

Shadow Man

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Sujet de l'article : Shadow Man

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N64 Gamer managed to get the chance to have a quick chat with Guy Miller. He's the Creative Director on the game and as you'll see, he's quite a dark and mysterious man himself....

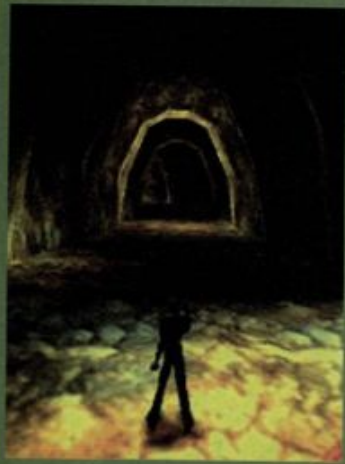
1. *I think the thing that intrigues most people about Shadow Man is its dark and moody setting and storyline. Too often these days Nintendo games seem to revolve around saving a princess in a fairy tale land - what gamers are after is something gritty and atmospheric. Can you give us a brief rundown of Shadow Man's storyline and the sort of ways you've created the game's rich atmosphere?*

[GUY MILLER] Shadow Man is a game about killing, about how, sometimes, it takes a killer to catch a killer. Let's make no bones about this - there's a lot of killing going on in this game - you get to travel to new and interesting places, meet new and interesting zombified people, and kill them. The rundown of the storyline is simple: You play as Mike Le Roi in this world (Liveside) and as Shadow Man in the next world (Deadside); as Shadow Man you get to kill, explore, find stuff, play with that stuff, kill some more, gawk at naked voodoo chicks, jump about, avoid traps, kill, gawk at yet more naked voodoo chicks, go crazy, kill again, meet five serial killers, talk with them a little, and then kill them. The game is really, really artistic, y'know?

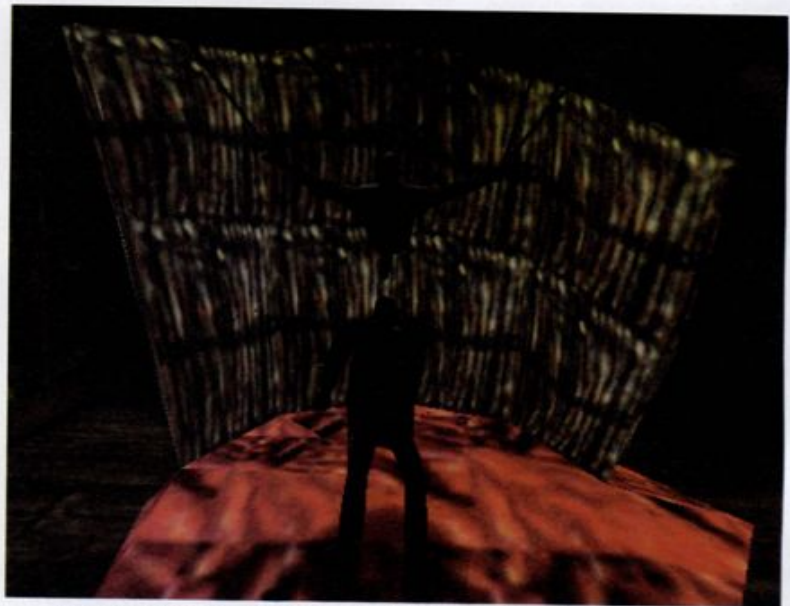
2. *It's rumoured that the game involves travelling between two worlds. There's the world we know, based around New Orleans, and the world of the dead. Can you tell us how travel between these worlds is implemented in the game? What sort of things will*



Getting ideas for videogames from criminals isn't such a bad idea, especially when they're total lunatics like Guy Killer... er Miller, that is.



Ever seen 'Seven', 'Silence of the Lambs', the 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre', 'Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer'? Shadow Man will be like playing through all of the scariest, weirdest parts of these movies.



Coming upon disgusting things like this dismembered body is commonplace in this freaky game.

he be doing in these worlds and how will the gameplay differ between worlds?

[GUY MILLER] The 'world we know' isn't always New Orleans - it may be for you, but for me it's anywhere there's a fridge. In Shadow Man, the 'world we know' is comprised of a Louisiana swamp, a Texas Prison, a New York tenement building and the London Underground network. The 'world of the dead', or Deadside, comprises the Wastelands, the Marrow Gates, the Gad Temples, the Asylum - and loads of other crazy locations too numerous and horrifying to mention. As for what sort of things you'll be doing in these worlds, well, you get to kill, you get to avoid traps, jump chasms, hang on moving thingummys, look out for spikey stuff, kill with a variety of weapons, run, strafe, gasp, vomit, shudder and tell yourself over and over, 'it's only a game, it's only a game, it's only a game...'

3. Given that the game uses a 3rd person view - will the gameplay still resemble the shooting based styles seen in Turok and Goldeneye - or will it be more action based like the Tomb Raider series?

[GUY MILLER] It'll be like neither. It'll be better than both. It'll be an experience to remember - and wake up screaming at the memory. Especially the sex stuff.

4. Can you tell us about the multiple actions the character can perform? We've heard that you can do a complex series of moves very quickly. For example, you may do a sideways roll across the ground, picking up a key and drawing your gun so that you come up firing.

[GUY MILLER] Let me give you some actual examples: You have a Magnum Desert Eagle in one hand and a flashlight in the other, or you have your Magnum Desert Eagle in one hand and a shotgun in the other - you can use both at the same time, or use 'em independently. You have an Engineer's Key in one hand and a Violator in the other - you can hold off the Asylum Brutals with your Violator, while using your Engineer's Key at the same time. You're climbing up a Bloodfall using your Poigne and you get attacked by Deadwings, so you take out your Flambeau Voodoo Weapon and - still hanging on to the Bloodfalls - you blow that Deadwing away. Or, as a slight variation, you're moving hand-over-hand across a Deadside tendon stretched across a yawning chasm and you get attacked by a Zombie on a ridge nearby, so you take out your Marteau and - still hanging on to the tendon - you blow that Zombie away. Really, the possibilities of two-handed usage are pretty extensive... ask your grandmother.

5. Will the game have specific objectives that need to be completed to move through the levels or will it be a more free flowing, exploration based game?

[GUY MILLER] It'll have both. Shadow Man is fundamentally non-linear in its overall structure, by which I mean that there are certain sections in the game that have levels that can be completed in no particular order.

6. A good variety of weapons is always welcomed in action games these days. Can you tell us what sort of weapons Shadow Man



The lighting effects in Shadow Man rival those seen in Turok 2 and Forsaken. Firing off a few shots always looks spectacular

will use, and what sort of things will he be able to do with them? For example, as well as killing enemies, can he disable them, stun them or use the weapons to break through sections of the scenery?

[GUY MILLER] Certain weapons will break through sections of the scenery, for example, the Marteau, which is a voodoo-based weapon, a dead guy's jawbone. There'll be 30+ objects to discover and use in-game. Some of them will have a dual purpose as both a weapon and an item.

7. We've heard that Shadow Man has some pretty scary stuff in it, but just how scary will it be? Games like Resident Evil had the ability to really scare the crap out of gamers because it combined dynamic music with scenes where monsters would burst through windows completely unexpectedly. I'm sure you don't want to spoil any specific scenes, but what sort of techniques will Shadow Man use to really achieve fear in its players?

[GUY MILLER] We plan to stalk anyone who doesn't buy this game. That should scare 'em. As for scaring the player... ever seen 'Seven', 'Silence of the Lambs', the 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre', 'Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer'? Shadow Man will be like playing through all of the scariest, weirdest parts of these movies. Ever been on those crazed psychotic wacko screwed-up psycho loony sites on the Net? Shadow Man'll be like playing through the heads of the people who put those sites together. There again. I personally think that saving a Princess in a sickly sweet disgusting puerile fairy-pantywaist-land is pretty bloody scary. Far better if you got to actually kill the Princess at the end...

8. Even though Turok 2 is a great game in its own right, there's no doubt that the extreme violence, like being able to blow heads clean off and punch holes straight through creatures' stomachs, had a lot to do with the game's success. What level of violence can we expect to see in Shadow Man?

[GUY MILLER] If you think of a scale of graphic violence where Turok 2 is a 1, then Shadow Man would be at least a Level 10.

9. What made you decide to develop the game for the N64 as opposed to other machines like the Playstation?

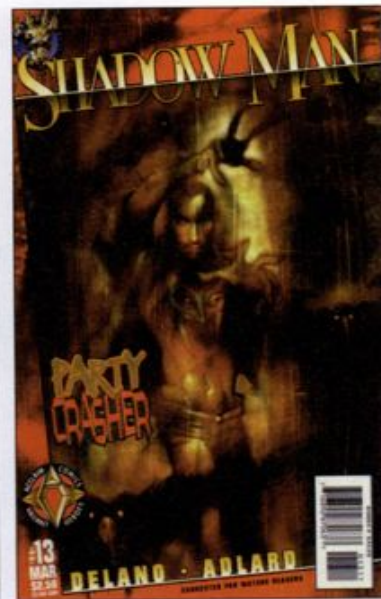
[GUY MILLER] The dark shade of grey on the N64 is nicer than the Playstation's lighter shade, and we thought that factor made it easier for us to develop Shadow Man on the N64.

10. Is it true that you already have plans for a sequel? I've heard that the game will be made in a similar way to Banjo-Kazooie - meaning that there are secrets in this game that relate to the next adventure or can only be accessed after playing the second game?

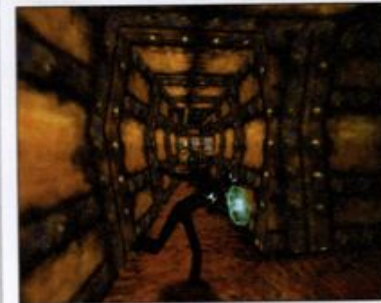
[GUY MILLER] It's true, we are planning a sequel, but I can't say anymore than that, or I'd be forced to garrote myself... which would be nice, but I'm not ready yet.

11. What other N64 projects will the Shadow Man team be working on next and what can you tell us about them?

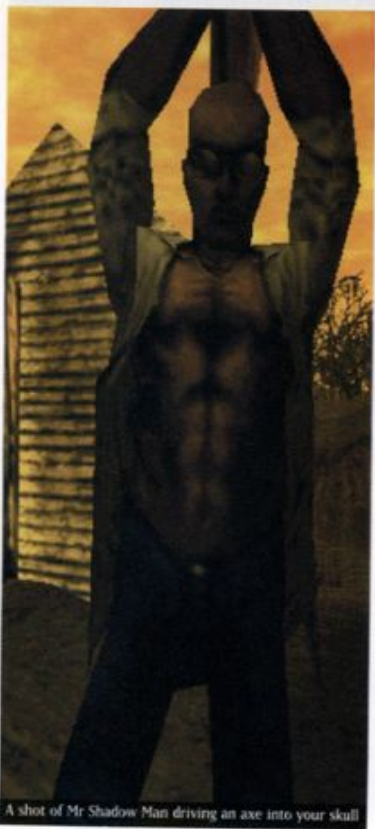
[GUY MILLER] We're going to do a game where, at the end, you get to kill the Princess.



Shadow Man is based around a popular gothic comic series



Yeah, he does look like one evil S.O.B...



A shot of Mr Shadow Man driving an axe into your skull

Shadow Man

After only a few minutes play, it becomes apparent that Shadow Man is unlike any other Nintendo game we've ever seen. Shadow Man effortlessly stands out from the multitudes of platform, driving and racing games because of its sinister storyline which is literally dripping with atmosphere. Right from the very beginning Shadow Man feels much more like a movie than a video game. The opening scene winds its way through a labyrinth of murky sewers until we finally arrive in the gruesome killer's lair. During this scene you hear the voice of the legendary 'Jack the Ripper' as he describes how he loves all of his girls. He also says how he regrets the bloody rituals of their deaths, but that they are necessary for the purification of his soul. It's at this point that you stand back and think - whoa!, this is pretty heavy for a game. There's no doubt that Shadow

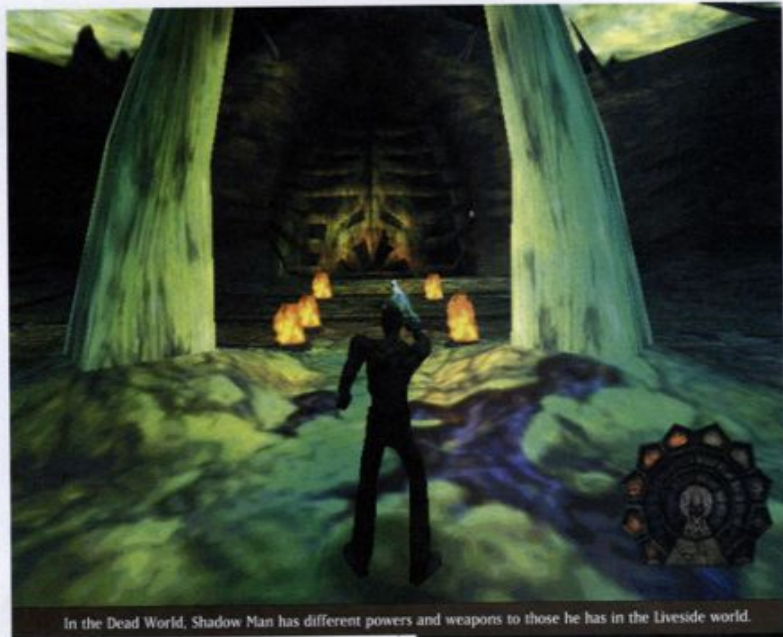
Man will scare a lot of gamers. This may put a few people off, but I'm sure the majority of Nintendo owners will be very eager to get their hands on a more mature game that has the ability to scare the crap out of them.

Graphically speaking the game is a feast for the eyes. It takes full advantage of the new 4Mb Ram Pak to display high-resolution visuals that are surprisingly detailed. Games like Turok 2, and especially Rogue Squadron, may look great in high-resolution, but most of the textures are quite plain and lack the details of a real world. Shadow Man looks much more realistic because when you're wandering around its world you will see many life-like details. For example, wooden bridges have a few broken beams, alleys are littered with garbage and rooms have dried bloodstains on the floors. Wherever you look in this game

you'll see the sorts of details you'd expect to see in a real environment. Another feature that adds to the realism is the clever programming that eliminates all the unnecessary fog or pop-up. In one scene, you can swim through a maze of underwater passages and then come out at the edge of an immense lake that you can see all of, without a hint of fog. The high-resolution even allows you to make out a few crocodiles that stir and start moving towards you from the far side of the lake. The scene looks amazing. The animations are also painstakingly detailed. Shadow Man swims with ease if he's carrying nothing. However, if he's holding a gun in one hand then he can only swim slowly using his other arm. Hold things in both arms and he moves along at a snail's pace by kicking with his legs. Lighting effects are another feature that add even more realism to the environment. Gunshot flashes light up the room when you squeeze off a few rounds. Many of the areas in the game are also quite dark, so Shadow Man has the ability to carry a magical burning torch with him that works even while he's underwater. The enemies in the game will definitely surprise you. In one scene I was wandering around the mystical plains of the Dead World, when I saw some winged creatures circling above me. I assumed they were bats, but as I got closer, they started diving at me and I realised that they were in fact human-like wraiths with huge vicious claws.

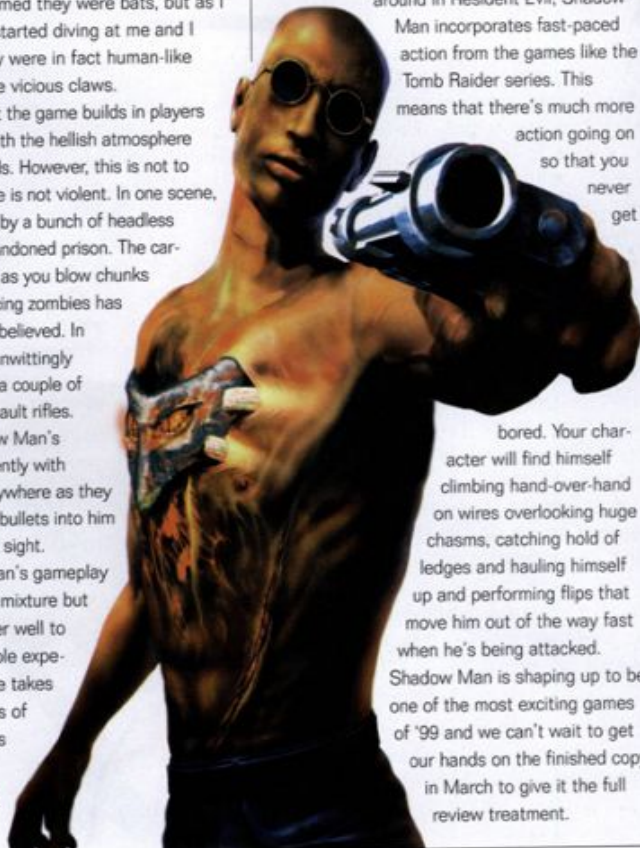
The fear that the game builds in players is mostly to do with the hellish atmosphere and moody sounds. However, this is not to say that the game is not violent. In one scene, you are attacked by a bunch of headless corpses in an abandoned prison. The carnage that results as you blow chunks out of the advancing zombies has to be seen to be believed. In another scene I unwittingly stumbled across a couple of guys packing assault rifles. Watching Shadow Man's body spasm violently with blood flying everywhere as they pumped endless bullets into him was a truly grisly sight.

Shadow Man's gameplay is an interesting mixture but it comes together well to make an enjoyable experience. The game takes the best qualities of earlier successes and combines them into a fantastic experi-



In the Dead World, Shadow Man has different powers and weapons to those he has in the Liveside world.

ence. Like Resident Evil, Shadow Man has the dark and moody storyline, the extreme violence and rich atmosphere. However, instead of the slow pace you experience when wandering around in Resident Evil, Shadow Man incorporates fast-paced action from the games like the Tomb Raider series. This means that there's much more action going on so that you never get



bored. Your character will find himself climbing hand-over-hand on wires overlooking huge chasms, catching hold of ledges and hauling himself up and performing flips that move him out of the way fast when he's being attacked. Shadow Man is shaping up to be one of the most exciting games of '99 and we can't wait to get our hands on the finished copy in March to give it the full review treatment.



Now, tell me where you put my cheesy poofs!



Sometimes you get attacked by headless corpses



Even the coppers have got it in for ya!