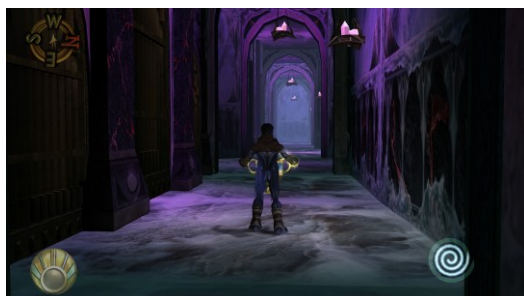
**It's** short (6 or 7 hours, if that) and easy on normal mode (I didn't have to use rewind or save states).

**This** also marks my 235th platinum trophy. Yay!

*PS2 Classics played on PS5.  
Originally posted: 05/09/2026.*



# Mini-Review: Soul Reaver 2 Remastered



**Note:** This mini-review appeared originally in [UGNN issue #45](#).

**The Legacy of Kain** story takes some twists here, and I'm starting to see why the series has developed a dedicated following.

**This** remaster does very little to improve on the original graphics (which can be turned on or off instantly), and at times doesn't appear to up-rez anything at all aside from specific world elements and the characters themselves.

**The** combat somehow felt worse than *SR1*. When the only benefit to fighting is recovering health (not experience or upgrades or item drops), it starts making sense to just avoid combat to avoid losing health to begin with.

**It's** also lacking the puzzle-boss fights, which I missed.

**There** are still some puzzle/dungeon sections (and good ones), but overall, it felt a little weaker than *SR1*.

**Great** story, though.

*Played on console: PS5 Pro.  
Originally posted: 05/16/2026.*

# Mini-Review: 007 – Everything or Nothing



**Note:** This mini-review appeared originally in [issue #44](#).

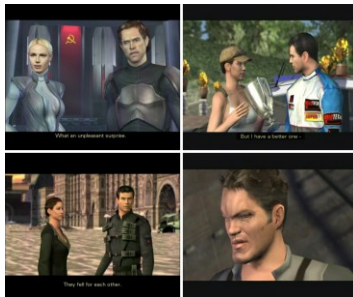
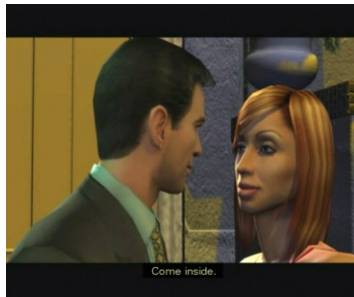
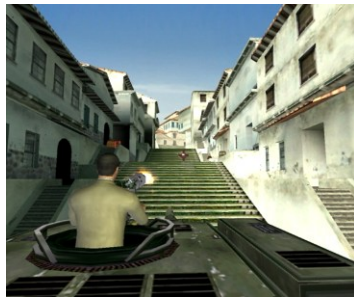
**My** *Bond* marathon continues with what's generally considered one of the best 007 games before the new IO Interactive one.

**For** me, I think I liked *007 Nightfire* a little more, but the devs at EA put plenty of effort into creating a game that more closely mimics the style and vibe of the movies.

**We** get a third-person adventure this time, featuring stealth, lots of mission variety, and a catchy theme song from Mya (also a minor character in the game), with a cast of actors that includes Pierce Brosnan returning as 007, Judi Dench as "M", John Cleese as "Q", Willem Dafoe and Heidi Klum as villains, and Shannon Elizabeth (of American Pie fame) as Bond girl Serena.

**The** missions are shorter but way more of them.

**A** bit of the experimental charm of the prior games is lost, but I enjoyed it.



*Played on console: Xbox (original).*

*Originally posted to social media on: 06/12/2026.*

# Mini-Review: Silent Hill 4 – The Room



**Note:** This mini-review appeared originally in [VGGN issue #23](#).

The first half is excellent. The second half introduces some frustrating bits, but it's still good. It holds up moderately well and is a worthy successor to the three prior games in this third-person survival horror series. I quite liked it.

To expand on that, the first half is a bit more chill and forgiving. In the second half, you revisit areas from the first half (but with some new twists), you can no longer auto-heal (the titular “room” is no longer as safe), hauntings start, and to top it off, it becomes an epic escort mission.

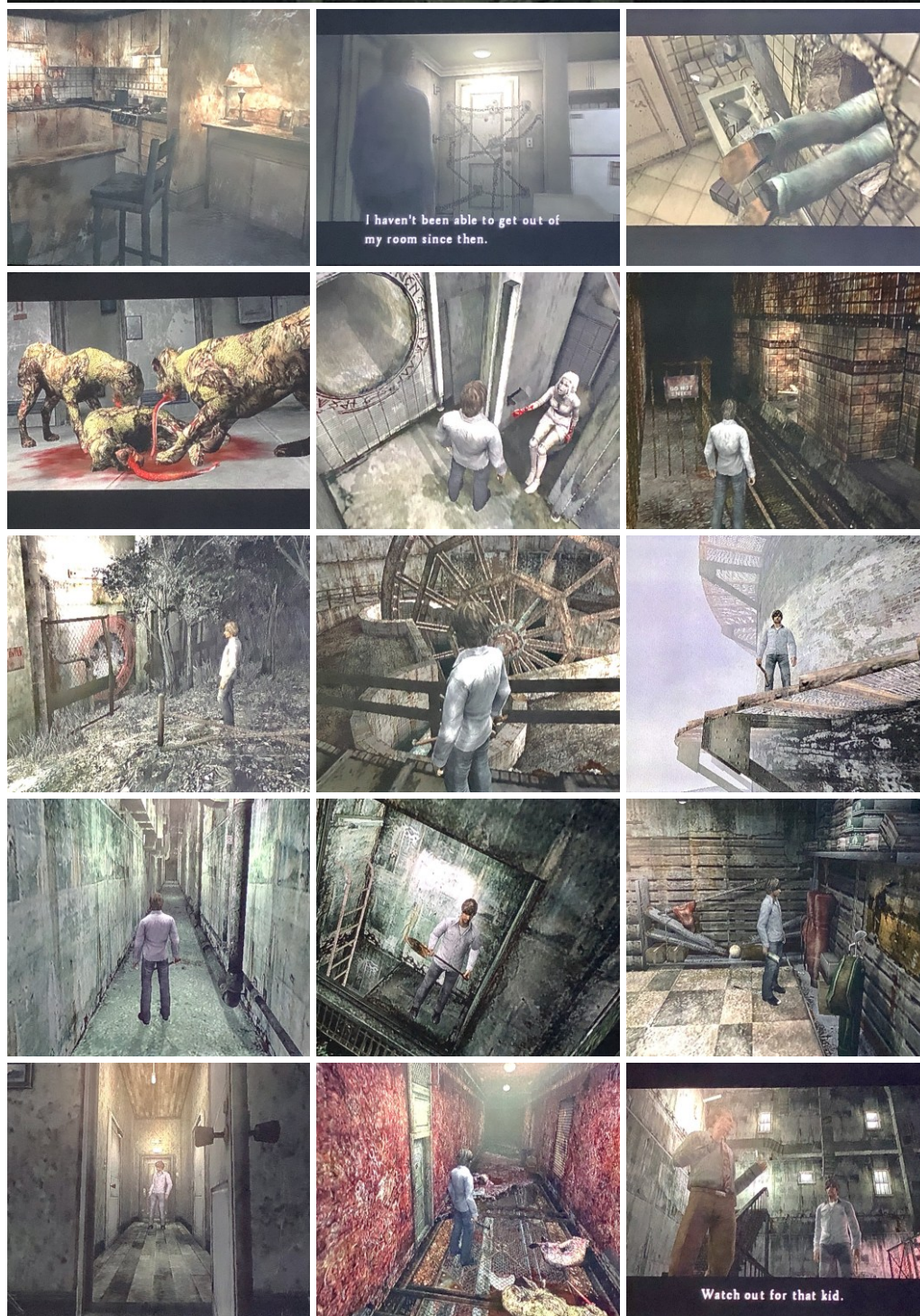
**Combat** is the game's weak point, but I got used to it. It's been too long since I've played the first three to remember, but it was probably always like this?

**Environments** and the story are the strong points. It also looks good for a game from two console generations ago (I use the Pound Xbox HDMI converter).

I had heard mixed things when *Silent Hill 4* originally launched, but I feel like it would have been great in its day. Even though the genre has evolved and some parts of 4 lack the suspense and surprise I remember from 1-3, it feels like the pinnacle of its genre for its time.

The puzzles involve items and clues and locked doors, much like the early *Resident Evil* series. Nothing is too hard. Camera is cinematic and fixed, but you can pan it some. It works fine thankfully, and normal third-person controls keep it very playable by today's standard.

*Played on console: Original Xbox.*  
*Originally posted: 08/25/2019.*



# Mini-Review: Shadow Hearts – New World



## Full Title:

*Shadow Hearts - From the New World*

**Note:** This mini-review appeared originally in [VGGN issue #38](#).

Less a sequel and more a stand-alone follow-up, *FTNW* marks the end of what should have been a long-lasting RPG series but wasn't.

This one has it all: a huge playable talking cat, Al Capone as a sympathetic figure with a fictional sister, iconic locations like Times Square, Roswell, Alcatraz prison and the Grand Canyon, a party of heroes made up of various stereotypes that could just as easily have formed a band and started singing "YMCA", and the return of a turn-based battle system that's among the best in the genre, especially for its time.

An argument could be made that the *Shadow Hearts* series could stand shoulder to shoulder with other PS2 RPG greats like *Kingdom Hearts*, *Persona*, and *Final Fantasy*. I liked this one almost as much as *SH: Covenant*.

**Weird, cool, very fun.**

*Played on console: PlayStation 2.  
Originally posted: 09/10/2024.*



# Mini-Review: Destroy All Humans! 2



**Note:** This mini-review appeared originally in [VGGN issue #20](#).

Since there isn't a remake of the second game (yet; rumor is, there will be) I played through the original. I miss the streamlined and improved controls of the first game's remake, but this is still very playable and fun.

Set 10 years later in 1969, alien Crypto seems more restrained and less evil, having spent a decade among humans. It's set up a bit like GTA with five different locations covering maybe a square mile each. He's often helping people (although with ample destruction in the process); another GTA-like aspect.

If it does get a remake\*, I wonder how they'll handle the various NPC stereotypes? The first game had hillbillies, but *DAH 2* goes global in ways that are bound to offend.

It's goofy and comedic though. Also, a fun completion-based Platinum.

*PS2 Classics played on PS5. Originally posted: 07/17/2021.*

\* A remake was released in 2022.

# Mini-Review: Yakuza Kiwami



**Note:** This mini-review appeared originally in [VGGN issue #26](#).

A remake of the game that started the *Yakuza* (now *Like a Dragon*) series.

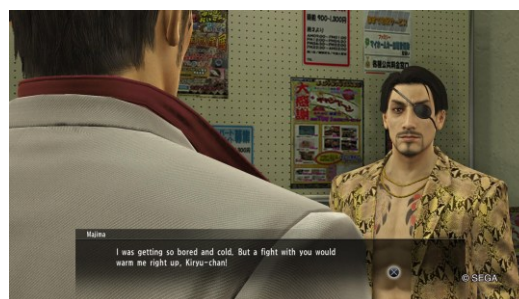
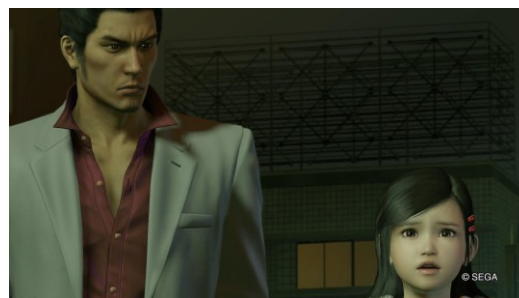
I never played the original despite owning it on PS2, but from what I've read, this is expanded and improved in many ways.

It's close in style to *Yakuza Zero* (which I also played recently for the first time), yet it's not quite as impressive. In particular, the substories were mostly short and uninteresting, in contrast to *Zero* where side quests were fun, surprising, and varied.

**Combat** styles from *Zero* carry over, yet I just never felt very good with it. Despite a lot of variety in styles, abilities and upgrades, I often found myself flailing like a fool, punching air, and fruitlessly trying to break out of botched combos.

**Still**, it was definitely worth playing on my way to seeing the entire series to completion.

*PS4 game played on PS5.  
Originally posted: 08/19/2023.*



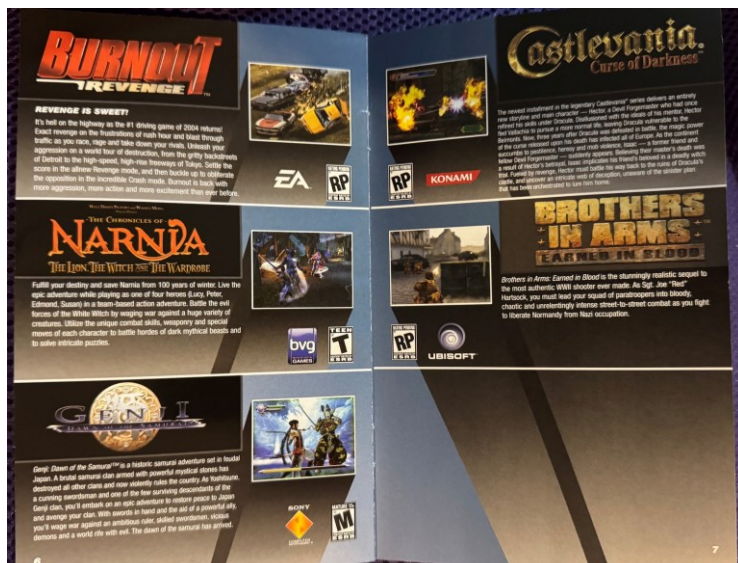
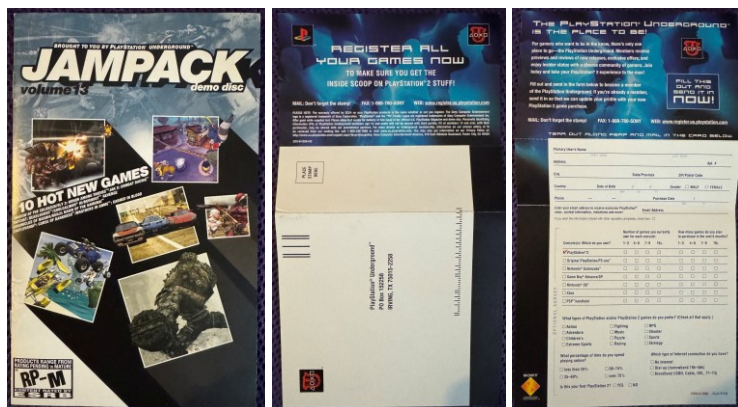
# The Final Stage

## Demo Disc Wrap-up

There were a surprising number of inaccuracies on the Wikipedia [page](#) for the PlayStation *JamPack* series. I made an account and fixed some of them (like missing notations for demos that weren't on both versions, or games missing entirely from the list), but I didn't do them all.

There is a seventh *Xbox Exhibition* disc. I tried to find it for sale online, but it eluded me. The numbering system along with verbiage like "7 Game Demos" make searching a chore, but I'm starting to think it must just be incredibly rare. I found this (very long) [YouTube video](#) that dives into what's on it, but that's all.

My photos of the later *JamPack* volumes don't show it (because I was trying to maximize what little space remained for screenshots), but they all came with manuals/booklets, registration cards, ad inserts and so on.



## Next Issue

My original plan was to play horror games all month long, leading to a horror game topic in an issue to release on Halloween. I had a blast last year doing a four-issue run in October. The problem is that the new *Silent Hill Townfall* is taking way longer to finish than I expected. I also want to play the new *Hellraiser* game, and reach into my backlog to play *Haunting Ground* (PS2), *Kuon* (PS2), the *Fatal Frame* trilogy (PS2, but I'd play them on PS3), possibly *Obscure* (PS2) and maybe some newer stuff like *Cronos: The New Dawn* or the *Dead Space* remake.

A number of other games will vie for my time, including *Control: Resonant*, which is by most accounts a pretty long game. My son wants us to play *We Were Here Tomorrow* when it releases later this month. Unless I want the Halloween issue to release in December, I may not actually do a Halloween issue.

I've also taken a temporary hiatus from playing and mini-reviewing black & white games. There are several more I want to play, including *Slay the Princess*, *Toem*, *West of Loathing*, and *Mouse: P.I. For Hire*, so that issue might also be quite a ways off.



## End Credits

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Images of the physical games in the *Collection Inspection* feature are photos I took of games in my own collection and weren't sourced from the internet. Apologies for reflections and bad framing. I'm not a pro.

Screenshots used in my video game mini-reviews and some screenshots used in other articles or features that weren't already attributed to a different source were captured by me in-game and are used here in what I believe is "fair use".

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