RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64

MUM ♥ C=64

Classic Cosmos Designs presentation, a great Steve Day loading screen and the PETSCII manual impressed me on starting this Hawkeye-inspired game. Graphics do a decent job, with the bosses particularly looking good. Music and sound fit the game well. But at the end of the day, the gameplay does feel dated. Falling through the edges of platforms, enemies spawning close to the player and the difficult-to-spot falling spikes belong in the past. In some ways it feels closer in spirit to Rubicon, throwing a lot of opponents in your path as you head endlessly right. Something also feels "off" with the shops, the way they appear and the values of the upgrades. Dead enemies dropping coins where you cannot reach is also annoying. If you have grown a lot of hair on your chest over the years, you might stand up to the challenge - but it misses out on greatness for me, given the long wait to play it.

The backstory to Outrage is that a great warrior wakes up from a period of unconsciousness to find decimation all around him. His home base is destroyed and all his friends and loved ones have perished in a war that they were ill equipped to contain. In a state of rage and despair, the warrior arms himself with some weapons and limited supplies and sets off on a mission to serve justice to those that destroyed his world.

Outrage is a horizontal run n' gun game that sees you blast your way through five levels packed with hordes of spawning monsters. You start off with five lives and an energy bar that decreases over time, costing you one of your lives should it ever become empty. So if you are considering employing a cautious approach through the game levels then you better think again, as time is of the essence.

As you plough your way through enemy creatures, you will have the opportunity to collect the coins that they drop. The funds you collect can be exchanged for useful items at the shops that pop up at various locations throughout the game. Upgrades such as extra lives, replenished energy, rapid fire and smart bombs can all be purchased with your blood money.

You have four weapons at your disposal with the default weapon being somewhat weak (resulting in most enemies requiring multiple hits to be killed off) but comes with unlimited supply of ammunition. The other three weapons available have stronger firepower but your ammunition for these is limited. Additional ammunition for these can also be bought from the Shop and you are going to need them if you are to ever succeed in your mission.

Outrage is littered with a myriad of platforms that must be navigated across carefully to ensure that you don't needlessly lose one of your precious lives by slipping down through a chasm with the landscape.

As you make it through to the end of each level, don't think it's a time for you to rest as you have a boss battle to contend with before being able to move on to the next world.

Outrage feels like a game put together in the 90s with its rock-hard difficulty. But the main issue I have with it is that it's too much of a 'stop/start' affair rather than providing a pure adrenaline rushed run n' gun experience.

Needing to navigate endless platforms that aren't clearly defined against the background causes great frustration. Time after time I watched my hero fall to his death while leaping onto a ledge that I thought was part of the play area. Add to this the general banality of the game play itself and the whole experience feels like a chore.

I enjoyed the end level bosses and the weapon shop upgrade system employed but the stand out within Outrage is Roy Widding's thumping soundtrack that is one of my favourites to grace the C64. But all this doesn't make up for the fact that Outrage feels quite rough around the edges and in need of current day sensibilities to be added to its game design to make it more engaging.

OUTRAGE

OUTRAGE WAS A GAME DESTINED TO BE ANOTHER ENTRY TO THE **GAMES THAT WEREN'T** ARCHIVE. A DECLINING C64 MARKET, INCOMPLETE SOURCE CODE, AND GLITCHY GAMEPLAY ALL CONSPIRED TO SEND THE GAME INTO THE FORGOTTEN REALMS - THAT IS UNTIL THE PERSISTENCE AND COLLABORATION OF THE C64 CODING SCENE FINALLY WON THROUGH AFTER 30 YEARS TO PROVIDE FRUITFUL RESULTS.

Developer
Cosmos Designs/Onslaught
Publisher
Protovision & Psytronik Software
Game credits
Game concept, Code & GFX
Bernd Buchegger
Additional Development
Sidney Arbouw
Original title & doc music Karl Sommer
In-game music & SFX Roy Widding
Loading picture Steve Day
**Producer & Story** David Simmons

When Thalamus released Hawkeye in 1988, its influence continued to be felt for many years. Andrew looks back at the failed sequels, spin-offs and games inspired by the classic – as well as the controversy over the magazine scores.

HAWKEYE
Thalamus, 1988

When the Boys Without Brains teamed up with Thalamus, one of the most memorable run & gun games on the C64 was unleashed. From the Mix-E-Load sequence with Jeroen Tel music to the animated intro with the "talking" alien, the game was highly polished. One interesting aspect is the fact that the SLF (Synthetic Life-Form) has access to multiple weapons at the start and must juggle the ammunition use. The weak pistol, the stronger machine gun, the laser, and deadly rocket launcher are selected with the function keys – and as well as picking up the four pieces of the puzzle to unlock the next level, the player can pick up hearts to restore energy and ammo for the weapons. Finding pieces is helped by the blinking of the eagle eyes in the status panel.
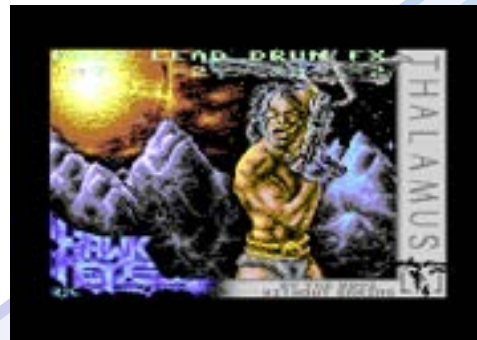
HAWKEYE 2
Thalamus, 1989 (unreleased)

Thalamus entered discussions with the Boys Without Brains to begin work on a sequel – but it would be X-Ample Architectures that started creating Hawkeye 2. However, without approval from the BWB this version was cancelled, as Frank Gasking explains in his feature elsewhere in Reset. X-Ample would go on to create the game ANOTHER WORLD that featured many similarities to Hawkeye.

HAWKEYE 2 PREVIEW
Onslaught, 2010

The scene group Onslaught put out this all new preview of Hawkeye 2 at the X'2010 party, complete with brand new code, graphics and music. The levels are split into rooms, accessed through doors and lifts. There were plans to complete it, but no final version has emerged – although efforts have apparently restarted, and Hawkeye 2 may only be a working title for the eventual release.

BAMBOO
Thalamus, 1989 (unreleased)

Meanwhile, the Boys Without Brains started work on their next C64 game. An impressive bitmap scroller was demonstrated and hype began to build, with plans for a mixture of game types – including a Hawkeye-like platform section and a scrolling shoot 'em up. However, this game would ultimately be shelved in favour of a new project.

RUBICON
21st Century Entertainment, 1991

Originally due to be published by Hewson, the company's bankruptcy saw the release delayed until Andrew Hewson formed a new company, namely 21st Century Entertainment. A cover tape demo gave a large section of the first level for players to experience, notable for the large jellyfish-like creatures swimming across the screen. Set in a Russia that has been devastated by a nuclear accident, the hero runs to the right blasting enemies and bosses through seven very tough levels. Power-ups can be obtained, and a jetpack breaks up the monotony a little. It got good reviews at the time, but the delayed release affected sales. Artist Joachim Ljunggren began work on a sequel, creating graphics for Amiga and C64 but it went unreleased.

TALES OF BOON
Prestige, 1993

This was re-released by CP Verlag under the title The Darksword in 1993. Much like Hawkeye, the status panel at the top of the screen features flashing eyes to help guide the player to the next object. There are some excellent parallax scrolling effects but the difficulty level is tough. It also reused graphics from the unreleased Hydrogenese, a game that would have mixed a scrolling shoot 'em up with Hawkeye-style platform levels.

GREYSTORM
CP Verlag, 1993

This X-Ample Architectures game was released on the Golden Disk 64 1993/02 issue, a German magazine on a disk from publishers CP Verlag. It features graphics reused from the failed Hawkeye 2 project and plays in a similar way. The plot sees the hero stranded in the past after a time machine experiment fails, with the player choosing which era to visit next. Each of the six levels (chosen from a map screen) sees the player moving left and right to pick up objects in the Hawkeye style, allowing them to advance through time to the next era.
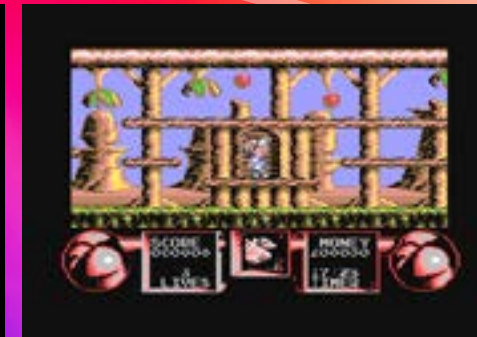
FLIMBO'S QUEST
System 3, 1990

The next BWB title to be released was the cute platform game Flimbo's Quest, and while it may not seem related to Hawkeye there are a lot of similarities. Flimbo must hunt left and right for the creatures holding the code letters, and there are some impressive parallax scrolling backgrounds.
System 3 were naughty and put a ZZAP! Sizzler logo on the adverts, but the actual score on 64 and Amiga was lower. It is probably best experienced on the four-game compilation cartridge released for the C64GS (Games System), as that eliminates the long multiload.

OUTRAGE
Protovision/Psytronik, 2021

The Austrian group Cosmos Designs had started work on this title in 1990, with programmer Bernd Buchegger (Panther) at the helm. It was entered into a 1993 competition announced by 64'er magazine to be published by Boeder. But the publisher pulled out of the C64 market before the game could be released. After a couple of efforts to restart development, new team members were brought on board and the game was finally released in 2021. The hero must avenge an attack on his military base, running to the right and jumping through the five hazard-filled levels. Shot enemies drop coins that can be spent in the shops that appear during the level. Waiting at the end of each level is a boss that takes many hits to defeat. Although the player does not have to run back to the left, the Hawkeye influence is clear.