

Curse of the Fallen Angel

Sierra's "Police Quest II: The Vengeance"

by Michael Chaut

One year has passed since Officer Sonny Bonds brought Jessie Bains (the Death Angel) to justice for his crimes. The world of drugs and violence has been silenced and the city of Lytton is once again peaceful

and serene. In *Police Quest II*, the latest edition to Sierra's "Quest" series and sequel to *Police Quest*, the story begins with Officer Bonds promoted to the position of Homicide Detective. All is calm until Bonds learns of the upcoming retrial and ultimate escape of the Death Angel. (Bains apparently appealed on a technicality and was granted another trial.)

What's New On The Beat?

Once the credits start, the viewer realizes that the graphics are getting better all the time. Through use of their new SCI (Sierra Creative Interpreter), Sierra has doubled the graphic resolution capabilities of their previous release. They are now able to add cinematographic touches such as zoom shots, split screens and film wipes.

The characters are no longer virtual stick figures, but have realistic form and shape. The opening sequence provides the player with an animated montage which includes both a police diver and a chase scene. Combining the graphics, animation and the unbelievable music sound track (provided by the MIDI Processing Unit and Roland MT-32), this reviewer felt as though he was watching the TV Movie of the Week.

The game starts with Sonny arriving to work in the Lytton Police Station. After parking, one should give the car a "once-over." As in all Sierra games, it is important to take, look, and/or read *everything* that can be seen (in some cases, things that are *not* immediately visible). Once inside the station, it is time for a little exploration. The area should be can-

vassed to find out where things are; Sonny should check-in at the homicide office; and locate his desk, check messages, and gain computer access. Before leaving the station, players will need to make sure Sonny has his keys, picks up his gear, visits the firing range, and most importantly, finds and takes his field kit. By this time, it should have become apparent that Sonny's mission is to recapture Bains before the murderer can fulfil his death threat made at the conclusion of Police Quest I.

In order to win the game, players will experience the daily ordeals of a homicide detective (i.e. fingerprinting crime scenes, questioning witnesses, booking evidence, etc.). One must not only capture Bains, but must do it "by the book," building your case as you go. When he is caught this time, he needs to be put away for good!

The game forces players to vicariously face life-threatening situations where split second timing and decisions make a difference between life or death. Players learn about working hand-in-hand with other branches of police work such as the underwater investigation squad, coroners's office, and S.W.A.T. Team. Above and beyond all else, one must *always* follow proper police procedures in order to succeed in this game. When in doubt about procedure, it is helpful to refer to the *Homicide Officer's Guide* which is included with the documentation.

Sierra has made some major strides in technology across their product line. First, this game supports a mouse and three (3) different music cards (the Roland MT-32, the AdLib & the IBM). This reviewer used the Roland Multi Timbre Sound Module (MT-32), a 32-voice synthesizer for the IBM which is comprised of eight individual synthesizers and a percussion sound module. Included with the MT-32 is the MIDI Processing Unit that provides the interface between the MT-32 and the computer. Mark Seibert's first venture utilizing this new technology offers a musical score that is simply spectacular. It actually changes rhythms and themes as one moves from one scene to another. So, when Sonny is in a scary and dangerous scene, one hears foreboding music and when Sonny is reunited with his girlfriend, one hears happy music. Although it is expensive, the Roland MT-32 seems well worth the expense. Having used the MT-32, it is hard to go back to games without music card support.

Second, the command interface has also been changed. The player no longer sees a command line and cursor at the bottom of the screen. Now, to interact with the game, one simply begins typing and a Message Input Window appears. In addition, the "F3" (for the MS-Dos version) "retype" or "echo" key only works for the current command sequence, speeding up the game. Those who enjoyed the earlier game will be pleased to note that Sierra has kept the handy "action keys." Also, the difficult and tricky manual driving sequences have been eliminated. Once Sonny is in the car, one simply types in the location where he needs to go and the game does the rest.

Avoiding Internal Affairs

Warning: This section of the review contains specific hints. Players should make certain they read the *Lytton Police Department Homicide Officer's Guide* included in the documentation. It is a major source for clues. One must know and utilize proper radio codes, vehicle codes, and penal code citations, as well as correct police operating procedures for running an investigation, in order to win.

Further, the player should save the game regularly as Sonny moves from situation to situation. Since Sierra now



TITLE:	Police Quest II: The Vengeance
SYSTEMS:	IBM (Amiga, Apple IIGS, Apple IIe/c, ST, and Macintosh versions projected)
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	\$49.95
DESIGNER:	Jim Walls
PUBLISHER:	Sierra Coarsegold, CA

conveniently provides the player with the ability to save twenty (20) different game positions within a directory, this provides the player with an easy method to backtrack.

It is important to visit the shooting range and adjust Sonny's gun sights. This assures that when his gun is fired, it will find its mark. When you are at a crime scene make sure everything is dusted for fingerprints. Everything in your field kit should be used. It is there for a reason.

If someone offers an item to Officer Bonds or he finds something that appears meaningless, have him hold onto it. In actual police investigative work, one never knows when something that seems to be insignificant will turn out to be the key to solving a crime. When arresting felony suspects, make sure Sonny calls for a back-up, has his weapon drawn, identifies himself as a police officer, etc. He should be certain to question all witnesses. When reluctant witnesses are encountered, they should be questioned again.

Don't allow Sonny to overlook using other branches within the force, the computer, and the telephone to help with the investigation. It is even possible to dial "411" for directory assistance during the course of the game. Make sure that Sonny pays close attention to the instructions given by fellow officers and superiors. It may even help to write down their instructions. Remember always how important it is to stay in touch with your partner, he is your lifeline.

Players should look for clues on the screen. If an object on the screen cannot be identified, it is time to investigate. In order to win this game with all possible points, players will have to really do some old fashioned police work. One can win without getting the maximum number of points, though.

Press Conference

It is obvious that in this game as in its predecessor, Jim Walls' "on the job" experiences add to the element of realism and danger that are evident throughout the game. In fact, Walls confirmed in an interview with this reviewer that all of the situations in this game actually did happen to him or a friend. For example, the sequence with the diver actually occurred and the real Jessie Bains (his name was changed) did escape (and is still on the loose).

Police Quest II is basically linear in nature. In order to win, players have to accomplish one task after another. However, the designer has given us many more puzzles and pitfalls than in his earlier outing. In any case, this reviewer is convinced that Police Quest II: The Vengeance is going to be hard to beat! The advanced graphics, intriguing story, and flowing animation make this story come alive. The whole package leads us toward a new apex in interactive game fiction!

Once again: Remember to "Be careful out there!" **CGW**



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