

SLEEPY STATION

Issue #6

**FREE
GONDOLA
CARDS**

HUEG



MODDING

REC411:

PUZZLE

AGENT



**N E X T
F E S T**

A CELEBRATION OF UPCOMING GAMES

**NO GAMES
PART 4**

**SLAVE
ZERO
REVIEW**



Anon's Passive Aggressive Corner

Well isn't this nice?

We're all gathered here to commemorate the union of anons mind and body.

The meeting of an unstoppable force and an immovable object.

A memorable occurrence indeed, considering how good we are at going through with our promises. We may as well call ourselves "Valve 2", considering how often and on time we release our gay little publication.

I kid, I kid, I'm only writing this to get on the co-editor-fag's nerves. It's so fun and liberating to play with other people's emotions without suffering any consequences. Gives you confidence and a sense of power. Must be how it feels to be a woman...

brb gonna transition

Gay shit aside, I am proud of this project and how well it's turning out to be.

Normalfags fear us, "real" game journalists envy us, no creature dares look us in the eye. We are alone on this barren earth.

All the little fights and disagreements we have in our threads only tells me that people are passionate enough about Sleepy Station to get their panties in a bunch over a cover choice. And before you try to rip me a new one: I didn't pick this issue's cover, it was one of the other co-editors. Whoever guesses correctly which editor didn't pick the Xbox cover, gets to tell him what for and tear HIM a new one.

I've looked into printing a physical copy of Sleepy Station, but no printing company in my vicinity wants to print anything. Not unless I order more than 10 copies. And that shit can cost up to 200 dollarydoos! In this economy?! Explains why magazines are filled to the brim with ads: gotta make that profit margin! But you won't have to worry about that. Our ads are 100% manufactured and sponsor free. That's right, we put in extra effort to not get paid! Not that it's such a difficult task to accomplish: I don't think Red Bull would look at our racy jokes and go "Yeah, we want our name attached to that!". Maybe we could trick someone like Nvidia to

sponsor us and then write a dozen articles about the "Chink in the system" issue. Ah, but that would entail a long and expensive libel lawsuit. And we can't even afford to print our own magazine!

So until I sell out - sit back, pray that your chair can still hold your quadruple-digit body weight and enjoy Sleepy Station Issue #6.



Table of Contents

1	Foreword
2	Table of Contents
3	Slave Zero Review
6	Rec 411: Puzzle Agent
7	TF2 aka Defense Stronghold The Second
12	Teagan x Kain
13	Serious Sam TSE: to be or not to be serious?
17	EXBAWKS HUEG Modding Guide
23	No Games (Part 4)
27	Steam Next Fest Demos Review
36	Gondola Cards



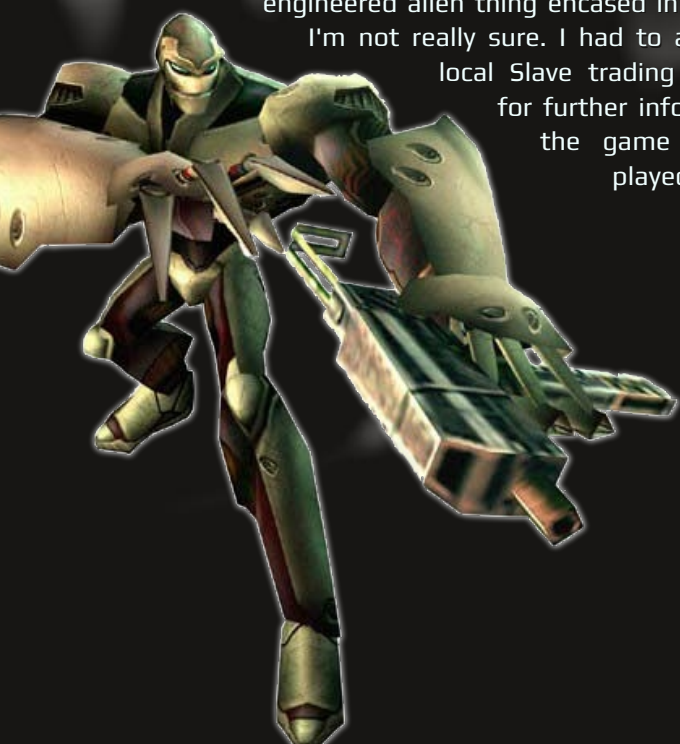
SLAVE ZERO

Are you familiar with the concept of comfort food? It's a specific dish that differs from person to person depending on their taste and life experiences. A familiar taste you know you can always come back to when you're feeling down and want to be reminded of the good times. For some it's a cheeseburger from the local mom'n'pop shop, for others it's a veggie risotto. Me personally? I love me some janky early 2000's third-person shooters.

Honestly speaking it could be any game I had fun with at the time: Unreal Tournament, Emperor: Battle for Dune, Carmageddon, Worms... But I have yet to find a dumb janky 3rd person shooter I didn't pick at random and enjoyed. X-COM: Enforcer, MDK, Max Payne, Die Hard Trilogy... The one we're going to be talking about today is Slave Zero.

SETTING

Developed by Infogrames for PC and Dreamcast (in 1999, but I still count it as early 2000's), you control the titular Slave Zero (the original nigger) on a mission to overthrow a chink overlord and replace him with... your chinese overlord. I guess the political story won't change much in the coming 500 years. Slave Zero is some sort of living armor or maybe some genetically engineered alien thing encased in armor, I'm not really sure. I had to ask our local Slave trading expert for further info about the game I just played:

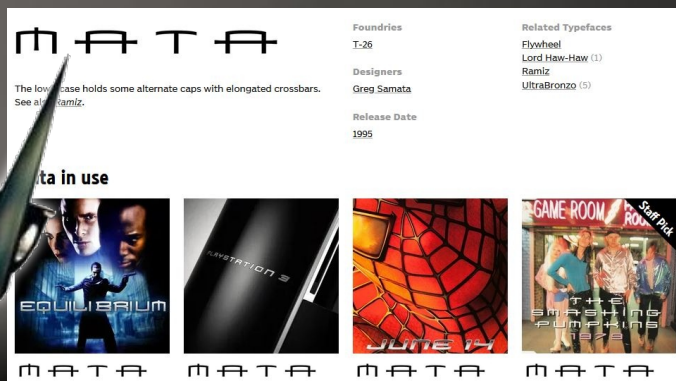


Slave Units are biological mechs grown for war and powered by what might as well be magic science with a substance called Dark Matter. Slave units however aren't fully grown when they are released from their tanks, and still take time to fully gestate. Think a baby becoming an adult, but this mostly has to do with the slave units having no experience or training yet. The guardians a group the main character belongs to somehow gets around this by permanently merging you to a stolen slave unit making the ultimate slave warrior for their cause bypassing the gestation period.



Contemporary game magazines were praising these graphics.

What I am sure of is that the devs were really into Neon Genesis Evangelion (Asuka best girl btw; Misato is a close second). Biopunk aside, we're dealing with a futuristic setting, mega-structures, firearms the size of an IKEA sign, constant radio chatter and magnetic hyper-elevators. It's funny how in many cyberpunk games, no matter how many elevators you take up, you never really see the surface or sunlight: Ruiner, Ghostrunner, The Ascent, Shadowrun, Cyberpunk 207-oh yeah, that's right! I remember people sitting on it



MATA is obviously the patricians choice in fonts.

for being set during daytime. I liked the Trigger anime, did you? Let me know in the comments bellow and don't forget to like, subscribe and hit that bell!

VISUALS



It's an ugly fucking thing. And I'm not the kind of person who wants his "24fps muh cinematic experience picturesque vistas" in every game, this game is legitimately ugly. This may be a purely subjective opinion, but I read through a couple of old mags and they were praising Slave Zero for its graphics. Now it may have had something to do with magazines being paid to do those promotions The first thing you're going to notice right off the bat is actually the Playstation 3/Spider-Man font ("Mata" or "WebSlinger" if you want to use a knockoff) and the comic-book inspired presentation. It's not a bad font on its own, and the game did come out before both PS-



I love seeing old 3D games do their gosh-darnest to try and render something resembling a circle.

Triple and Sam Reimi's 2002 masterpiece, but I'm willing to bet money every single one of you thought the same when you saw the font.

Draw distance is pathetic, often masked by cramped, claustrophobic environments. Ironical, considering you spent most of the game running across mega-city streets and rooftops. The textures are really low quality,

even for the time. Combine that with objects clipping all over the place and buildings deflating instead of crumbling and you've got yourself a glorious jankfest.

You can run it in Glide or Direct3D. Glide has no shading and is as stable as a nuclear family, while D3D looks nicer with shadows and crisper textures, but is marred by frequent crashes and an immovable gamma slider. Shit's dark, yo. Can't see shit, cap'n. Whatever your

sexual preference in graphical renderers may be, you'll notice after shooting a couple of buildings that something is amiss. Buildings don't crumble - they deflate.



Approximately 10% of all 3D game renderers suffer from erectile deflation. (lol)

I like the way your mech looks - huge armored forearms, organic muscle tissue seeping through the cracks, icky long fingers that keep twitching around. I wonder how he can fit those behind the trigger guard.

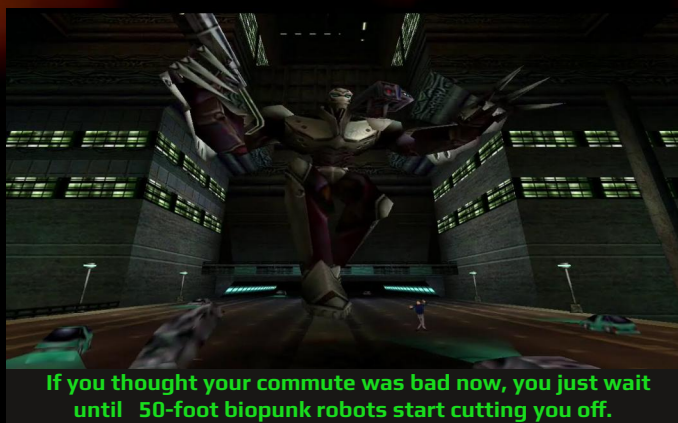
Pro-tip: any resolution higher than 640x480 misaligns your crosshairs, so you'll have to aim slightly lower and to the right of your actual target. This makes lock-ing on with advanced rocket launchers especially cumbersome.

GAMEPLAY

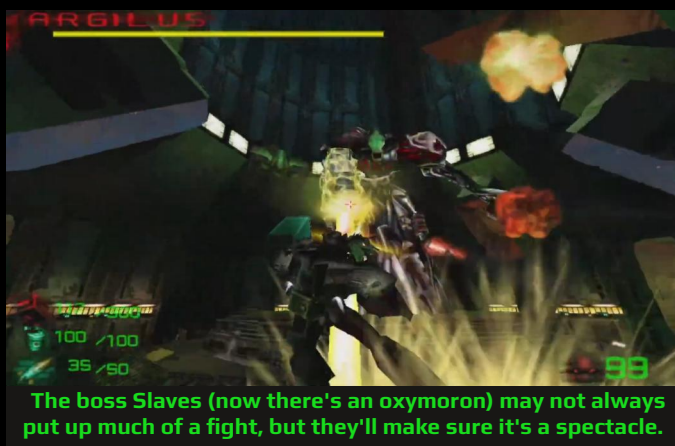
Gameplay is pretty fast paced and simple. Arcade-like, even. It's a mech game in name and aesthetics only, otherwise it controls like any other 3rd person shooter. Run, jump, schütt. 3 weapon limit, 3 ammo types, and your metal mitts for close combat. I've only managed to smack another bot in his gad damned misaligned chrome face a couple of times. And it was pretty satisfying, but any other time I got too close to an enemy I got my shit kicked in instead. Melee is activated automatically when you're in close proximity to a hostile, so it can be unreliable considering you don't

have full control over its triggers. It can be reliably used to knock over target buildings though. Just make sure to land the final hit with a ranged weapon, because those fuckers explode. And explosions hurt.

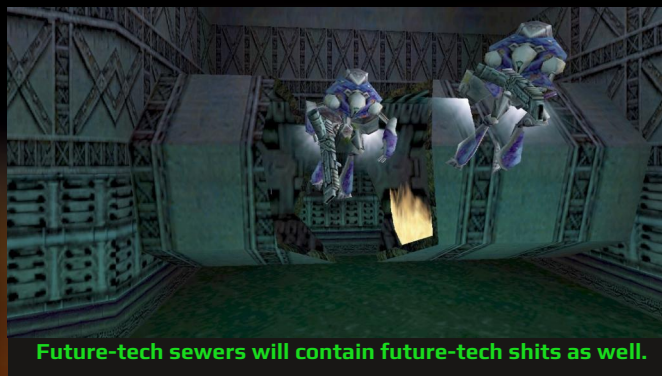
There's some extra interactivity in this game. Let Max Payne keep his interactive water faucets and vending machines, here you can pick up cars and civilians and splattering them across a nearby wall. Remember those deflating buildings? Well regardless of how you lower the local property value, some buildings contain ammo and health power-ups. They also spawn girders and giant metal pipes for you to pick up and throw at enemies. It's neither satisfying nor does it deal a whole lot of damage.



As you progress through the concrete mile high club, you'll run across better weapons. Some can be found early in secret areas or randomly dropped by a dead enemy. From time to time you might want to downgrade certain weapons because their upgrades are absolutely awful. THE top tier ballistic weapon is supposed to be a howitzer, which sounds good on paper, but in practice it's a ballistic equivalent of



erectile dysfunction: the range is pitiful and ammo economy is worse than Greece. You can still pick up older weapons with Ctrl, but all "upgrades" are picked up automatically. The penultimate upgrades to your energy and missile weapons are absolute garbage. A shock rifle sounds fun to use, but it literally chews through your entire ammo reserve within 3 seconds. And the shitty missiles travel in a whimpy arc and can't even lock onto anything. One of my favorite weapons in



the game was a rail gun. Not only is it efficient in terms of ammo use, it also knock enemies down. The same enemies that have been using that railgun against you for the past couple of levels. Sweet, sweet catharsis.

You can stomp the ground, but it's pretty useless and doesn't have a sound effect for some reason. I imagine it's because they didn't want you to go deaf from all the sounds overlaying each other if you stomped in the middle of a destructible neighborhood. It only seems to be useful for taking out a bunch of ground troops, but the wind-up animation is slow as hell. It's faster to just shoot them, they all go down in one hit. Besides, you stop encountering tanks and human enemies after only a couple of levels.

Pro-trivia from a true fan

- In the battle with the second boss Sanguinar you fight him in two separate levels. If you kill him before the door opens to the second area you die even if you kill the boss, it's a scripted death.
- In the fight with Revenant Prime atop the city if you kill the boss just as you jump off a building you will get the boss death scene with a splash screen coming up saying you died. Hitting any key will send you to the next level anyways, but now you are invincible because you have zero health. Only tested in the PC version.
- Slave Zero was poorly received on the Dreamcast because it had serious performance issues (namely framerate dropping the moment action turned into anything more complex than a threesome), this is still present in the PC version, but to a much lesser degree. You will only have crashing or slow down or freezing during the most intense fire fights.

There's a game called Slave Zero X in development right now, it's a 2D beat-em up set in the same megacity, most likely a prequel. You're no longer piloting a robot or hurling support beams at helicopters, instead you're down at the human level slashing up damage sponges and constantly getting scolded by your master. The 2D fx artist is a faggot though. It's got a demo, so check it out if you want.



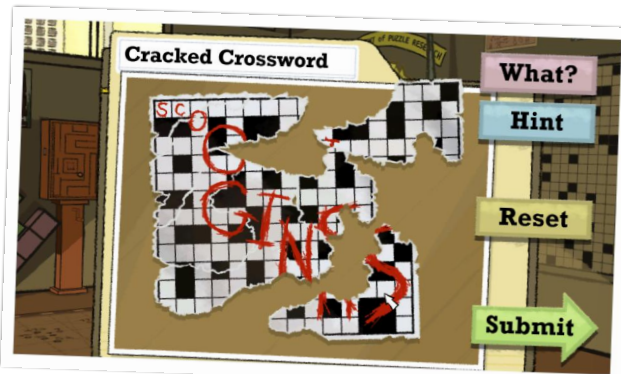
In Puzzle Agent, you play as Nelson Tethers, a Mr. FBI man tasked with investigating the source of a potential eraser shortage in the small town of Scoggins, Minnesota. You quickly discover that there's more to the town than what it seems, as you talk with the residents and attempt to investigate the case, solving puzzles along the way.

By the way, did I mention that this game is a Professor Layton clone? If you've played any of the games before, then you'll quickly notice some similarities between the two series. Hell, even the plot of Puzzle Agent is somewhat similar to the first Layton game, being about an investigation into a town with a mysterious

background, done by investigator(s) with a peculiar knack for puzzles. That being said, such similarities aren't a bad thing, of course.

People are always raving about "spiritual sequels" and whatnot, and besides, it doesn't matter too much as long as the gameplay is fun, right?

Oh yeah, the gameplay. Puzzle Agent's bread and butter are its puzzle segments, or "assignments". In each of these, you're presented with an interactive puzzle that you can attempt to solve. Once you've entered in your answer or completed the puzzle, you can send off your assignment into FBI headquarters where you'll see if you've got the right answer or not. If the puzzle becomes 2tricky4u, then you can spend a piece of used chewing gum to unlock a hint (This makes sense in the



game, trust me). Unlike hint coins in other games, finding used chewing gum is piss easy thanks to Puzzle Agent's radar-like interaction system, so don't worry too much about spending them if you really need to. Compared to the Layton games, the puzzles are generally pretty easy for those experienced with brain teasers, some puzzles being mind-numbingly easy. On the bright side, this means that there mostly aren't any puzzles that require insane esoteric thinking to solve. But there is the fish puzzle. For someone who breezed through most of the game, I could not figure it out for the life of me, and had to get someone else to help solve it. Sure, it was near the end of the game, but the puzzles before and after it were

pretty easy in comparison. This leads to what I consider to be the game's main flaw: A lack of balance and progression. Some puzzles are a breeze, other puzzles require some deep thinking to solve, but there is practically no rhyme or reason to the difficulty jumps between puzzles.



That being said, it's not really a deal breaker, and there's still a lot to like. Graham Annable's art style is fun, and it's coupled with a story that is fairly humorous while still

retaining a degree of suspense at points. Also Glori Davner a cute. Puzzle Agent is a pretty good Professor Layton clone, in spite of what's previously mentioned. If you're someone who's just interested having some fun solving some puzzles, then you can easily have a good time. Overall, the game's pretty good, and since pirating games from GOG is easy peasy, it's just a download away. What are you doing reading this crappy article, anyway?

Go. Pirate it now.

Editor's note: It turns out there's no rule 34 of the Davner girl. WTF is wrong with you, internet?

TEAM FORTRESS 2

A.K.A **DEFENSE STRONGHOLD THE SECOND**
A.K.A **GROUP FORT THE 2ST**
A.K.A **STOP PLAYING SO WE CAN SHUT DOWN THE SERVERS**

Team Fortress 2 is currently in a strange state of flux. It's been six years since the last major update, four years since the start of the bot invasion, and over a decade of Valve still having interest in updating it, but it chugs along. Actually it's more of a crawl, buried underneath three decades of spaghetti code, unoptimized maps, countless bugs, and game-breaking exploits... but it still lives.

Like the nihilist zeigeist that pervades this generation, TF2 is a microcosm of this phenomenon. A game that, at its peak, was considered one of the greatest games of all time, has now dropped down quite a few pegs in such a manner that even its own players are aware that nothing lasts forever. The lines in the sand have been drawn: if you're good at the game, then you can pubstomp with ease by employing the time-tested soldier strategy of "shoot ground win round" (also known as "aim at floor, get top score"), hold W + M1 as Phlog pyro to end the entire enemy team's free trial on life, or trick a player into revealing a single

pixel of their back hitbox for an instant kill as the spy.

But what makes TF2 so special? Why did countless games, endless "TF2 Killers" shutter almost immediately after launch, failing to bring the giant down? Remember Lawbreakers? Battleborn? Overwatch? They're all gone baby, yet TF2 still ~~stands~~ limps with pride.

It comes down to a few simple things executed very, very well:

SETTING

The first thing that immediately pops out about TF2 is its artstyle. The 1960s low-budget spy movie aesthetic permeates the world, from the colorful desert landscapes to the secret lairs filled with giant Strangelove-screens and whirring data reels, TF2 has a visual style all its own. How every map has a smooth transition from "wasteland shithole" to "ultra secret missile silo". The characters that, barring the Workshop-slop hats, each have their own



A CURATED SELECTION OF USER-MADE TEXTURES. Yes, you can beat another player with a JPEG.



unique profile, design, weapons, gameplay strategy, and personality that makes them instantly recognizable to anyone on them internets. Compare this with games like Overwatch that prefer quantity over quality: it has dozens of characters to pick between to appeal to everyone with a specific playset. TF2 accomplishes this with only nine classes. You change your playstyle to fit the game, not vice-versa.

GAMEPLAY

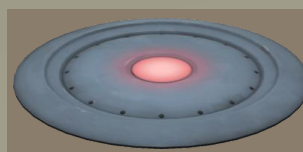
TF2's gameplay has been time-tested. From the first time Quake was fired up by John "Pizza Man" Carmack, to a group of autists turning it into TFC, to Valve purchasing said autists and having them slave away for almost a decade, the core gameplay is still very much an arena shooter. Flying across the map with rocket and sticky jumps, mowing down entire teams with Sasha, and the eternal "rare high moment" where half the enemy team is deleted with a single crocket. From the 45 year old that's been playing since the beta to juan.perez.br2009 that just installed the game ten minutes ago, against all odds this game is **still** attracting new players. Why is that?

SIMPLICITY

Buried underneath all the unusual particle effects, the earrape minigun chaos, uber medics doing the congo on the cart, and the terrifying horn of the vuvuzela signalling impending doom, the core gameplay remains unchanged. Nothing ever feels truly unclear to the player. Every map has an intro that breaks the goal down so clearly that even a blind tamarin monkey on quaaludes could understand it, the

only exception being when Valve removed

cp_snowplow for being "too confusing for new players" despite it just being a variant of Control Points. The End of the Line update is only surpassed by Meet your Match in irredeemability.



TF2 PLAYERS
WILL DEFEND
THIS.

FANBASE

Are parts of the fanbase autistic beyond belief? Yes, absolutely, but find me one game that has a community larger than twelve people and doesn't have a dedicated cabal of autists. Looking past how most of the big name TF2 players don't even care for the game (VNN's astronomical ego that got him blacklisted by Valve, Uncle Dane's failed crusade to remove random crits because he hates fun, and the compfags crying for years for official competitive, then abandoning the game for Overwatch after it was added in a

complete shitshow of an update). But ignoring the hardcore spergs, you have a community that creates endless content ranging from artwork to SFM and GMod animations to pootis and bonk remixes to AI-voiced mercs arguing over rappers and pizza toppings. This is not just a group of pump-and-dump jewtubers making flavor-of-the-week content. This is a sustained flow of content going on for 16 years at this point. Very few games can cultivate that kind of love and commitment.

Is TF2 a mess? Absolutely. Is it frustrating to deal with, especially today? Of course. But is it still **fun**?

Да.



The Goon

2000 Honda Civic SI

DEAD Andrew Prostate : how did everyone just die at once

DEAD Gimmecheese : phlog moment

The Goon

2000 Honda Civic SI

Freakazoid

The Jackal : fuckin pyro players have the gay

zxfreddysonic

2000 Honda Civic SI

Gorefeild : how was that skill lol

zxfreddysonic

is DOMINATING Vipe Mane

The

Acasiorrockstar

lord mobility scooter

is DOMINATING lord mobility scooter

JoeBuscus

ImKruz

reginald_the_craeb

DEAD IAmTheKnight : No skill ass phlong

SethSteel28

TheTuPiece

ImKruz

avyl

DEAD Ted Kaczynksi : stupid phlog nigger hang yourself

Flying Tiger Of Icewind Dale

IAmTheKnight

TheTuPiece

Acasiorrockstar

is DOMINATING TheTuPiece

defended Final

sairou

Do I look like your girlfriend?



*The definitive horror classic
now for a modern audience*



*Over the Shoulder
Action*



*Autistic
Girls*



*Surprise
Mechanics*

REIMAGINING 2

KONAMI

WINTER 2023

UNREAL
ENGINE

BLOOMING THIS SPRING

DUDE *f*LOWERS LMAO



Preorder now and get a **FREE*
LEGO™ Pyramid Head™ figurine!**

* for orders incl. season pass & subscription to Konami Online™ for \$99.99





Serious Sam TSE: To be or not to be Serious?

Serious Sam is a confused and overly complicated mess without an identity of its own. It copies every mechanic from the first First Peoples Shooter - Quake - but I guess if you are going to copy anyone, it should be the original FPS. So the question arises - why didn't the developers take any notes from Gone Home for the story? The *ludonarrative* is all over the place, at times I had to ask myself if the writers even took their job seriously:

“ (...) at times I had to ask myself if the writers even took their job seriously.”

First, it's about a giant alien ship being crashed into by a trolley of some generic huge-headed, high-pitch-voiced aliens (which may even be alienist, considering all of them were white, not a single alien of color in sight) and you survive the crash by leaping directly down onto an alien planet.

Then, in a moment of *tabula rasa*, the game re-invents itself as it turns into a Subnautica-esque survival sim, with your character falling into water and a HUD element for your oxygen appears immediately (again, slightly icky alienist, since devs assumed ALL carbon based life forms require oxygen to survive). Interestingly, no hunger meter in sight, which puzzled me for the longest time, but more about that on page 2 of this review.

NETRIKSA v2.01 - persönliche Version für: phlux

Beenden

taktische Daten

strategische Daten

Waffen (2)

Gegner

Statistik

Palenque - Sierra de Chiapas



Palenque - Sierra de Chiapas

Unser Raumschiff ist von irgendetwas getroffen worden und musste landen. Keine Ahnung, ob Mental die Finger im Spiel hat. Meine Sensoren haben kurz vor dem Aufprall einen Schrei aufgefangen.

Zum Glück habe ich viele Daten gesammelt, als wir an Bord waren. Ich war an den Hauptcomputer angeschlossen und habe enorme Datenmengen kopiert. Viele der Daten muss ich erst noch auswerten, aber unabhängig davon deuten meine aktuellen Erkenntnisse darauf hin, dass wir unsere Mission noch erfolgreich beenden können. Die Sirianer haben nämlich eine Ersatzvorrichtung geschaffen, um ferne Galaxien bereisen zu können, selbst wenn der ersten "SSS Centerprice" etwas zustößt. Und das ist ja jetzt passiert!

Lots of flavour text means there's lots to read between traumatic fights and frankly, I prefer reading to games



The Construction tool doesn't work underwater.

It turns out the narrative changes a second time when you discover there is more land than water on this alien planet and the scanner in your hand was a fully semi-automatic rifle this whole time. The deafening explosions *exploiting* from its nozzle were the unmistakable sounds of an AK47. It triggered my PTSD, and I got flashbacks of my grandfather telling me stories of his desk job in Vietnam. I could not even for about 20 minutes, but thankfully our workplace

has been diversified enough for me to calm down. Thank Goddess above Jamalikhad raped me out of my stupor and I could resume my harrowing duties of a video-playing journalist. After picking up some tacky vest I discovered a classic red English phone booth standing in the middle of this alien planet. You can imagine my joy of discovering this obvious nod to Doctor Who and it gave me an idea for a couple more fanfics, so at least something good

came out of this game. A very confusing phone call took place with what seems to be the only voice actor talking to himself.

After another 10 minutes of exploring this island I ventured across the body of water and was immediately given two new items: another same AK47 and a chainsaw. After finding the inventory screen curiously bound to the mouse scroll wheel instead of the traditional "I" or "Tab" keys, I selected the chainsaw tool and began harvesting materials. To my surprise, harvesting went very smoothly, every tree and bush were



Get your scarves ready, it's Dr. Whoin' time!

(...) it gave me an idea for a couple more fanfics, so at least something good came out of this game.

“To my surprise, harvesting went very smoothly, every tree and bush were collectible.”

collectible (No Man's Sky 2, anybody?), you could even pick up grass by applying the chainsaw to the ground. My immersion was broken, however, when I could not salvage the tiny pier for materials.

My mining experience was interrupted when a badly modeled ape-like creature attacked me. Seriously, the graphics are so bad it looked like it had just one eye.

The narrative changes yet again when a headless soldier runs up and attacks me. The social commentary of mindless, testosterone driven, *veni, vidi, vici* white men raping and attacking aliens instead of starting a conversation is spot-on in the current year



climate. I do have to detract points for not having the ability to converse with the headless white male and try to educate them on the struggles my race had endured WITH MY SHIP EXPLODING RIGHT ABOVE OUR HEADS AS I SPOKE! Having being forced to fight fire with fire, I reluctantly fired back and defeated the first boss of the game. In the typical video-interactive fashion, more of the same enemies came up, this time a bit weaker. Eventually, I came up against the final boss of the game - the bull. As much as I would like to recollect my past night filled with sexual adventures back home, I had to be a trooper, say *ne re quæsiveris extra* to myself and soldier on with the game. The bullfight is a beautifully scripted boss sequence where you are doomed to fail. Obviously, the developers were setting up an anti-gun and anti-animal cruelty message with this fight, telling people that even with all our advanced weaponry and technology, the nature will always prevail (unless we're talking about genders, duh :3).

“Obviously, the developers were setting up an anti-gun and anti-animal cruelty message.”

Overall, Serious Sam: The Second Encounter is a broken, confused game with good intentions, a diamond in the rough. The tales it has to tell are beautiful, unlike its graphical presentation. The non-30-frame-per-second framerate made the game too fast and nauseating to play. *Tempis fugit*, anyone? The luscious jungle environments sprawling throughout the whole game are stunning from a far, but ugly when you look closer at them, again, commenting on the human society as a whole.

8.9/10, it's a bürek out of burger



EXBAWKS HUEG

giving your big girl a makeover

You know what time it is, bro? It's time to FEEL the POWER of the X BAWKS!!!!!!1

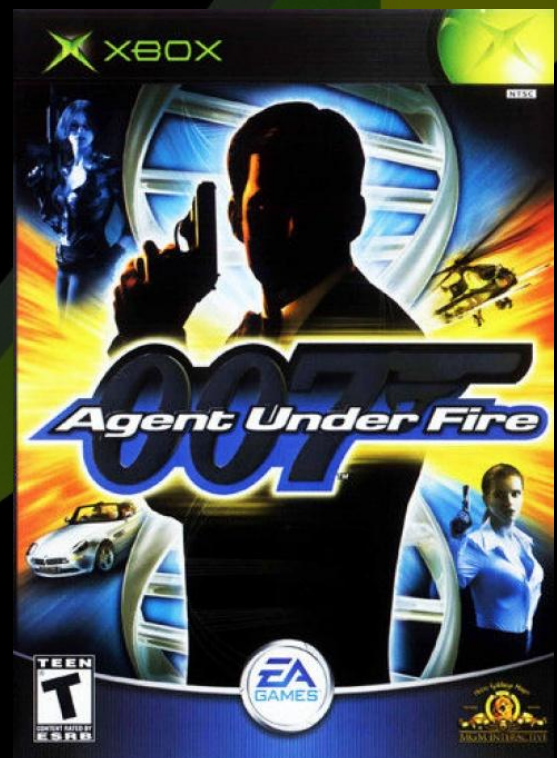
Okay, not really. The Xbox is arguably the first successful console to have a real "scene" building mods outside of sleazy chinks selling game copiers to poor kids. Being essentially a PC running Windows 2000 made it catnip for power users looking for better ways to pirate and Linux hackers who were already looking at ways to put a computer on your teevee. The scene collapsed after geohot cracked the PS3 and everyone migrated there, but the modern age of emulation (and scalping scumbags targeting everything older) is leading a

reincarnated scene to pick up the pieces, starting with one-step softmodding and working up to a full Xbox Live replacement. There isn't a much better time than now to pick up one and get hacking.

Getting Started

You can still get a decent condition Xbox in the US for a reasonable price on eGay. Do it, they'll only get more expensive. You're also going to need:

- SATA to IDE adapter (unless you have a working IDE drive lying around) with a master/slave jumper
- Molex power splitter - for the hard drive swap
- USB to Xbox controller adapter - cheap on Amazon
- Flash drive 4GB or smaller - the vanilla Xbox firmware won't read anything bigger
- One of the save exploit Xbox games - Early printings of MechAssault, Agent Under Fire and Splinter Cell will do the job.
- Rocky's Xbox Softmodding Tool - includes all the shit needed to install a hacked dashboard and some basic brick protection too
- A big fat hard drive - I guess you can use an SSD but it'll rattle around without a bracket. Remember you can only use 2TB of it.
- FATX FUSE driver for PC - you'll need this to get the hack onto the USB drive in a format the Xbox can read
- Soldering tools - we'll get to why later



best modchip ever

Advice on getting controllers: NEVER buy an Xbox controller without pictures. Before wireless was really a thing MS used these breakaway dongles so that kids wouldn't pull their consoles off shelves by the controller cables anymore. The breakaway connector is round, the Xbox connector is oblong. Extension cables can be scrounged if you find you're missing one or more dongles, but really you should be looking at the seller's listing and making sure the dongle is physically present before you buy.

Identifying Your Hardware

Not all consoles are created equal. Microsoft kept fucking with the design over time to kill mods, limit hardware flaws and reduce costs. Your console revision affects your ability to install hardmods and to a lesser extent video quality; only the first and final revisions listed below are really worse than the others. You can figure out which model you have by either the manufacture date, the kernel revision in the Xbox menu (buried in the System Info screen) or by inspecting the motherboard.

- 1.0: Made Jan 2001 to Oct 2002. Conexant NTSC video encoder, which allegedly means better quality. Kernel version 3944 through 4627. Controller ports are on a daughterboard. Has two HSFs, making it the loudest of an already loud console.
- 1.5: The paranoid delusion of modchip makers. If you're trying to install a modchip and pin 2 of the LPC bus appears to be disconnected no matter what you try, send it to Ripley's Believe it or Not.
- 1.6: Made Mar 2004 to Aug 2005. The shit one. Most importantly, you can't run them without a clock capacitor, but the halfassed "Xcalibur" video encoder glitches out in 480p and the empty RAM pads from earlier revisions (which could be populated by modders with balls of steel) have been nixed. Kernel version 5838. This is the only console with an external tell: if you see an Xbox at a yard sale and there's an exposed metal strip visible along the bottom of the AV port, put it back.

Removing the Clock Cap

All Xbox consoles have a time bomb hiding on the motherboard, just waiting to rape your face when you least expect it. Instead of doing something sane like having a separate clock chip and battery, the Xbox keeps time with a nasty supercapacitor tied to the northbridge to save ten cents. Because this fucker is always charging and about 20 years old, it has a fun tendency to jizz electrolyte or explod Bionic Commando style and kill the components around it. Unless you like playing with fire (or have a 1.6, you poor bastard) you should desolder it double-quick. Kill it before it kills you.



Ouch! That's a lotta damage!™

You can find it behind the port for Controller 1, underneath the CD drive. Teardown your console and make sure it hasn't corroded anything. If it has (and you'll know) your console is fucked. While you might be able to fix dead traces with some bodge wire and a hobby knife, if you're reading this you're better off just selling it as "for parts" and leaving it for some other bozo to deal with. If it hasn't exploded yet, desolder the piece of shit ASAP. If the surrounding PCB seems sticky that means it leaked electrolyte, rub down the area with high-percentage isopropyl alcohol and pray there isn't any invisible damage. If you're not dealing with a 1.6 you can leave the space where the clock cap was bare and the console will just yell at you to set the time on power-on, which we'll be fixing with a new dash anyway. If you feel like replacing it with a less explod-y capacitor and are willing to deal with money orders, www.console5.com sells a drop-in replacement.

Let's Crack This Fucker Open

Format your USB device to FATX and follow the readme that came with Rocky's for your game of choice. If all goes well you'll be left in the UnleashX dashboard, after which you should ALWAYS run NKPatcher Settings and go to EEPROM > Advanced Features > Hard Drive > Null Key. This changes the password the Xbox BIOS uses to freeze the hard drive against prying eyes from a random string to all ones. This means if your hard drive dies you can always replace it by flashing a barebones image, because you'll know what password the Xbox expects. Back up your EEPROM while you're in there.



Loading More Homebrew

Your dashboard will have an FTP server enabled by default, with the IP address in plain view. This is how you load stuff onto the console. Unless something is horribly wrong the credentials to get in will be xbox/xbox. Connecting to the server, you should see folders named C, D, E, and F. C contains OS stuff and usually should not be touched. D is the contents of the DVD drive. E is the saves drive and place for core homebrew that shouldn't be misplaced. F is a scratch drive for any space left after the first 8GB created when softmodding; after you replace the hard drive with a bigger one this is where you'll put game rips. Homebrew should be unzipped into E/Applications or F/Applications. Recommended homebrews to install first are:

- Chimp - for hard drive upgrades (see below)
- Mimesis - downloader for mods and title updates that would otherwise be lost to time
- DVD2Xbox - Rips games on DVD to your Xbox hard drive, because you never know
- DVDX - DVD player without the cheesy hardware dongle, because you never know



Hard Drive Upgrade

Here it is, the big chungus. First thing is to open your Xbox. unplug the molex connector for the DVD drive and put the splitter in between. Plug in your new drive to the newly split molex connector with the master/slave jumper set to slave mode and power on the Xbox. Launch Chimp from your dashboard, unplug the DVD drive from the IDE cable when prompted and plug it into your new hard drive. Once you're done with this, scan for IDE devices, then clone from master (your old drive) to slave.

If you have a real IDE drive or an SATA drive with less than 1TB of space, choose to have F occupy all available space. If you have an SATA drive with more space, choose to split the available space between F and G. Rest the new drive on top of the DVD drive and DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING. After Chimp says it's complete, say Yes

when asked to lock the new drive or you won't be able to swap it. After you get back to the main menu, turn off and unplug the Xbox. You should now be safe to swap the old hard drive with your new drive, move the jumper back from slave to master and reboot.

Dealing With ISOs (Fuck You, Redump)

You got your console set up with a comically oversized storage drive and you're ready to stuff its moist folds with all the games you wanted to play as a kid but couldn't because your parents kept buying you Reader Rabbit. You boot up LimeWire and start grabbing Redump-verified ISO rips, because Redump is The Shit and you don't want to deal with whatever retardation the scene was doing in the early 2000s. You FTP them over to F/Games, park your ass in a comfy chair to play and pick the ISO from your dashboard. Your Xbox crashes. What the fuck?



This happens because Xbox DVDs are mastered in a very particular way to fuck with pirates. The first "partition" is the only one anything expecting a real DVD will see, and has a standard video loop that acts like the old "take me out of your CD player or I'll tell your mom about your Google search history" warning from the Playstation days. The actual game data is in a hidden second partition; any imaging tool not designed for the ecksbawks will either ignore it or shit itself.

You get around this by unspooling the game into a folder and FTPing that instead. You do this with a tool called "extract-xiso"; get it from shithub. 95% of the time this will work perfectly.

If the game complains about your being a naughty, naughty pirate or refuses to boot, you have one of the 5% of games that either disagrees with how FATX works or goes out of its way to cockblock you when run from a hard drive. A clunky but simple way to make these games work is to burn a DVD with only the game data on it (extract-xiso can build a suitable ISO) and rip it with DVD2Xbox, which comes bundled with patches to work around issues like these. You can also neatly evade all this horseshit by downloading scene rips, which will have any patching done for you.



What Happens Next

Okay, you've got your mods, you've got your games, life is good. You could easily stop here and everything will be fine.

Maybe fuck around with emulators since there were some pretty nifty dashboards built around that, or install DVDX and XMBC4Xbox to build a retro entertainment center like some kind of hipster. If you want to go Even Further Beyond, you can explore the wilderness of TSOP flashing or

be among the first to play Xbox Live in more than a decade.

BIOS Flashing

The Xbox stores its OS kernel and BIOS in a "TSOP" reprogrammable flash chip on the mainboard. With some soldering, you can reflash this chip with a hacked BIOS that can do whatever. It's like a modchip but free, or like custom firmware on a PS3 or 3DS.

While you obviously don't need to do this when softmodding lets you pirate games just fine, a good BIOS has a number of perks:

- Better brickproofing - a missing or dead DVD drive, an unlocked hard drive, or a missing clock cap on 1.6 consoles won't kill your Xbox dead.
- UDMA support - gets you faster load times with a quality IDE adapter.
- Support for truly massive hard drives - if you're the kind of autistic who wants the ENTIRE library available to not play at your fingertips.
- Macrovision deleted - because we can.
- Support for 128MB RAM - for those with balls of steel, a hot air rework station, and a burning need to play Virtua Cop.

BIOS selection and flashing is a clusterfuck which we don't have time to fully go into here. The current top of the heap is CerBIOS, but other choices can be just as fine if you don't need large hard drive support and just want brickproofing or debug support. Good luck and godspeed.

Insignia

Meanwhile, your "friendly" neighborhood clout chasers have been hard at work on Insignia, a replacement for the original Xbox Live servers. Like the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection emulators, but significantly more impressive because nobody was smart enough to be wiresharking their gaylo sessions back in 2007. Insignia is currently invite-only, so follow the normal precautions at and don't name your account xXNiggerKiller88Xx, no matter how funny it would be. Setup is a little more complicated than for other consoles due to Xbox Live being designed from the ground up to take your money; the invite email will tell you how to register your console ID and convince your Xbox that you have a real account with a credit card and shit. The only real gotcha is that Insignia is DNS-based (so any anti-semitic DNS protection you have on your router will fuck with it) and you should be using a retail BIOS as hacked BIOSes gimp Xbox Live as a defense mechanism.

Hardware Mods

What? You're still not done? You know you should actually play a video game on this thing at some point, right? There are still a couple more things you can do to really pimp out your console.

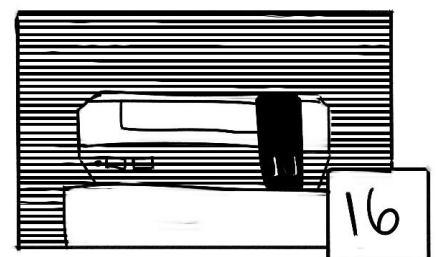
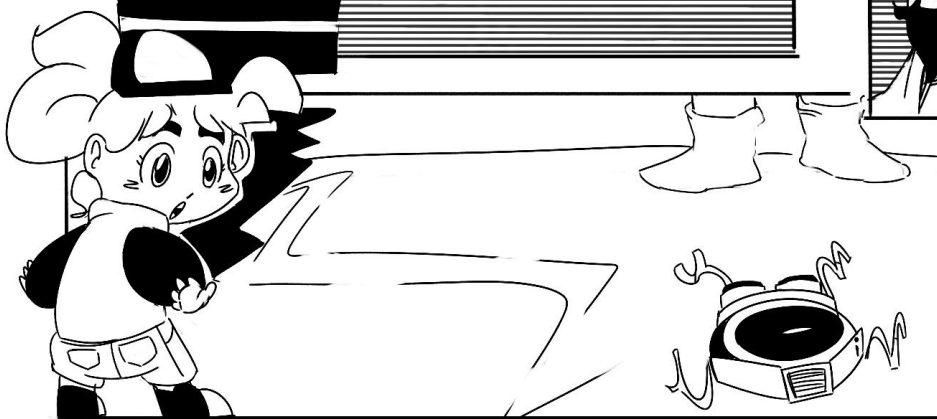
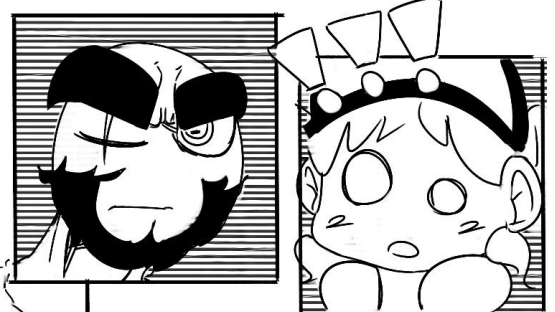
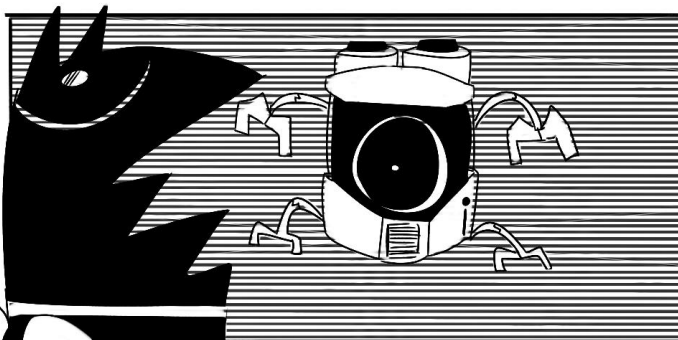
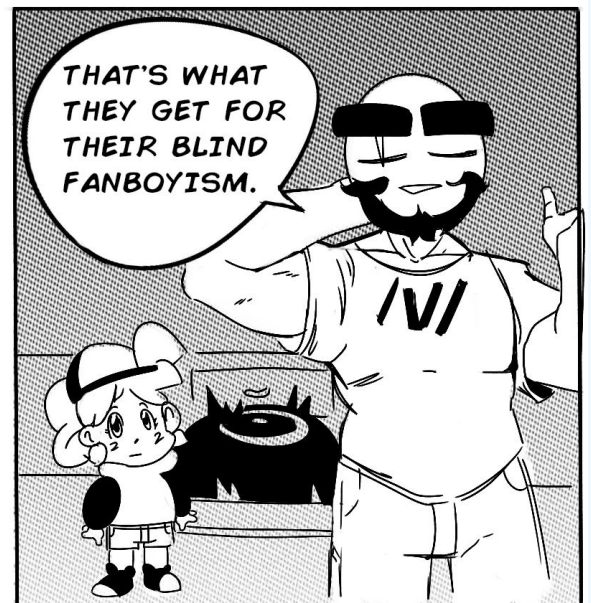
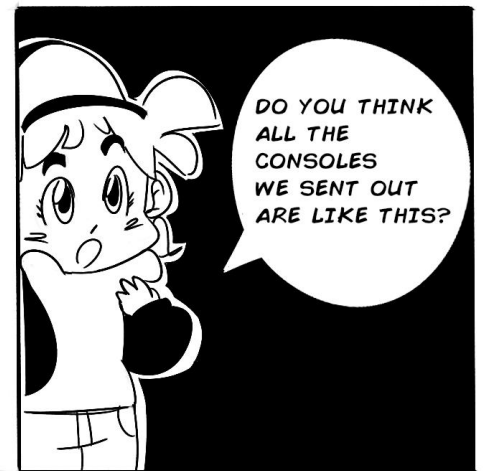
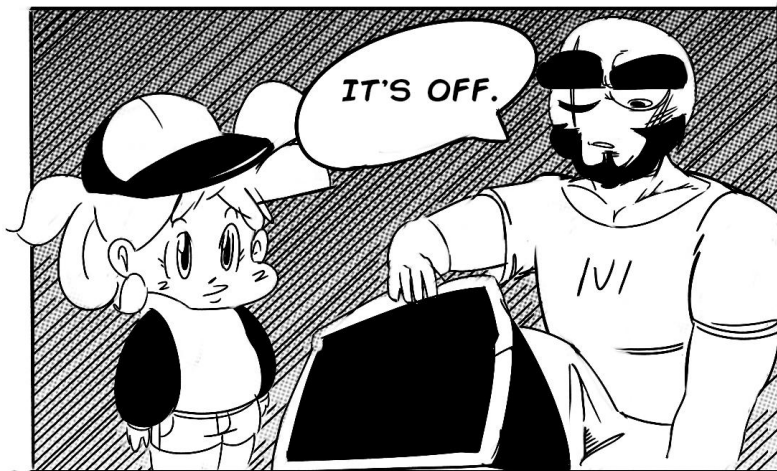
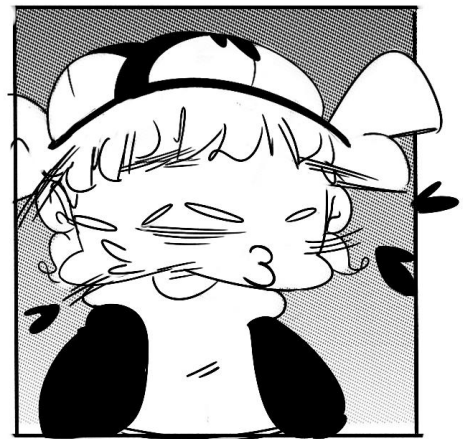
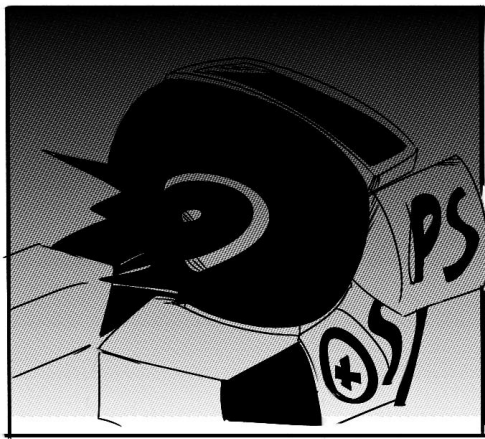
- HDMI** - If you didn't get a chance to buy a CRT after reading our buyer's guide a couple issues back, Chimeric Systems (<https://chimericsystems.com>) sells a rather snappy upscaler that plugs directly into the multi-AV port... when they have it in stock. Behar Bros (<https://www.beharbros.com>) sells the Xedusa, which is basically the same thing but in stock. If dongles murdered your dog, look up the XboxHD+ for an internal solution; this obviously requires fucking around with a soldering iron and a dremel, but has the benefit of being 100% digital.

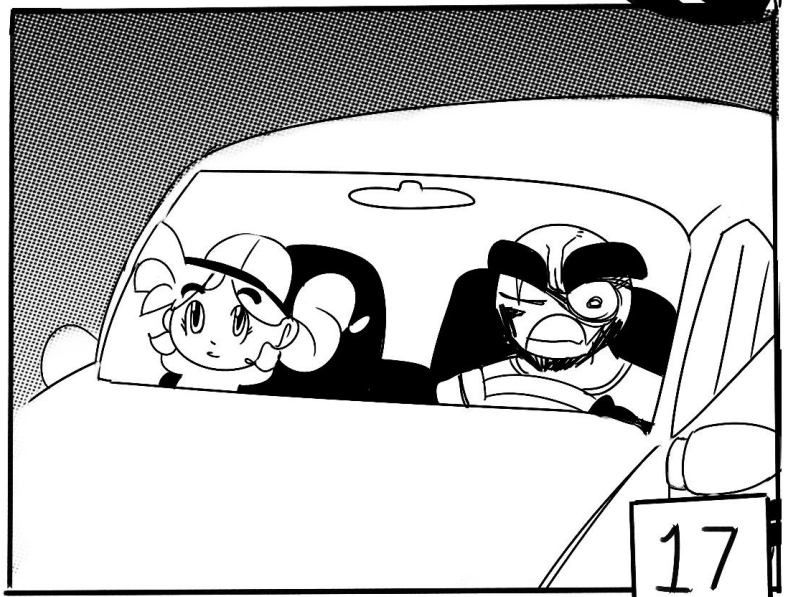
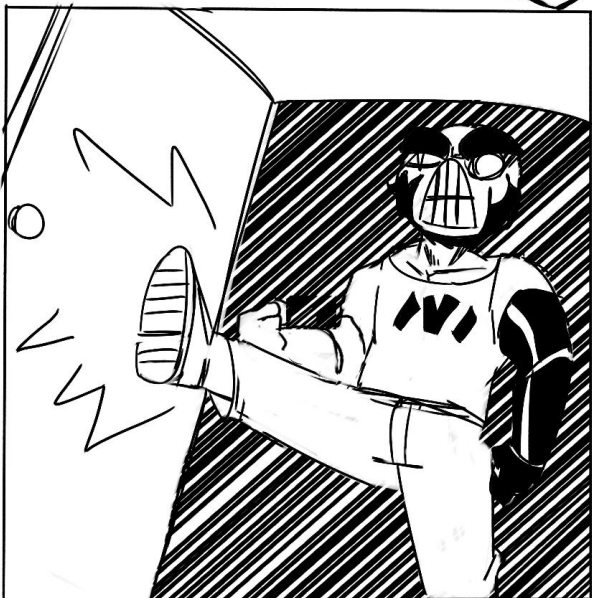
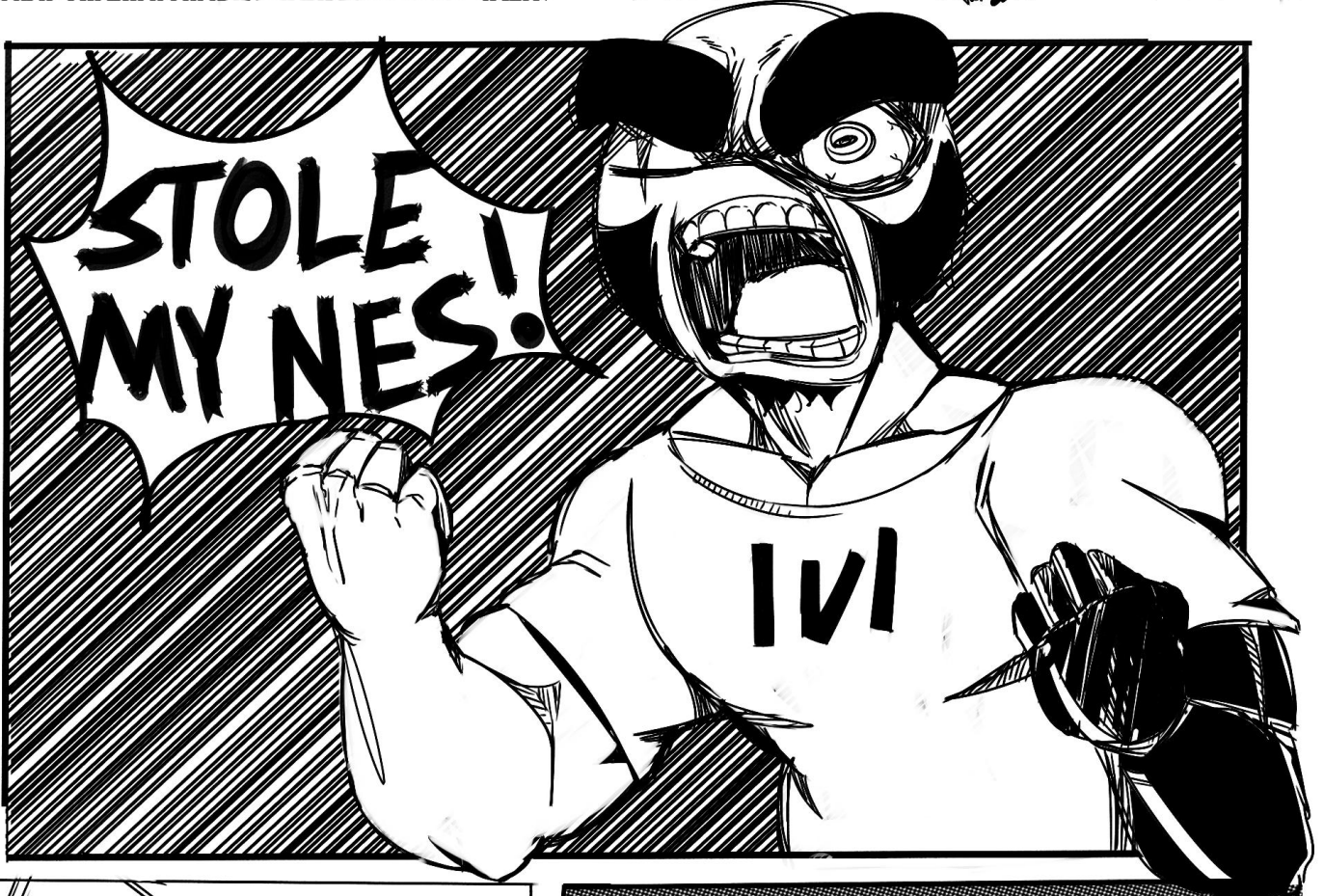
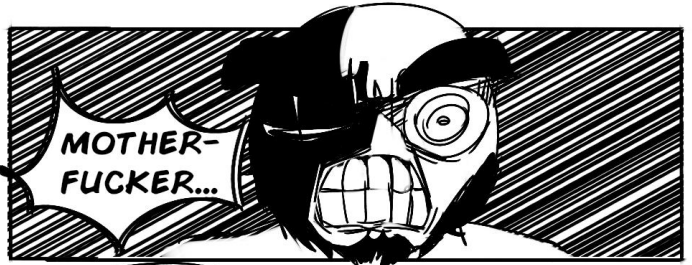
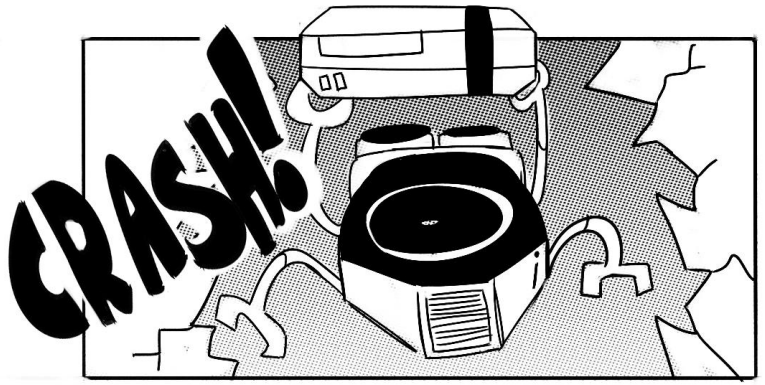
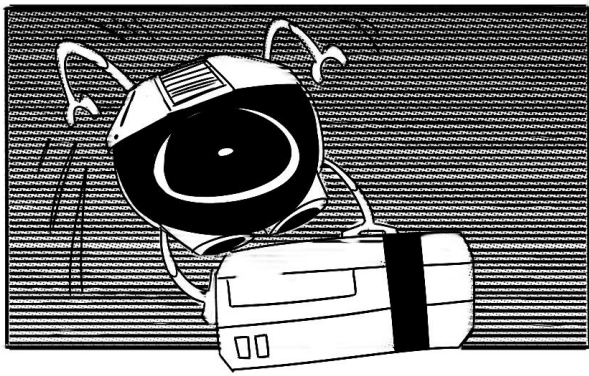
- Controllers** - The OGX360 is an open sores, Arduino-based doohickey that maps XInput compatible controllers to look like original Xbox controllers. Why would you use this when you probably have a working controller already? One reason: You can play Steel Batallion with this motherfucker. That's right, scrounge up a 360 controller with that stupid fucking Yahoo Messenger keyboard and you too can play one of the fuckinest mecha games ever made without paying a scalper an idiotic sum of money. Sure, it's clunky, but until someone hacks this thing to work with (almost as expensive as the Steel Batallion panel) flight sim equipment it's as close as you're going to get.

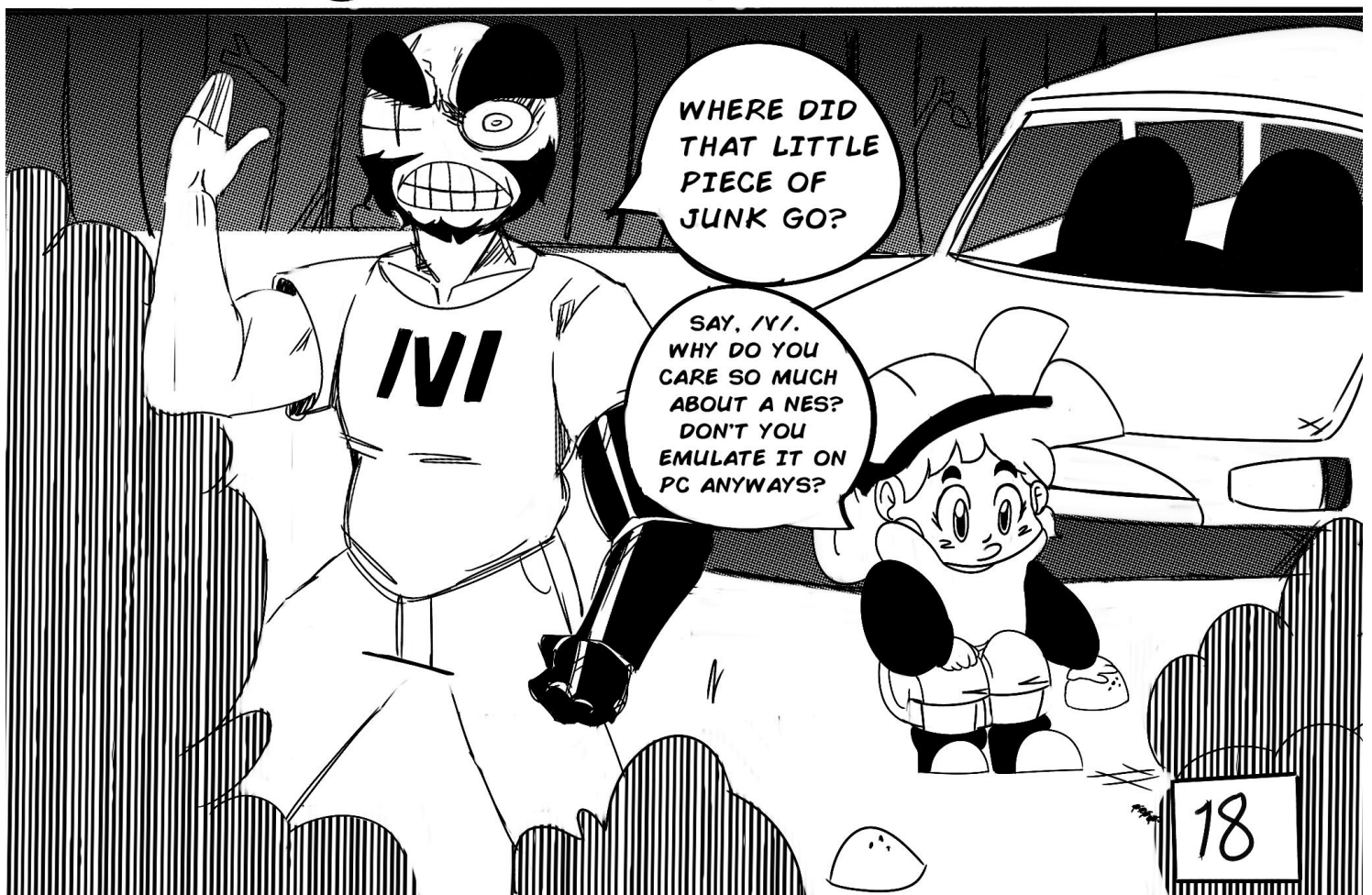
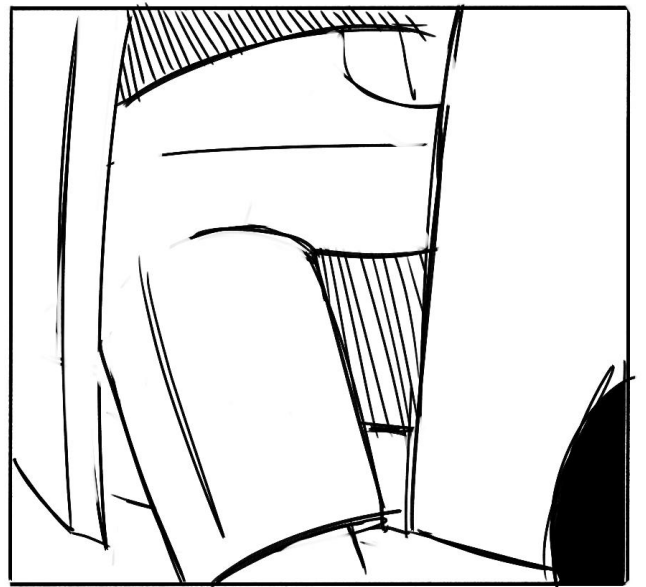
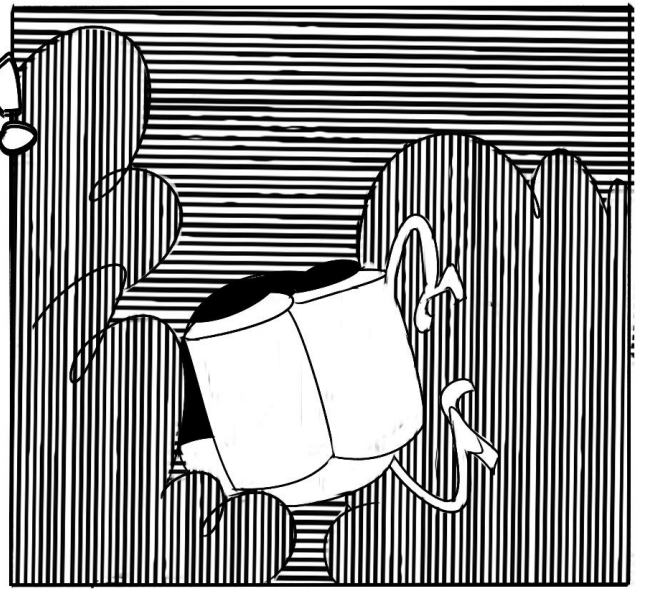
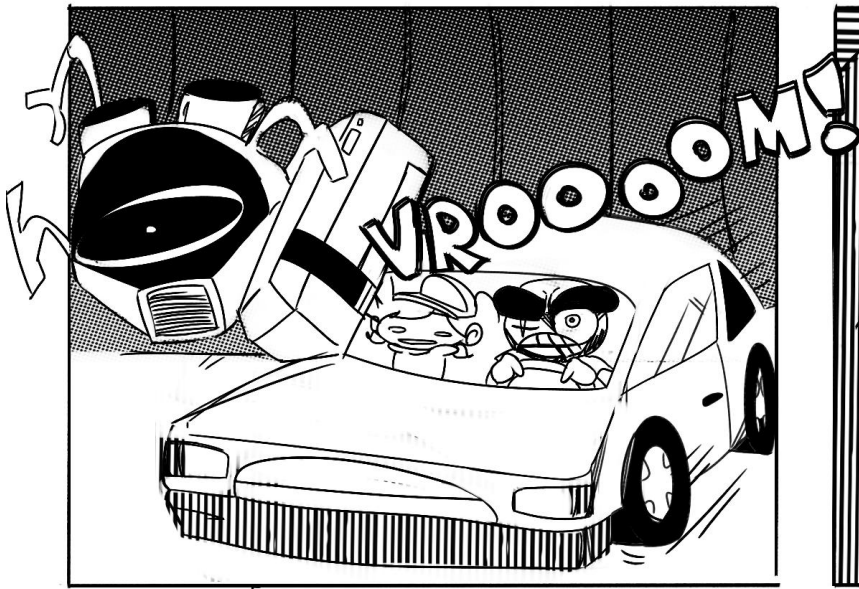
- Fan Swap** - The cooling fan on the Xbox is an oddball size, old, and noisy. You can cut back on the noise by playing in a cool room and using dashboard settings to keep it from going full blast, but a better solution is to get a 3D printed bracket and slap a modern PC fan in there. Stone Age Gamer (<https://stoneagegamer.com>) sells them in 70mm "Nexus" and 60mm "Noctua" flavors; other fans from other brands should work if they're the same diameter, as long as they have mounting holes in roughly the same places. They also sell 2.5-inch drive cages for the Xbox's weird-ass HDD tray, if you didn't follow my advice earlier about letting an SSD rattle around in there.



That's it. Now go and play. And please don't start by playing fucking Halo. Xbox-chan is a good girl and deserves better than that.









IT'S NOT JUST
ANY NES!!

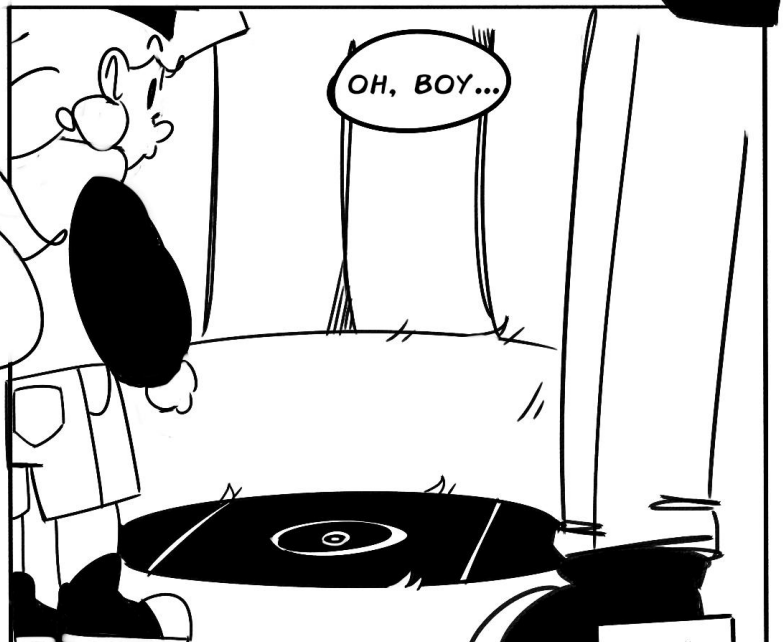


IT'S THE FIRST
CONSOLE I'VE EVER HAD!
MY FIRST INTRODUCTION
TO VIDYA!

circa 1985



HEY, /V/.
CHECK THIS
OUT



OH, BOY...



N E X T F E S T

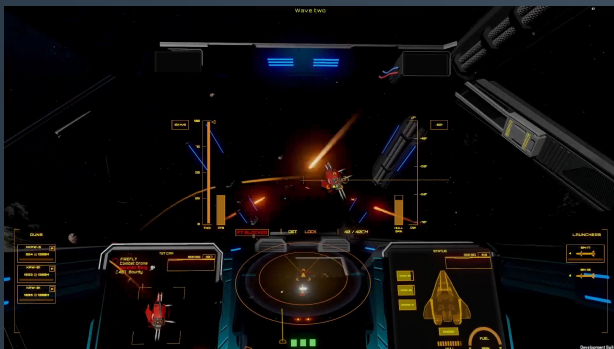
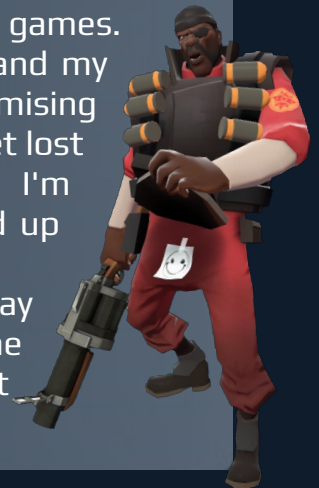
FEB.06 - FEB.13

A CELEBRATION OF UPCOMING GAMES

My eyes... (pt. 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUBc3DyMOXs>
My brain... (pt. 2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yk2f--DX00>
My disk space... (pt. 3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI8oYk7cqEY>

You know what that moaning means: It's time for another Steam Next Fest! Once more I subject myself to the grueling task of playing video games. Unthinkable, I know. They hog up my hard drive, they hold me and my specs tight in their arms and whisper sweet nothing in my ear. Promising the most dazzling and captivating experiences a single man can get lost in. Best graphics, best gameplay, best soundmixing. It's like I'm walking through the red light district and picking the least used up whore and Gabe is their big ol' pimp.

Playing through 26 demos took me around 14 hours, so I have to say I'm impressed by how how long these shits are. I remember the time when you would play a demo for literally 5 minutes and it would nag you to mail order it over phone. Good times... I think?



Relatively simple dog-fighting game, but there's also a whole fleet management portion I failed to try out because I ran out of time (read: I was rushing). Controls take a while to get used to, maybe it's actually very simple for people who have played space sims before. Looks and sounds pretty dang nice, made me want to finally install "Elite Dangerous", but I know I won't. Made in unity, but you can hardly tell.

Space Reign

Developer:
Propulsive Games

Twin-stick shooter heavily inspired by "Geometry Wars" and "Survivors". Upgrade trees remind me of "Rogue Genesia", but slightly better, still a bit too many passives to level up consistently. Has a good variety of weapons and special abilities. Overall it's kinda middle of the road, not great, not terrible, but the over-saturated colors and bloom make my eyes hurt. It's one of those games without too much depth, but with an addiction factor worked into it.



Shape Shifter: Formations

Developer:
Castec Studios



A broken flight sim with a hovering flight mode. I've barely played like 3 missions total in the "Ace Combat" series, but the controls were never this shit, even in early PSX entries. You can't fly with M+KB, you can't fly with a controller, menus are broken beyond belief: can't even select a fighter jet because the menus keep fucking up and opening up color options instead. It's made in unity, so you expect some jank, but not on this level. This demo is clearly unfinished, so I can't give it a fair shake.

Nova Squadron

Developer:
Claire Gale

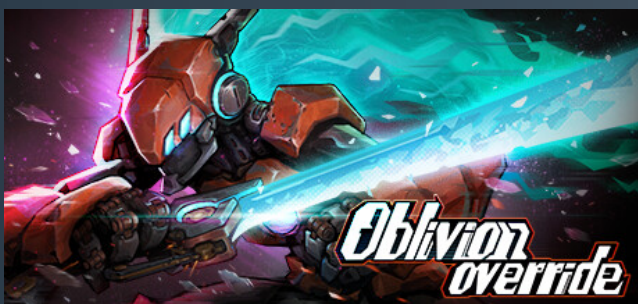
An "8-bit" lovechild of "Shatterhand" and "Powerblade", both NES classics in their own regard. At least in my opinion, those are pretty damn good games. Prison City is really, really good, but I'm very biased because I love both of those games (I'll be honest, I haven't played Power Blade 1 yet, only 2, I hope I manage to beat it until this issue comes out). No rixels or mixels, no flicker and a slightly richer palette than real NES, but it feels like the best of both worlds. It's probably not as hardware accurate as "River City Ransom", but still takes it easy with extra VFX. I would have liked even less particles flying around after every hit, but I'll take it, it's miles away from other indieshit like "Iconoclasts" or something. The two bosses available in the demo had a tendency to be damage sponges and one of them had a cheese mechanic (make it hit itself with a rockets and then beat the shit out of it while it's stunned). I found out on a second playthrough that it's a lot easier when you're not streaming. Who would have thought?



Prison City

Developer:
Retroware,
Programancer

GOOD
SHIT,
NIGGA



A "Dead Cells" rip off, this one is centered around robits. It plays pretty much the same as "Dead Cells", but a little floatier and with cheaper animations (omg, I'm gonna tween!). Some dialogue is grating, maybe it'll get better after everyone's done introducing their quirky selves. At least I hope so. Pretty much all the mechanics are copied and pasted from "Dead Cells", except for the level-up system, I didn't understand it completely myself, but it's not about collecting Might Scrolls anymore, it's instead experience-based. Mite b gud, We'll see.

Oblivion Override

Developer:
Humble Mill

Another "Dead Cells" knock-off that looks like Metroid Dread (in the worst ways) and plays like shit. Danger hair protagonist, awful voice acting and audio mixing, story and dialogue suffer because of it - have fun trying to make out what the fuck everyone is saying while explosions are going off in the foreground. Unsatisfying, slow, clunky combat is only exacerbated by constant hitching and lagging due to extremely poor optimization and bad code in general. Promises to have 3 playable characters, but I couldn't stomach even the one we got in the demo.



Trinity Fusion

Developer:
Angry Mob Games



"MISTROGUE: Mist and the Living Dungeons" is a very clunky dungeon crawler that aims to look like those dungeons in "Recettear" with a dungeon manipulation mechanic. I don't know why, but I kept thinking it was made by the CCP. Maybe it was the bad translation or stock sound effects. The only interesting part about it is the dynamic dungeon which shifts and changes more the deeper you go inside. You can find consumables that create pathways or platforms, but it's glitchy as all hell. I kept walking on air and it's not unusual to see pre-made level geometry collide with itself. Surprisingly nice skill icon artwork, it's especially noticeable because of how shit everything else is. Total garbage, stay away.

MistRogue

Developer:
Polyscape Inc.

3rd person rougelite shooter. Looks like shit, runs like shit, plays like shit, sounds the same. Dude 80's bro, check out my flat untextured surfaces, ain't that retro? Aiming is fucked, it's like I'm playing Slave Zero all over again with the misaligned aim reticles. Feels like a unity asset flip/swap, 6 and a half gigabytes for 2 levels.



ArcRunner

Developer:
Trickjump Games



"Megaman X" fan game that's been making waves around the influencer circuit. Grapplan hook-shot lets you grapple defeated enemies and throw their asses into other enemies. That same hook-shot lets you speedrun the game. Cool "8-bit"-ish graphics, but it falls into the common trope of indie games where they add WAY too much shaking and VFX for each action, so it becomes difficult to tell what the fuck is going on in

the middle of gameplay. Cool muzak, no complaints there. Feels harder than "Prison City", but play really well. Unlikely to be a hidden gem, I have a feeling this one is going to get a lot of coverage by normalfags.

GOOD
SHIT,
NIGGA



Gravity Circuit

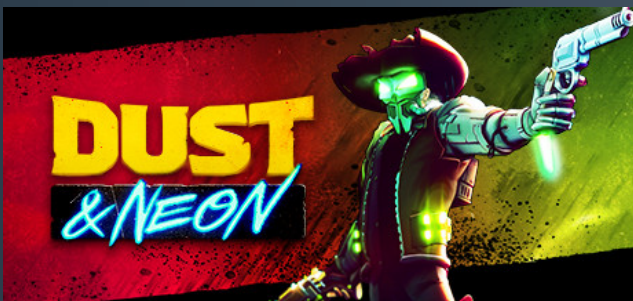
Developer:
Domesticated Ant

A Beat 'Em Up Set in the "Slave Zero" universe, I assume it's a prequel to the original. So far only the big bad is the same character, everything else is generic Shonen anime bullshit. It suffers from glitchy controls, some inputs would get stuck or keep repeating themselves for a full second after you've stopped pressing buttons, can't tell what triggers it. While the backgrounds are gorgeous and look true to the original, the 2D vs 3D clash becomes apparent when sprites clip through the environments. Enemies are absolute damage sponges, it takes forever to down a single enemy, and it's one of those beat 'em ups where you can't hit a man while he's down. I haven't found any combo moves outside of button mashing, no grappling or either. There's parrying and power moves, but it honestly felt shallow. On an unrelated note, the 2D artist is an absolute faggot.



Slave Zero X

Developer:
Poppy Works



A better "West of Dead" twin-stick shooter with a western aesthetic. (they took it off Steam, lmao). It's filled with robots and, true to its name, slightly annoying neon color palette. It's a rougelike, so make sure you're not surrounded by enemies when picking up a new gun because the game doesn't pause for your pleasure. Feels like a passion project for at least one of the developers, there's some soul here, I can feel it

when I look at the little details like fictional company logos and characters. Cool on-screen reload animations, I don't think there's anything more to them other than style points.

Dust & Neon

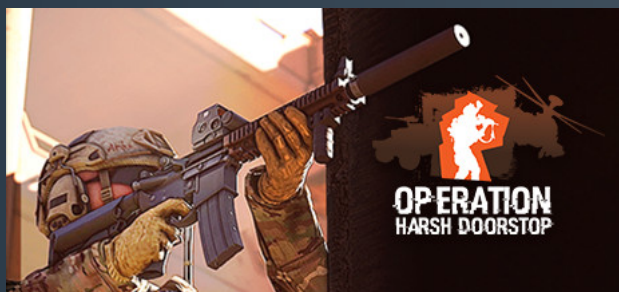
Developer:
David Marquardt
Studios

"Last Stand" meets "Vampire Survivors". Bad and irregular framerates, even with VSync turned on nearly ruin the whole experience. I imagine even relatively new toasters won't be able to run this game at all. Basic bitch gameplay, bordering on looking like a mobile game, but what can you expect? These are the same devs who made it big during Xbox360 / mobile era with "Yet Another Zombie Defense". Experience diamonds, permanent upgrades, level ups, chests, it's all there. If you're easily addicted to these types of games like I am, it's pretty fun (read: addicting).



Yet Another Zombie Survivors

Developer:
Awesome Game
Studio



Free to play early access "Battlefield" fan game, devs list "Project Reality", "Squad" and "Red Orchestra" as main inspirations. Spans multiple time periods and war theaters (WWI, WWII: Hitler's Revenge, Fortunate Sons War, Cold War and the subsequent Oil Wars). Promises to be extremely moddable (or at least have Steam Workshop support), so I hope they manage to flesh it out without being overtaken by faggotry. The

movement is what gets to me, unfortunately. Like sure, it's realistic, but it's no fun to get stuck on trench geometry while rushing to your next objective or having to wait 3 seconds to vault over a knee-high wall. Guns feel realistic enough to shoot, there's bullet drop-off and when you die - you fucking die. Black screen and a prompt to respawn. 32 gigabytes for 5 levels in a single-player demo and it takes a while to load. So I hope you got a source of cheap SSDs to install this game onto.

Operation Harsh Doorstop

Developer:
Drakeling Labs

Interesting turn-based mmorpg buried under a bunch of shit, so you know it'll likely be a disaster. Season pass front and center, AWFUL voice acting, redundant mystical terminology for things like "weakness to magic" or "Gold" etc. "Kingdom Hearts" may have had a lot of influence on the story here, which is a shame. It looks and plays nice, like a fairy tale or Torchlight, but a smidge gayer. Pretty

good combat system for retards like me, you have a limited amount of Action Points which can be used to move or attack, different attacks have different costs. Think X-com, but scaled WAY down. I'm sure there is a more apt comparison, but I don't play a lot of tactical games like this.



Inkbound

Developer:
Shiny Shoe



A mix between "Her Name Was Fire" and "Brotato" Boring sounds, visuals and standard gameplay formula for the genre. Probably made by a bongistanian considering the rainbow screen transition, it's just a guess, but I think it's callback to 80 personal computers like Commodore 64 loading screen.

Cyclo Chambers

Developer:
Hobofeller

Sicko mode "vampire survivor-like" set in space. Really cool and neato, but cryptic and weird, will definitely go on the Weird Vidya graph No2 if we ever finish it. I mean it has "Yume Nikki 2" walking segments between deaths/runs, that ought to put it up there alone. Gameplay is bog standard, but the style is what might elevate it above the rest. Each power-up has it's own code description, dunno if it's real code, but it was interesting to try and decipher what each item did from text alone. I mean seriously, can you tell at first glance what this item does according to it's description?



```
HARDWARE ENHANCEMENT CODE_  
with(obj_enemy)//#COLLISION -> OBJ_WEP  
if other.object_index != obj_wep:radio  
{  
    if inst_number(obj_wep_radio) < version  
    {  
        radio = inst_create(x,y,obj_wep_radio);  
        radio.dmg = (other.dmg/2);  
        radio.knockback = 0;  
        radio.hitonlyonce = true;  
    }  
}
```

Picayune Dreams

Developer:
Stepford, andyland,
milkypossum



"Dead Cells" meets "Smash Bros.". You teleport from room to room through an overworld "pick your path" map (I keep wanting to compare this type of progression with "Curse of the Dead Gods"). Obviously chink-inspired, but I was surprised to find out it's not that bad, actually, tbh fam, no cap, fr fr balla, game aint fire but she frillin like that aaaaaah shit be bussin at mid no rizza, mid beat W and L fellow kids

Spiritfall

Developer:
Gentle Giant

Timed "XCOM" + "Battletech". Very interesting "Combat Prediction" mechanic, which allows you to see what your enemy is planning to do in the next 5 seconds so you can plan accordingly for the next 10 seconds of your engagement. No idea how they're planning on making it difficult, unless most mission start you off at a disadvantage or enemy reinforcements flank you mid-mission. Plenty of customization, but I wasn't allowed to scrap together a robot of my own out of salvaged parts. Weirdly enough you can't aim at specific bodyparts to tactically cripple your opponents, but you can bully tanks, so that's fun. Doesn't let you replay the entire battle and I take that personally. Optimization and graphical options need work, camera is floaty and some VFX like Chromatic Aberration cannot be turned off. While the combat is nice and impactful, mechs' animations are hollow and weightless, you don't get the impression you're commanding a squad of building-toppling giants even though that's exactly what they are. Cringy voice-acting direction (women on the home front are the true victims of war, but also the true frontline heroes), the "Having a cake and eating it too" aspect of it rubs me the wrong way.

- For nearly 2 hours of my uncut demo gameplay watch this:

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

or any other longplay that's out there.



Phantom Brigade

Developer:
Brace Yourself
Games



filled with rotten flesh and make you think you're eating a monster, OH WHAT COULD IT MEAN?!!!!
Fuck I hate it.

Pretentious hipster bullshit rendered in that PSX Horror Demo Disc aesthetic. Everything else about the story, presentation and even gameplay is tryhard. You fly around with floaty controls as a fly and try to eat dead things in a bog. So you fly inside a flower, teleport to a kitchen and eat crayons, corn flakes and drawings. Oh god all these child-related things are made out of meat and the crayons are

The Hungry Fly

Developer:
Erupting Avocado

Unfunny, ziggurat knockoff made by Redditors with Kickstarter backing. Literal dad jokes all over the place. Controls like ass, you hold left click and drag it forwards or sideways to swings your sword. Hold right click and use movement keys to block. That makes zero fucking sense to me and just kept getting me killed. Flat surfaces make it difficult to navigate in the dark. Shit style, no substance. And if there is, I'm not going finding out.



Dad by the Sword

Developer:
Rocketcat Games



Speaking of "X-Com", here's a sequel to its spiritual successor. Long ass loading times for a 2D game, seriously, why does it take so long to load a jpeg? It doesn't even look all that good, in the end of the day I honestly prefer the classic pixelart of the original. It sure is "X-Com" in here, even the difficulty selector directly mentions the original "X-Com". Supposedly known as vaporware considering how long it's been in development (original came out in 2014 and I've

been told that they began development on Xenonauts 2 straight away afterwards). Most elements were taken from the original and some from the Firaxis remakes. Pretty slow both in terms of performance and gameplay. What I'm trying to say is it hitches all the time.

Xenonauts 2

Developer:
Goldhawk
Interactive

Top down "SUPERHOT" aesthetic, but the controls are what kills any interest I may have had in playing it. Not only do you slide around like God's smoothest curling stone, your aim affects the camera as well. It's like your mouse has acceleration turned on all the way up, good luck aiming at anything on the move. There is a lock-on feature, but you need to be pixel perfect while aiming at a target, which defeats the purpose of auto-aim in the first place. The isometric camera also makes it difficult to keep track of enemies behind level geometry as well.

- nah, dog, nah



Cardiac Powder

Developer:
Edalbung



Twinstick barrel thrower with very mixed gameplay. You begin a stage by riding through a half-pipe filled with QTEs on your bike and then switch to a top-down perspective and look for the boss. Maybe it was just the demo, but I haven't seen any regular enemy encounters during top-down sections. Doesn't control or play all that well, everything feels like it's made out of rubber, nothing stands still and things just jump around, phasing through

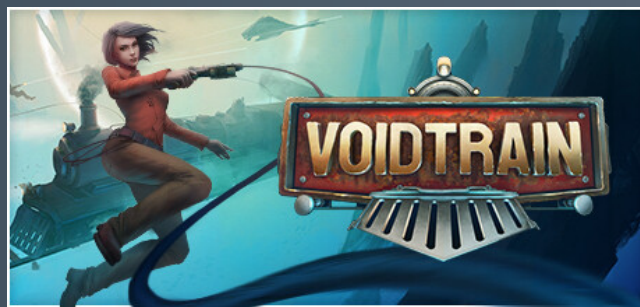
environment and colliding with each other. The same rubbery nature is seen in the rubber-banding AI, who will either keep running into surrounding rocks or bee-line to your ass and explode. Tries to look 80's so much it hurts.

Gripper

Developer:
Heart Core

On-rail Subnautica in the void. Very slow start, very slow movement, animations are very slow and "detailed", reminds me of Metro 2033 games in the worst ways. Whimsical to a fault, the narrator could be good, but he can't fucking wait to be funny and quirky. It's like the game wants to be Stanley's Parable, but can't stop sperging out.

- 15 GB to render the void



Voidtrain

Developer:
HypeTrain Digital



Janky "Clustertruck" meets "Mad Max", you can especially feel the jank when you kick or phase inside trucks. Pretty dang fun. Stupid, janky fun. Levels go on for a little too long, but I guess they used later level in the demo to show off how crazy the action gets. Weird checkpoint system, but I'm not against it: you don't respawn exactly where you died, instead you "roll up" in your bike a couple of trucks behind your death spot. Multiple weapons and enemy types with bosses that act more like puzzles. I like it.

GOOD
SHIT,
NIGGA



Meatgrinder

Developer:
Vampire Squid

2D platformer that reminds me, at least thematically, of Prince of Persia. Looks nice, but everything moves a little slow and feels longwinded (if that makes any sense to you). Physics are just a little bit wonky, you keep phasing through environment and enemies during hectic fights. Linear level design oriented around puzzles. I've played so many games that control in a similar manner with randomly generated levels at this point, it felt nice to navigate something that was handcrafted instead. It's promising and if it keeps escalating it will surely end up a good game. But I have the nagging suspicion that it will remain on the same note, same intensity, same difficulty for the entirety of the game.



Nocturnal

Developer:
Sunnyside Games

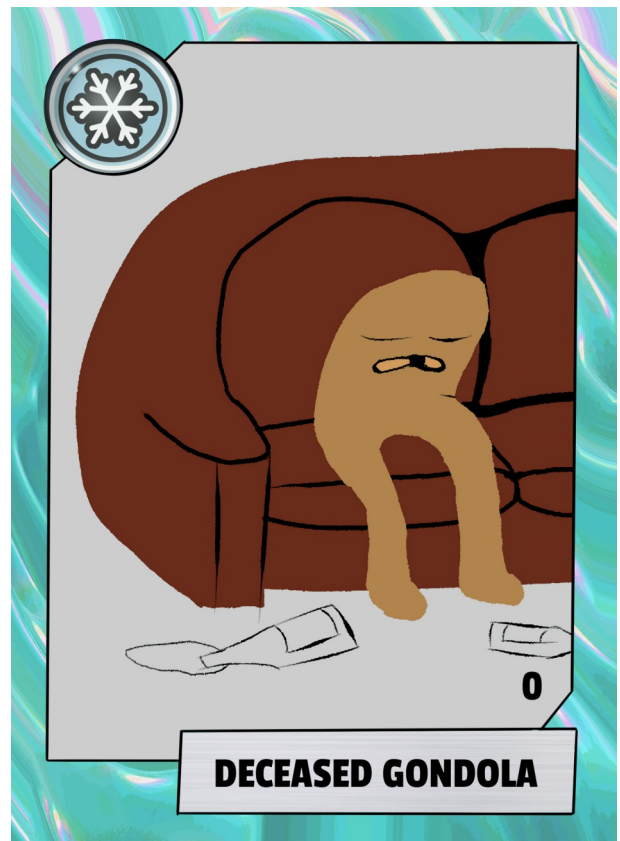
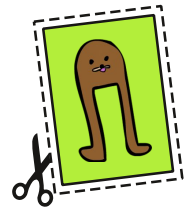
An honorable mention goes out to "Broken Arrow" for being the most bloated of all the demos I've covered, clocking in at 37 GBs and not even launching. May as well, the USA vs. Russia RTS looked like a unity asset flip anyway. Yes, these grapes are delicious, thank you for asking.

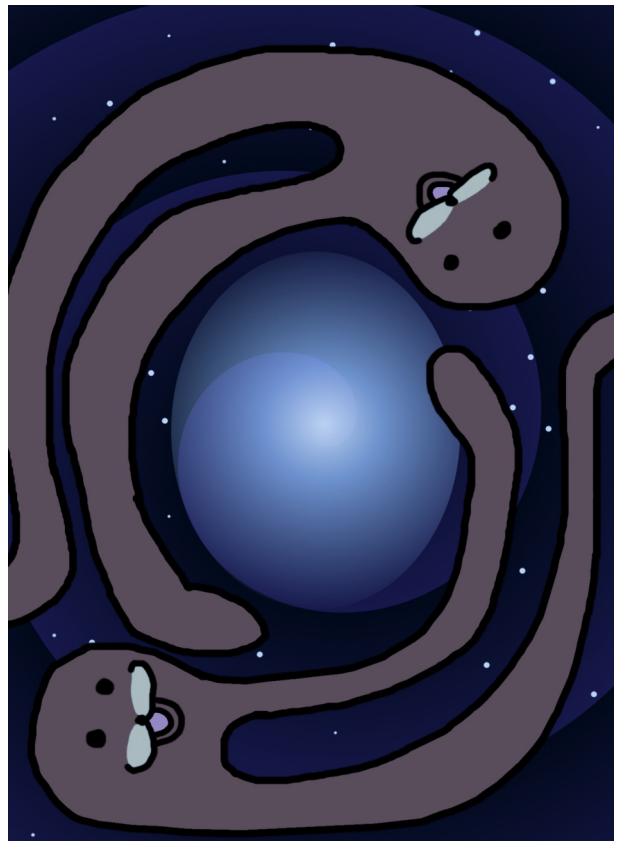
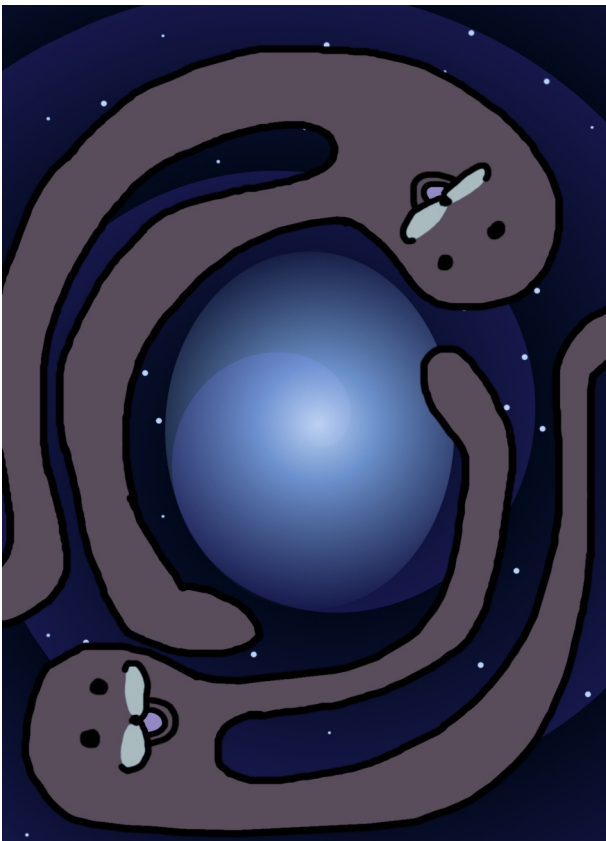
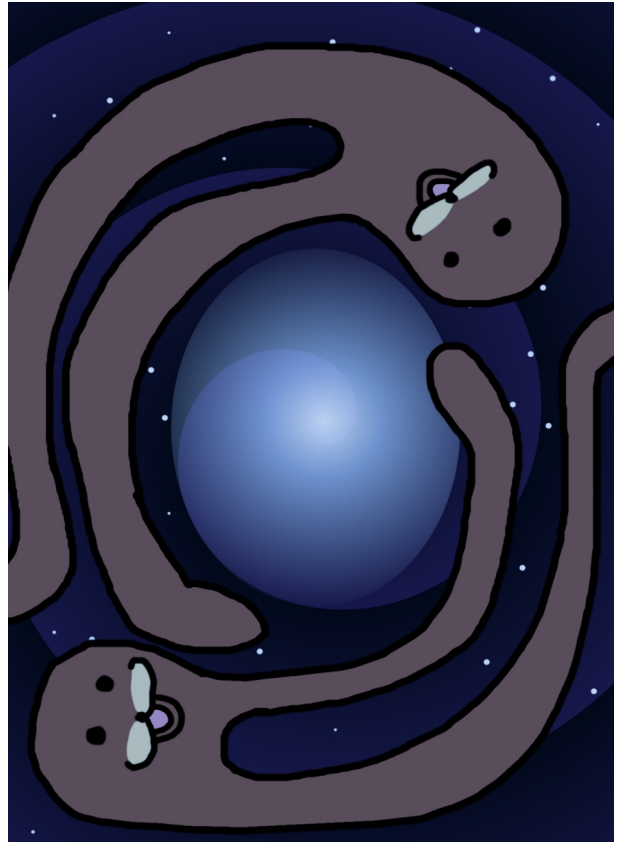
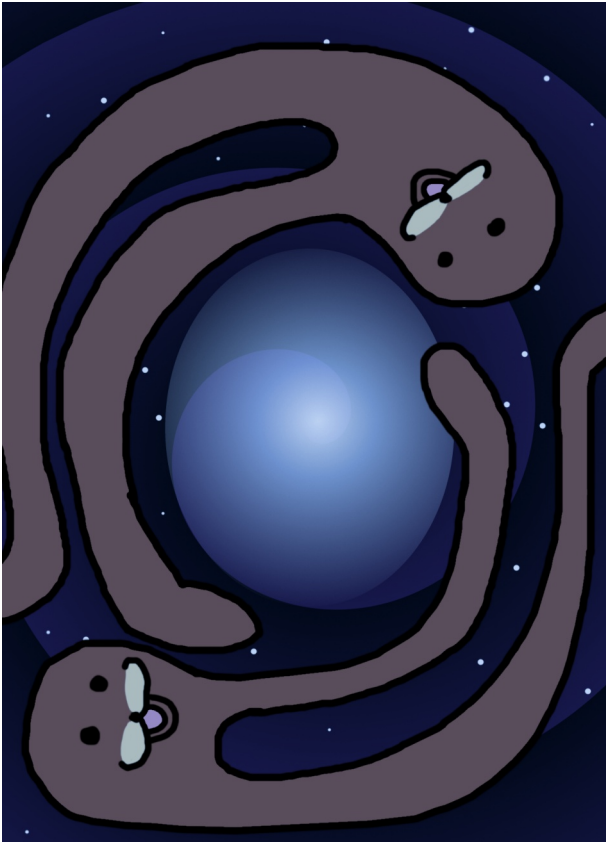


Broken Arrow

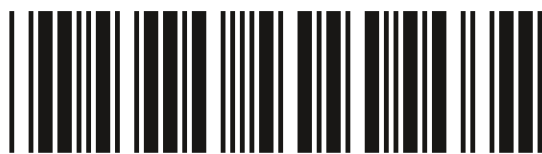
Developer:
Steel Balalaika

Gondola Cards!









ZZZ