HERO

Project Initiation

March 31, 1994

9:30 am

Central Conference Room

Distribution:

Haywood Beaird
Steve Blevins
Steve Calfee
Robert Daley
Derryl Depriest
Don Diekneite
Chuck Eyler
Hector Fajardo
Wayne Fielding
Mary Fujihara
Brad Fuller
Mike Hally
Dennis Harper
Ted Hoff
Geoff Holmes
Paul Lewis
Pat McCarthy
David March
Dave Menconi
Harry Mok
Rick Moncrief
Hide Nakajima
Mark Pierce
Sharon Plotkin
Lyle Rains
John Ray
Bruce Rogers
Bob Sheffield
Dave Shepperd
Gary Stark
Nick Stern
Bob Stewart
Mike Taylor
Dan Van Elderen
Dennis Wood

HERO: *Project Summary*

Frantic HyperBrutal BloodSplash GroinSmash GigaDeathKill DoomBattle

- ☞ *Popular player-versus-player, best 2-of-3 rounds fighting game*
- ☞ *$3000 whole games (Family Cabinet); $1500 JAMMA kits*
- ☞ *Exceptional 2D graphics from 3D animation*
- ☞ *13 Atari owned and licensable characters (10 in the 1st release)*

Schedule

Second field test in April '95 with finished goods in July '95 (12 weeks later)

Product Differentiation

Strong characterization

- Appealing, animated 3D character graphics
- Character designs selected after focus group research with 23 character prototypes
- Unique personalities (attitude, voice, fighting style)
- A story for the overall game and for each character in the game

Comic book elements

- Powerful characters with exaggerated body proportions and skintight costumes
- Dramatic character poses and moves
- Use of contrast, light and color to add graphic impact.

Cinematic elements

- Use of sets
- Camera and editing tricks: quick action cuts and visual echo

Enabling Technologies

High quality 3D character animation using SGI graphics workstaions

Real-time Graphics decompression from CD-ROM storage

CoJag -- Coinop Jaguar system with CDROM

Hero Team

1 Producer	Lyle Rains
2 Programmers:	Dave Menconi +1 TBD
6 Animator/Artists:	Chuck Eyler (art director), Steve Blevins, Sara Petty, Hector Fajardo, David March, +1 TBD
1 Composer/Game Designer:	Don Diekneite
1 Game Designer:	Haywood Beaird
0.3 Product Manager:	Derryl Depriest
0.3 Electronics Engineer:	Brian McKee
0.5 Technician:	TBD

HERO: *The Game*

GAME ATTRACT MODE (Dramatic CD audio)

INT. AN EXOTIC CEREMONIAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Firelight. MYSTICAL CHIMES. Starting at large taloned feet, we pan along an immense stone statue of an insect/man lying on a pedestal. At one of its eyes, assorted prisms dance within a force field sphere as a beautiful woman's hands move over it.

A door bursts open, as a storm rages outside. A hooded figure enters, slamming the door firmly behind. Throwing back his hood, he reveals angry eyes above a powerful physique, encased in bullet proof armor. He approaches her with dangerous intent from the opposite side of the statue.

The woman, her trance broken, whispers "Dreddlok! No! Too soon!" She backs easily away from him step-for-step, keeping a precise arms-length between them.

His anger flares. Through gritted teeth, he whispers, "Celeste." He reaches suddenly out to her. She pulls away, her robe falling off in his hands. He is momentarily confused.

She is again at the sphere; it gets LOUDER. She begins merging with it.

Confusion turns to understanding, then to fury. Screaming, "NO!", he leaps over the statue. She dematerializes, merging completely into the sonic sphere just as he smashes it with his armored fist.

Her SCREAM becomes the RINGING of the glowing, twirling prisms as they fly, dissolving before they hit the floor.

FADE TO RED:

TITLE THEME. Flashy 3D title. (Take it away Sharon!)

(TWO EXAMPLES OF CHARACTER TEASERS)

Night. Inner city. Malcom's knocked to the ground by six attackers. As their shadows fall across him, a glowing prism appears beside him. He grabs it & moves at lightning speed.

OR

A glowing prism appears on Kraäv's grave. The skeleton hand from below clutches it, becoming a pale flesh fist wearing a gauntlet.

[the player puts a coin into the slot and pushes the start button]

SELECT SCREEN (Filled with character portraits)

Malcom - Swift & deadly inner city ninja

Chromite - Highly adaptable liquid metal special agent

Kraäv - Twisted vampire cannibal medieval baron

Taera - Mysterious & strange evil power, a beautiful dark witch.

Tatu - Bind tattooed Monk from the mystical dragon temple

Stiletta - The cold chisel, a witty & icy cruel femme fatale

Flint - Grizzled champion of outlaw bikers

THE FIGHTS

When you choose a character their attract movie plays. The prism (in Celeste's voice) says their name and their leitmotif plays. Who you choose determines the order you encounter the others. From dialogue before and during the fight, you learn about the characters. At the end of the fight, the defining secret about your relationship with your opponent is revealed when you take their prism (by executing a secret control combination). Other secret combinations result in derangements™, tirades, and the like. As you get to the final characters, you realize your friends are last. They say something like, "you knew it would eventually to come to this."

Malkom

Taera

Chromite

Tatu

Flint

Kraav

Stiletta

Celeste

and introducing
KL'KLATK
as himself

Dreddlok

HERO: *Story Synopsis*

In the ceremonial chamber of the Sedu temple lies a 50-foot statue of *Kl'Klakt* the Insectoid. Its eye is a magnetic mobile of prisms dancing inside a spherical force field. Standing over it is Celeste. Her lithe body swaying back and forth, she's lost in a trance, her hands cupping the air around the sphere. She snaps out of it and looks up as Dreddlok bursts in. To escape him, she melds with the sphere as he smashes it with his fist. The prisms scatter in the air and dissolve.

Each prism chooses a person in need. A person with talent at an extreme emotional turning point - angry, betrayed, trodden, they want to be empowered. Malcom was chosen for his stealth and knowledge of eastern mysticism. Chromite for his adaptability, ruthlessness and his ability to use disguises and travel incognito. Kraäv for his association with the black arts, the dead, and a perverted willingness to be totally evil. Taera, whom Celeste raised was a special case. Celeste hoped that one day she and Taera would rule side by side if Taera could prove herself. Tatu was chosen for his mastery of the spiritual domain, and his experiments in psycho-kinetics. Stiletta, the most cold-hearted and ruthless of the group, was picked for her ability to respond to danger with icy calm. And finally, Flint, chosen for his cunning and unabashed self-interest.

The prisms talk to the recipients. The voice is Celeste's, soothing and encouraging. She tells them of her need to be rescued, half whispering, begging for help. She offers help in return. Each prism is a catalyst enhancing it's possessor's inherent characteristics, magnifying them to extra- human capabilities. This new-found strength is addictive, and the drive to acquire more, unquenchable.

The way to get more is to find the others and fight them. By fighting, a player forfeits or acquires a prism. After three prisms are acquired, a member of the *Kl'Klakt* swarm awakens and tries to take them from the player. The voice of the prism is especially concerned during this fight and gains strength. She continues to gain strength as the fighting continues until one player gets all the prisms, save one.

The final fight occurs in the ceremonial chamber. Dreddlok has been waiting, knowing that someone would emerge with all the prisms except his. He is determined to claim them for himself. He's the fiercest, most difficult opponent yet encountered. If defeated, he loses his prism but does not die.

When the last prism is acquired, the sphere recombines and becomes Celeste. Dreddlok charges her in a rage. She appears helpless, wide-eyed but with an effortless move, she kills him. She laughs while morphing into a SHE-SECT, a female *Kl'Klakt.* Celeste's plan is now complete. She's gathered the powers of all who've been defeated. The player only now realizes he has created his own worst and most difficult enemy. . .

HERO: *Development Notes*

Hero Animation/Graphics procedure [Chuck Eyler]

We'll put the final polish on the character concepts, then make reference drawings of the first four to send to traditional clay sculptors.

While sculpting is in progress we will train on Wavefront software and analyze visual reference materials (e.g., moves from movies and TV, Martial Arts training films and any specific video reference we want to act out ourselves).

Two weeks later the four finished clay models will be shipped out to become polygonal skins; a low resolution version for quicker peeks while we're animating and a high rez version for rendering. We'll design a single digital skeleton to be placed within each of them. This should allow us to share basic motion files between characters before they're individualized and polished. The texture map and its placement will be determined for each character. We'll launch the next clay models, these and their polygonal versions will continue in process going on as we move into the animation.

In "getting up to speed 3D animation training mode", two 3-person animation teams will each attack fighting moves for two characters. These moves are broken into 3 phases - rough, full and final. Attract movies, transition screens, "final blow" moves, fatalities, special effects, props and a character's "home turf" set are part of each character's animation schedule.

The first four characters will have more time alloted than the next six. For those we should be at "full speed ahead" in 3D mode, and we'll work one animator per character. The last three characters, we'll double up on to crank 'em out ASAP.

We'll also shoot video reference of the dialogue recording sessions to use in the lip-sync acting.

Motion Capture [Paul Lewis]

Motion capture could be a significant part of reducing *HERO*'s animation production schedule.

For *HERO*, motion capture (MC) would be used as a starting place for the animators to generate exaggerated, or comic book style animation. Because no *real* person moves in this way, direct MC will not replace an animator's creativity, but would shorten the time normally required to generate complex character movement by alleviating the difficult setup process.

The added benefit of MC is that animation can be reviewed in its raw state, allowing entire sequences to be looked at, and then refined, rather than have nothing until the end of the process. In short, by starting out with functioning data, the schedule only dictates how refined *The Look* is, rather than forcing the question, "Which sequences can we cut?"

Audio [Don Diekneite]

Speech

Extensive use of dialogue is planned. Each character will have a set of phrases which show his/her personality and reaction to current opponents. These include taunts, expressions of pain, references to past events, and comments reflecting the character's general state of mind.

In addition, each character's prism talks to them. The nature of this speech changes from soft and encouraging to excited and insistent as the game progresses.

SFX

Basic high-powered over-the-top hits, groans and grunts. Playfield specific sounds and ambiance are also anticipated.

Music

The role of music in this game is to reinforce and intensify the drama. The general approach is more akin to movie music than any particular style or genre. Each character will have a leitmotif. When two characters fight, the underlying music will combine their two leitmotifs. It is hoped that this can be done in a more interactive way where the winning character's leitmotif emerges from the general musical texture, and then fades back in if he begins loosing. If this level of interactivity can be achieved, not only will each pair of characters produce a different musical piece, but music for the same two characters would be different each time they meet.

Game Design [Don Diekneite and Haywood Beaird]

While the basic format is essentially the same as the most popular fighting games, several aspects of gameplay will be new and unique. These include:

Strong story presented with unparalleled production value

Ready stance indicating health (3 levels)

New moves

- Active blocks (allow you to turn a defensive move into an offensive one)
- Taunts
- Reversals (player caught in a noogie can reverse it)
- Struggle (player caught in noogie struggles in response to JS wiggle)
- Ultra-dramatic finishing move using camera zooms, visual echo, etc.
- Playfield-specific moves

Cinematic treatment of player entrances

Home field advantage

- Hidden rooms in playfields
- Movie vignettes unlocked with secret control combinations
- More interactive use of playfields

Programming [Dave Menconi]

In programming *Hero*, we will use as much existing code and available resources as feasible. Specifically, the schedule assumes that we will be able to use the *Primal Rage* code as a basis for the fight engine and that we will be able to use the basic concepts and much of the code for the various editors and tools. We are also counting on Mike Albaugh's assistance in developing the overall game structure.

We may have an opportunity to reuse even more code. We may be able to quickly and efficiently port the motion object driver that is being used in *Primal Rage* to the *Jaguar*. Our ability to do this depends primarily on how quickly we can port the low level motion object functions, on which the *Primal Rage* motion object driver is based.

If we can do this, we will be able to start with most of the *Primal Rage* code running immediately (we will have to convert some of the code to deal with our data, of course). We will also be able to use most of the editors and tools for *Primal* with little or no effort spent rewriting them. Future *CoJag* products can start with the motion object driver and the basic code created for *Hero*.

There were some assumptions made when we wrote the schedule. First, we expect to get a *Jag* development system (running on a PC) next week. We also hope that we will get the *Jag* display code and other basic code working this month.

The schedule also assumes that the *HERO* programmers will not have to do all the custom GPU code, nor write audio tools for *Jerry* (the *Jaguar* audio system). If this development is done by a dedicated *Jaguar* Support Programmer, then programmers on all teams developing for *CoJag* could concentrate on their games rather than any rubber room code required for *Jaguar*'s custom chips. In particular, some kind of audio tools need to be written for *Jerry* if we're going to use it instead of *CAGE*.

If no dedicated programmer is hired, we will circle the wagons and share the tasks of programming the *Jag* among the projects that are developing for it. This will have a negative impact on the schedule. The severity of that impact depends on how the programming gets divided up.

The final assumption we made is that there will be a second game programmer hired for *HERO* early in April. We already have a few candidates in mind.

Other Project Considerations [Lyle Rains]

Product Costs

You can see in the attached cost analysis that we are expecting the basic $3000 box to actually sell for 3-grand when we're finished -- *if*. . . The first "if" ties into Dave's comments about company sponsored support for *Jaguar* (especially audio tools for *Jerry*). If we can't get reasonable tools for creating competitive audio on *Jaguar*'s *Jerry*, then I would favor using *CAGE* as an alternative to Jerry audio tool development on the *Hero* project. We are neither staffed for nor expert in audio tools, and have plenty of trout in the skillet already. The second "if" ties into unkowns about the *CoJag* hardware platform. Until we have a fully functioning *CoJag* system with CDROM working at full speed, we won't have the exact costs for the hardware. Also, I want to "punt" the question of host processor selection at this time (see Tools, below).

Development Tools

To be effective at 3D animation, you need good tools. Right now that means SGI workstaions and professional 3D animation software. In the products that we have examined, we have found none that live up to our expectations for animation productivity. Even so, we feel at this time, the most effective character animation tool at the best price is *Wavefront*'s *Kinemation.* Other advantages to *Wavefront* tools are Paul Lewis' experience with the product and support of it at ViewPoint Engineering (the modelling company we plan to use). I would like for each animator to have an *Indigo2 XZ* with the basic *Wavefront* package, and one machine (Chuck's) to be an *Indigo2 Extreme Graphics* system with an advanced version of the *Wavefront* tools. Additionally, we have found things that both *Alias* and *Prisms* do better than *Wavefront* (lighting effects and lip-sync animation are two particulars). Since we have several *Alias* installations, we can get its features, but it would be nice to have one package of *Prisms* in the company (preferably on Paul Lewis' system) to cover several holes in the features of the other packages.

For software development tools, we will use inexpensive Atari Corp *Jaguar* systems initially, and switch to *CoJag* hardware when it is available. At that time, switching to workstation-based tools will help with productivity. I am showing a Sun SparcStation 10 in the equipment list, but Paul Lewis has suggested we consider an SGI *Indy* instead. If the tools we need to run will work on either, and their is no significant cost difference, this is a reasonable alternative. What I do *not* want to do is spend $80,000 on three 68EC020 development systems. The '020 is a bad bet. I would like to move toward host-independent tools as proposed by Dave Shepperd, using network connected logic analyzers. In particular, I would like to initially use Dave's ASCLEAP board as an X-bus host to talk to the *CoJag* PCB. We can use existing ASAP tools and buy a logic analyzer. We are not proposing that we use ASAP as the final host (though we may eventually). We are proposing that we make a decision later and save development system money now. Even if we decide to use the '020 in production, perhaps we can borrow an EL-3200 for a few months at the end of the project rather than buying several now.

Audio tools are up in the air until we know more about *Jerry*'s capabilities and the company wide plans for *Jaguar* audio tool support. Hopefully, we might have a CAGE subset implemented on Jerry, and Don could use the regular audio tools to do his job.

Lies, Damned Lies, and Schedules

More attachments, further back. We want to plan two releases. The first is a minimum fighting game with 7 player characters and 3 bosses. We should be in final test in April '95 and in production in July. Four months later, in October, we should be ready to release a major update with 3 new player characters, improved tuning, and new hidden surprises. We may make a few maintenence releases between those dates in order to heighten player interest.

I have seen the enemy, and he is me. Convenient lies are much easier than real scheduling. And there are so many opportunities for slippages that the possibilities are endless. Nonetheless, we worked very hard to come up with what I believe is a realistic schedule. It is neither best nor worst case. I discussed it at length with Dennis Harper, and he thinks it is reasonable in general, with some quibbles on the software schedule being too optimistic. If several things go right and none drastically wrong, we have a good chance of actually beating the dates. If *Rage* code is ported easily and robustly, we win. If Paul's motion capture experiments work well and early, we win. If we get the resources we are requesting when and as requested, we are commited as a team to meeting this schedule. If we are delayed a month or two on staffing or equipment, it is no longer a realistic schedule, and we'll produce an updated schedule showing the effects, mitigating them as best we may.

Development Budget

An attached sheet shows the expected costs of developing the *Hero* product as envisioned in the preceding pages. It shows a rough cost of $2.1 million for the initial release, and another $400K for the second phase. If the initial release is weak, we aren't likely to have a second phase. These numbers include all costs (including what we have already spent) based on our assumptions as presented previously. The largest cost by far is the body count. This is a very large project for animation resources. We will produce several versions of many thousands of images. We will have the same number of player characters as *Rage* or *CyberStorm*, plus pictures for three *boss* characters, with about the same amount of resources dedicated to the project. Although I don't like the total when added up, I think it is reasonable in two contexts. First and foremost, it reflects the results of a thoughtful effort in planning and scheduling. Second, a basic test of reasonableness indicates that *Hero*, as one of nine projects, represents 1/9th of the Engineering budget.

Risk Factors (as requested by Bob Sheffield)

- **Jaguar or the CD do not work properly** -- we delay while finding a work-around or porting to a different hardware system.
- **The market may move away from fighting games** while we develop this product -- possible, but unlikely. Either aboandon the product or do the best you can with it: a business decision.
- **3D animation is much harder than we think** -- quite possible. Motion capture starts looking better and better. Most likely problem is that the learning curve is slower than planned.
- **Requested resources cannot be fully provided** -- we will work with the resources available, but the schedule will need to change to reflect this.
- **Equipment failures or data loss** -- we will take proactive steps to minimize the danger of data loss, but if people don't have the tools necessary to do their job, the project may slip.
- **Untimely loss of key personnel** -- OUCH! This is not in the schedule.

Hero Marketing Plan

Derryl DePriest

Product Description and Features

"Hero" is the working name for a fighting game in the popular head-to-head format. Due to the recent and very large successes of fighting games, this category is crowded, and as such, any new game will have to establish a separate identity in order to break away from the pack. I believe Hero has several things going for it that will make it a success.

To players, Hero will have several standout attributes. These have been roughly ordered in terms of priority.

- Realistic computer-rendered graphics
  Characters will be created and animated as three-dimensional computer models. Our fighting game focus group rated this treatment as the overwhelming look of choice over digitized, hand-rendered (i.e. SF) and polygon-based games.
- Graphic fatalities and great specials
  From the top, characters have been designed to have specials and fatals that are integrated into their personalities. Characters will seem very complete and internally consistent.
- "Life-like" character control
  Characters will have over 60 moves each, allowing for great fluidity and variety of motion. Characters will also, when stunned, vibrate to the movements of the joystick, so players can actually "wake-up" their characters.
- Fluid combo ability
  Based on the success of the Primal Rage system of controls, I propose we investigate it's use. The Rage controls offer a quicker and more fluid method doing combination hits, an integral part of strategic and advanced game play.
- Intriguing characters with personality
  The character set has been refined from over 50 original characters to set of 10 player-selectable and three bosses through internals brainstorms and outside focus groups. We plan to include many personalized moves, like taunts, as well as audio phrases unique to each character to flesh out their personalities. The initial product release will have 7 selectable and three boss characters, with subsequent CD-ROM releases adding the remaining three characters.
- Immersive storyline
  The storyline is such that each of the characters has a complex relationship with each of the others, and events (controlled by players) as the game progresses will determine the outcome of the game, allowing for up to 42 different endings. The overall storyline also sets the player up for a great betrayal, as what players will believe they have been

working toward is shown to be false. This sense of cinematic dramatic intensity will be the first of its kind in an arcade game.

•Abundance of memorable boss characters

Our boss character, the Insectoid, was an incredibly popular character during the focus groups, and should prove to be very memorable. Because of the insect/human combination of this character, we can extend the game by taking it off earth or to another planet easily for a sequel, taking our story into the science-fiction genre as a logical extension. There will also be two other bosses, Dreddlok and Celeste, who will morph into a female Insectoid during the final battle.

•Numerous bonus rounds

Bonus rounds offer fun diversions for players, and extend the perceived value of their money. We plan for numerous rounds where players will fight a series of bosses, as well as rounds where players are able to practice specials and combos on objects like Insectoid egg pods and the like. We are also investigating bonus rounds in 2-player mode that would reward players for playing 2-player games.

•Hidden characters

At a certain place in the game players, with a special code, will be able to morph into a special "good" version of the Insectoid and fight their way through the rest of the ladder.

•Character "morphing"

Although not one of the major selling points of the game, there will be multiple morphing characters in the game, including one character who turns into a skeleton, a morphing Insectoid boss, and an ice creature morph.

•New categories of special moves

Reflective blocks, which will open a new dimension in strategic play, are just one type of new move planned.

•Playfield interaction

We are interested in increasing players' expectations for head-to-head fighting games by providing more playfield "non-linearities," i.e. rooms off the main backgrounds as well as being able to smash characters through walls with very fierce hits. This will open up new arenas for players, as well as provide opportunities for "home-field" advantage during matches.

•The use of camera angle changes in "canned" sequences

This, along with visual echo during brutal fatalities, will give a greater sense of cinematic intensity.

To operators and distributors, the standout attributes of Hero will include:

•Familiar theming

While Hero is definitely a unique product, the basic fighting engine will be similar to past successes such as Street Fighter II and Mortal Kombat II.

•Very affordable pricing

Hero will come in at a very attractive price point, just over $3,000. In order to push more units into the field, we may lower the price even

further to drive more consumer sales, if it makes sense to do so in the time frame.

•Character and program updates

CD-ROM allows us to deliver quick and inexpensive character, move, and program updates. These can be provided at a nominal cost to operators, as a profit center to us.

•State-of-the-art graphics

The graphics will attract not only the traditional fighting game players, but will have a very "high-tech" look that may capture the non-core base as well because of the rich look. While this is an unknown right now, thebottom line should be greater for operators.

•Easter Eggs

To extend the life of the product, we will feature many hidden surprises that players will be interested in searching for. We will facilitate these rumors through creative use of the Internet as well as a calendar chip.

•Tournament action

Tournament support will encrouage operators to run tournaments to extend the life of the product, to the benefit of everyone. Also, we will explore the feasibility of a tournament link package, which may include a special "torunament only" Insectoid homeworld background.

Marketing Research

We want to make sure that we are meeting the expectation of fighting game players, and as such we plan for at least three focus groups, which will serve as the focal point for progress milestones.

Two sets of foci have already been conducted, the first aimed at soliciting general fighting game expectations, the second aimed at refining and improving the Hero character set.

First wave three months after initiation. Players will be asked in detail about the set of Hero characters, and the expectations players would have for the characters (i.e. special moves, fatalities, storylines, and personality). If we have computerized models of the characters, we will ask about these relative to characters from other games, including Mortal Kombat II and Rise of the Robots (providing more information becomes available).

Second wave eight months after initiation. Players will be asked about their general level of interest in the game, relative to other fighting games (i.e. Mortal Kombat II), based on the look and animation of at least two characters and two completed backgrounds Continual refinements of the game will be made in order to reflect players' most recent fighting game perceptions. Here we should have more information of the Fall game releases, and make relative assessments to any games seen at AMOA.

Third wave, "rolling focus", nearing field test. Using the "rolling focus" protocol, groups of kids will be brought in to play Hero, then brought back after two weeks to ensure that their suggestions for game improvement were addressed. In the

first few weeks of Primal Rage, this process has had a noticeable effect not only on the game, making it more balanced and in line with players' wants and perceptions, but in helping give the team a short-term milestone to serve as an objective. This keeps the team focused and sharp while incrementally advancing the state of readiness of the game before field test. Players will reexamine the appeal of the format, address any concerns they may have about the tuning and balance, and generally solicit feedback on the latest in Easter Egg technology.

Field Trial and Field Test Strategy

Fighting games are difficult to bring to field trial, since the game relies not so much on waves and levels as much as a complete, tuned character set to sell the game. We do not want to tip our hand too early in the process by bringing out a game with fewer characters on a field trial, so the initial field trial will have to preceed the field test by a few weeks at most.

On field test, we will want to have at least eight units. These will break down as follows: four local test units in three locations (I'd like to test one location with two banked units), one European unit, and three nationwide distributor units, in Chicago, New York, Texas or Florida.

Launch Strategy

If development proceeds on course, we should be able to show the game at ACME next year, with corresponding press coverage to drive interest and demand from the consumer side, although it is unlikely that we will be able to take orders on the game without field test results. It may be close, but I absolutely feel that we will maximize sales by showing and being able to take orders at ACME; we should try as hard as possible to meet this goal.

Special events at ACME will include a tournament, which will be progressive until a winner is eventually crowned on the last day as well as promotional giveaways such as comic books and posters.

Hero will be a finished product when it is released in Spring of 1995, but it will be only a subset of what will be in store for the next 6 months. At release, Hero will feature seven player-selectable characters and three non-selectable boss characters, all fully tuned and balanced, which will be updated within six months in with a CD-ROM upgrade to 10 selectable characters and three bosses, with numerous additional enhancement updates and fatalities added. It should be noted that for operators to pay for this update, it must be shown that the improvements in the game *make a noticeable difference in earnings.* This is not trivial, and will require additional testing. Further, must also be convinced of the need to competitively install the update.

The update will be available at the nominal cost of $99-$299 per copy to the distribution channel, and will consist of a CD-ROM with three additional player-selectable character and an additional set of fatalities for each character. Also

included will be several "Easter Egg" type distractions that will help extend the life of the product, including extra "secret training rooms" off the main background scenes that can be activated with special codes.

Easter Eggs and other hidden surprises

As mentioned above, we have numerous designs for Easter Eggs and hidden surprises, including secret rooms off the main backgrounds, hidden characters that players can morph into and fight, and other diversions.

Public Relations, Pre-Release Promotion, and Product Placement

Prior to the release of our Spring line next year, we should bring in the game magazines for an "Atari Preview" to showcase our Spring line. Through this PR, we can hope to develop some hype about our games and drive demand on the operator end through the channel.

This does not have to coincide with ACME, but the timing, as far as lead time for the magazines, would be about right. We want to drive demand as our product is hitting the distributor channel and questions about the game are fresh in operators and locations managers' minds.

We will try to gain at least three corporate "sponsors" in our game, who can mutually benefit from publicity in the game. These will include (ideally) DC Comics, SkyBox cards, and Wizard Magazine, with whom we will attempt reciprocal arrangements, whereby we will receive advertising or reduced rate cards or promotional comics in exchange for their promotion in our game. Since fighting games offer fewer opportunities for promotion than do, say shooters or drivers, we should limit the number of sponsors to a select few who can offer us the greatest amount of exposure.

As far as extending the life of the game, we can monitor the progress of players getting through the game via the Internet, which provides up-to-the-minute data from players around the country. We can use this to our advantage, and drop hints as necessary to nudge players in one direction or another. This will require caution and limited access by Atari personnel, since they will undoubtedly be deluged by a sea of whinings and ministrations about the game that would require a full-time person to handle.

Merchandising

Trying to merchandise an unproven hit is a gamble, but we will have the strong advantage of Primal Rage preceding it, and if all goes according to plans, we can leverage that success on any upcoming ventures, like Hero.

We will of course be "shopping" Hero to toy and comic companies (DC first, obviously) at the earliest opportunity, but there are several types of low-cost , high profit merchandise we can market ourselves. Ideally, this would be

marketed at redemption counters as redemption prizes or point-of-sale merchandise.

Examples of this would include:

- Promotional comic books
- Posters
- Trading cards, packs or uncut sheets of cards
- T-Shirts
- Caps

In addition, we can go forward with the idea of the 1-900 line, which may be in place by this time. We could give players hints, updated weekly, on the special moves, fatalities, and Easter Egg-type things that they can look for in the game. This hint line can be carried over into the home release of Heroes to capitalize on the momentum of the effort.

We will also try to license these characters for merchandise including toys and comic books, as well as any other lines of merchandise that is appropriate.

Engineering Cost Estimate

Hero

item	P/N	unit cost	Family Cabinet qty	Family Cabinet extended	Family Cabinet Cage Audio	Family Cabinet Jerry Audio	JAMMA kit qty	JAMMA kit extended	JAMMA kit Cage Audio	JAMMA kit Jerry Audio
Game Electronics					725.00	565.00			725.00	565.00
JAMMA filter PCB		20.00	0	0.00			0			
CoJag system PCB (6 Mbytes RAM)		325.00	1	325.00			1	325.00		
X-Bus master host CPU (w/EPROM)		120.00	1	120.00			1	120.00		
CDROM Drive		120.00	1	120.00			1	120.00		
RAM-Cage (optional)		160.00	1	160.00			1	160.00		
Electrical Subassembly					537.11	537.11			0.00	0.00
Power supply		50.00	1	50.00			0	0.00		
25" color monitor		318.00	1	318.00			0	0.00		
PCB grounplane		10.00	1	10.00						
PCB RF shield hat		10.00	0	0.00						
Main harness w/ ferrite bead		30.00	1	30.00			0	0.00		
Power, video, display harness		20.00	1	20.00			0	0.00		
IEC on/off harness, 2 jumpers	A051839-01	14.04	1	14.04						
Power cord	150041-001	2.10	1	2.10						
Flourescent light assy		15.18	1	15.18			0	0.00		
4 inch speakers	148007-104	5.95	2	11.90			0	0.00		
8 inch subwoofer	148011-001	6.00	1	6.00			0	0.00		
Coin door assy	171093-001	53.83	1	53.83			0	0.00		
Component bracket assy	A052693-01	6.06	1	6.06			0	0.00		
Cabinet					234.13	234.13			12.00	12.00
Wood cabinet		165.00	1	165.00						
Vendor kit		31.08	1	31.08						
Misc kit parts (decals, bezel)		12.00					1	12.00		
Misc cabinet parts		38.05	1	38.05						
Control Panel Assy					70.87	70.87			35.50	35.50
Panel	053044-01	20.37	1	20.37						
Decal		7.00	1	7.00			1	7.00		
Harness		15.00	1	15.00						
8-position switch joystick		7.25	2	14.50			2	14.50		
Buttons		1.00	14	14.00			14	14.00		
Other					51.09	51.09			8.65	8.65
Shipping container		25.44	1	25.44						
Kit (pizza box)		3.00					1	3.00		
Manuals & labels		5.65	1	5.65			1	5.65		
Misc hardware		10.00	1	10.00						
Reserve		10.00	1	10.00						
Total Cost of Material					1,618.20	1,458.20			781.15	621.15
Direct Labor					27.58	27.58			12.86	12.86
PCB labor		8.57	1.5	12.86			1.5	12.86		
Video labor		5.89	2.5	14.73			0	0.00		
Material and Direct Labor					1,645.78	1,485.78			794.01	634.01
Overhead			0.21		345.61	312.01	0.21		166.74	133.14
Total Cost of Goods					1,991.39	1,797.79			960.75	767.15
Distributor Price				45% margin	3,620.72	3,268.72		50% margin	1,921.49	1,534.29
				40% margin	3,318.99	2,996.32		45% margin	1,746.81	1,394.81
				35% margin	3,063.68	2,765.84		40% margin	1,601.24	1,278.58

Hero: Estimated Project Costs

Initial Release

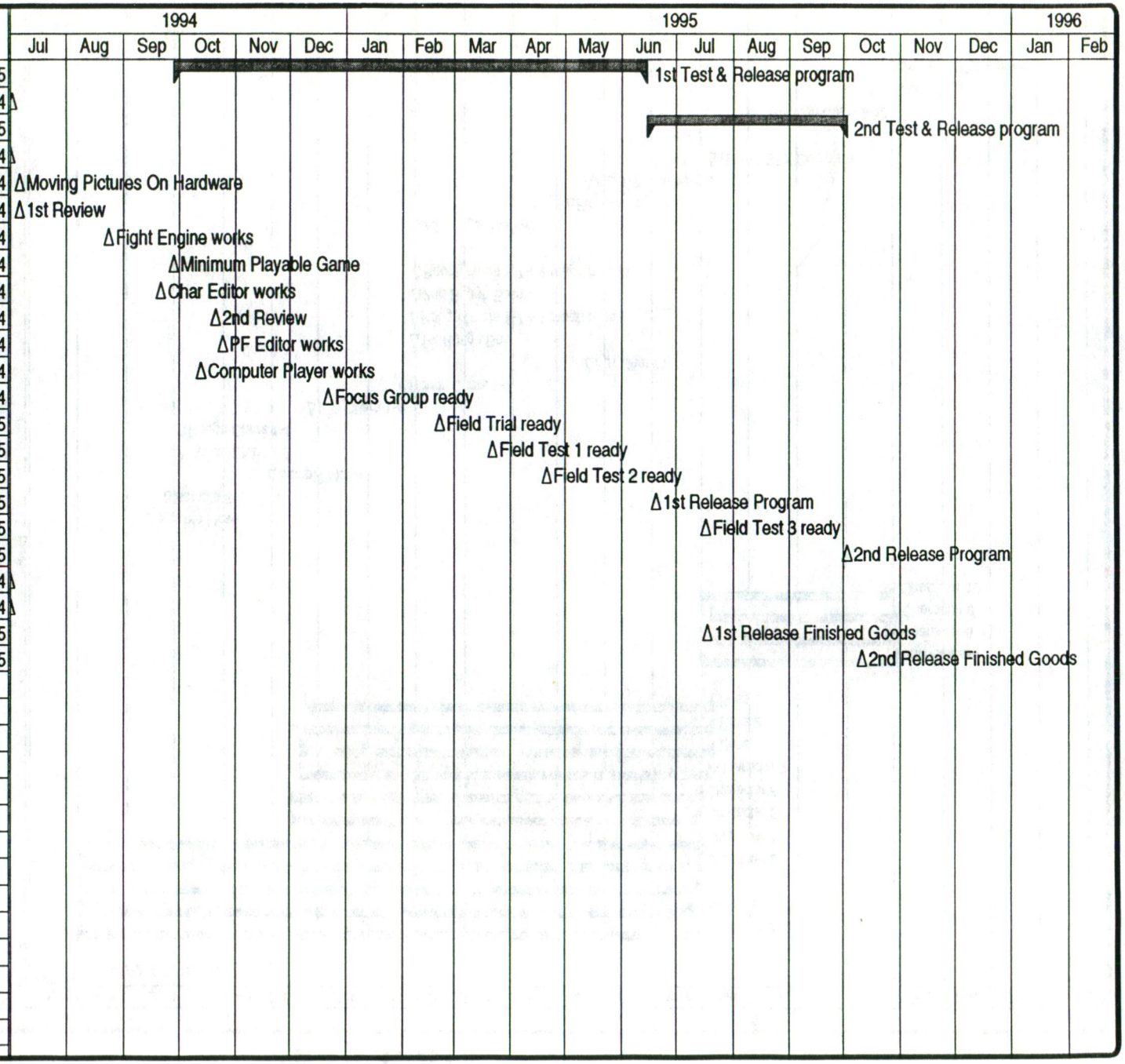
	expense		qty	unit cost	extended	totals	
Personnel	Hero Team	man yrs	15.50	$93,000	$1,441,500		
	Design Services	man yrs	0.75	93,000	69,750		
	Electrical Engineering	man yrs	0.75	93,000	69,750		
	Titles Group	man yrs	1.00	93,000	93,000		
	Video Lab	man yrs	0.20	93,000	18,600		
	Software Tools Group	man yrs	0.50	93,000	46,500		
	misc. support	man yrs	1.00	93,000	93,000		
					$1,832,100	$1,832,100	
Services	training	wks	7	$3,000	$21,000		
	sculpting/modeling	ea	15	5,000	75,000		
	actors	hr	40	100	4,000		
Matl	CoJag systems	ea	20	$800	$16,000		
	cabinets	ea	15	1,150	17,250		
					$133,250	$133,250	
Capital Eqpt	SGI Indigo2 extreme	ea	1	$35,000	$35,000		
	SGI Indigo2 XZ	ea	5	25,000	125,000		
	Wavefront Gameware Pro +	ea	1	45,000	45,000		
	Wavefront Gameware	ea	5	15,000	75,000		
	SGI peripherals & software	lot	1	8,000	8,000		
	Sun Sparkstation 10	ea	1	12,000	12,000		
	HP 16500 Logic Analyzer	ea	1	20,000	20,000		
	Jaguar Dev Sys w/486 PC	ea	2	4,000	8,000		
					$328,000	$164,000	50% of useful life
						$2,129,350	**est. cost of 1st release**

Second Release

			qty	unit	extended	totals	
Personnel	Hero Team	man yrs	2.75	$93,000	$255,750		
	Design Services	man yrs	0.10	93,000	9,300		
	Electrical Engineering	man yrs	0.10	93,000	9,300		
	Titles Group	man yrs	0.20	93,000	18,600		
	Video Lab	man yrs	0.10	93,000	9,300		
	Software Tools Group	man yrs	0.10	93,000	9,300		
	misc. support	man yrs	0.20	93,000	18,600		
					$330,150	$330,150	
Services	sculpting/modeling	ea	6	$5,000	$30,000		
	actors	hr	15	100	1,500		
Matl	CoJag systems	ea	6	$800	$4,800		
	cabinets	ea	6	1,150	6,900		
					$43,200	$43,200	
Capital Eqpt	*(from above)*	lot	1	$328,000	328,000	$32,800	10% of useful life
						$406,150	**est. cost of 2nd release**

Milestones

Task Name	Effort (Days)	Start	End
1st Test & Release prog	245.13	Sep/28/94	Jun/15/95
	0.00	Jul/02/94	Jul/02/94
2nd Test & Release prog	24.00	Jun/15/95	Oct/03/95
	0.00	Jul/01/94	Jul/01/94
Moving Pictures On Har	0.00	Jul/06/94	Jul/06/94
1st Review	0.00	Jul/06/94	Jul/06/94
Fight Engine works	0.00	Aug/24/94	Aug/24/94
Minimum Playable Gam	0.00	Sep/28/94	Sep/28/94
Char Editor works	0.00	Sep/21/94	Sep/21/94
2nd Review	0.00	Oct/21/94	Oct/21/94
PF Editor works	0.00	Oct/25/94	Oct/25/94
Computer Player works	0.00	Oct/13/94	Oct/13/94
Focus Group ready	0.00	Dec/22/94	Dec/22/94
Field Trial ready	0.00	Feb/21/95	Feb/21/95
Field Test 1 ready	0.00	Mar/22/95	Mar/22/95
Field Test 2 ready	0.00	Apr/21/95	Apr/21/95
1st Release Program	0.00	Jun/20/95	Jun/20/95
Field Test 3 ready	0.00	Jul/17/95	Jul/17/95
2nd Release Program	0.00	Oct/03/95	Oct/03/95
	0.00	Jul/01/94	Jul/01/94
	0.00	Jul/01/94	Jul/01/94
1st Release Finished Gc	0.00	Jul/18/95	Jul/18/95
2nd Release Finished G	0.00	Oct/11/95	Oct/11/95



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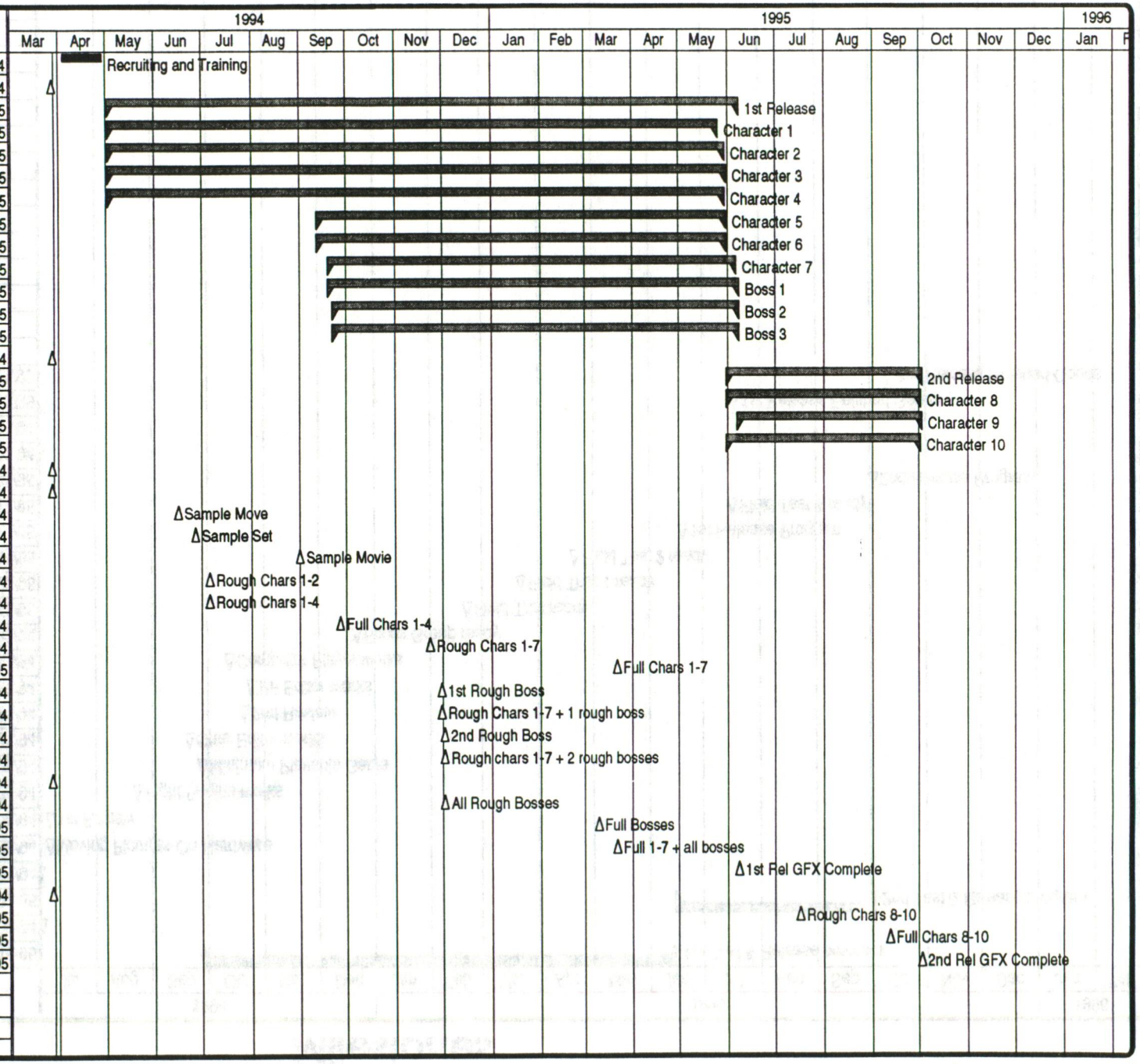
Milestone Δ Summary

Animation

Task Name	Effort (Days)	Start	End
Recruiting and Training	0.00	Apr/04/94	Apr/29/94
	0.00	Mar/28/94	Mar/28/94
1st Release	1,032.00	May/02/94	Jun/08/95
Character 1	114.00	May/02/94	May/26/95
Character 2	114.00	May/02/94	May/30/95
Character 3	114.00	May/02/94	May/31/95
Character 4	114.00	May/02/94	May/30/95
Character 5	100.25	Sep/12/94	May/31/95
Character 6	100.25	Sep/12/94	May/31/95
Character 7	100.25	Sep/19/94	Jun/06/95
Boss 1	91.75	Sep/19/94	Jun/08/95
Boss 2	91.75	Sep/22/94	Jun/08/95
Boss 3	91.75	Sep/22/94	Jun/08/95
	0.00	Mar/28/94	Mar/28/94
2nd Release	300.75	May/31/95	Oct/03/95
Character 8	100.25	May/31/95	Oct/02/95
Character 9	100.25	Jun/07/95	Oct/03/95
Character 10	100.25	May/31/95	Oct/02/95
	0.00	Mar/28/94	Mar/28/94
	0.00	Mar/28/94	Mar/28/94
Sample Move	0.00	Jun/16/94	Jun/16/94
Sample Set	0.00	Jun/27/94	Jun/27/94
Sample Movie	0.00	Sep/01/94	Sep/01/94
Rough Chars 1-2	0.00	Jul/06/94	Jul/06/94
Rough Chars 1-4	0.00	Jul/06/94	Jul/06/94
Full Chars 1-4	0.00	Sep/27/94	Sep/27/94
Rough Chars 1-7	0.00	Nov/23/94	Nov/23/94
Full Chars 1-7	0.00	Mar/22/95	Mar/22/95
1st Rough Boss	0.00	Nov/30/94	Nov/30/94
Rough Chars 1-7 + 1 rou	0.00	Nov/30/94	Nov/30/94
2nd Rough Boss	0.00	Dec/02/94	Dec/02/94
Rough chars 1-7 + 2 rou	0.00	Dec/02/94	Dec/02/94
	0.00	Mar/28/94	Mar/28/94
All Rough Bosses	0.00	Dec/02/94	Dec/02/94
Full Bosses	0.00	Mar/10/95	Mar/10/95
Full 1-7 + all bosses	0.00	Mar/22/95	Mar/22/95
1st Rel GFX Complete	0.00	Jun/08/95	Jun/08/95
	0.00	Mar/28/94	Mar/28/94
Rough Chars 8-10	0.00	Jul/17/95	Jul/17/95
Full Chars 8-10	0.00	Sep/12/95	Sep/12/95
2nd Rel GFX Complete	0.00	Oct/03/95	Oct/03/95



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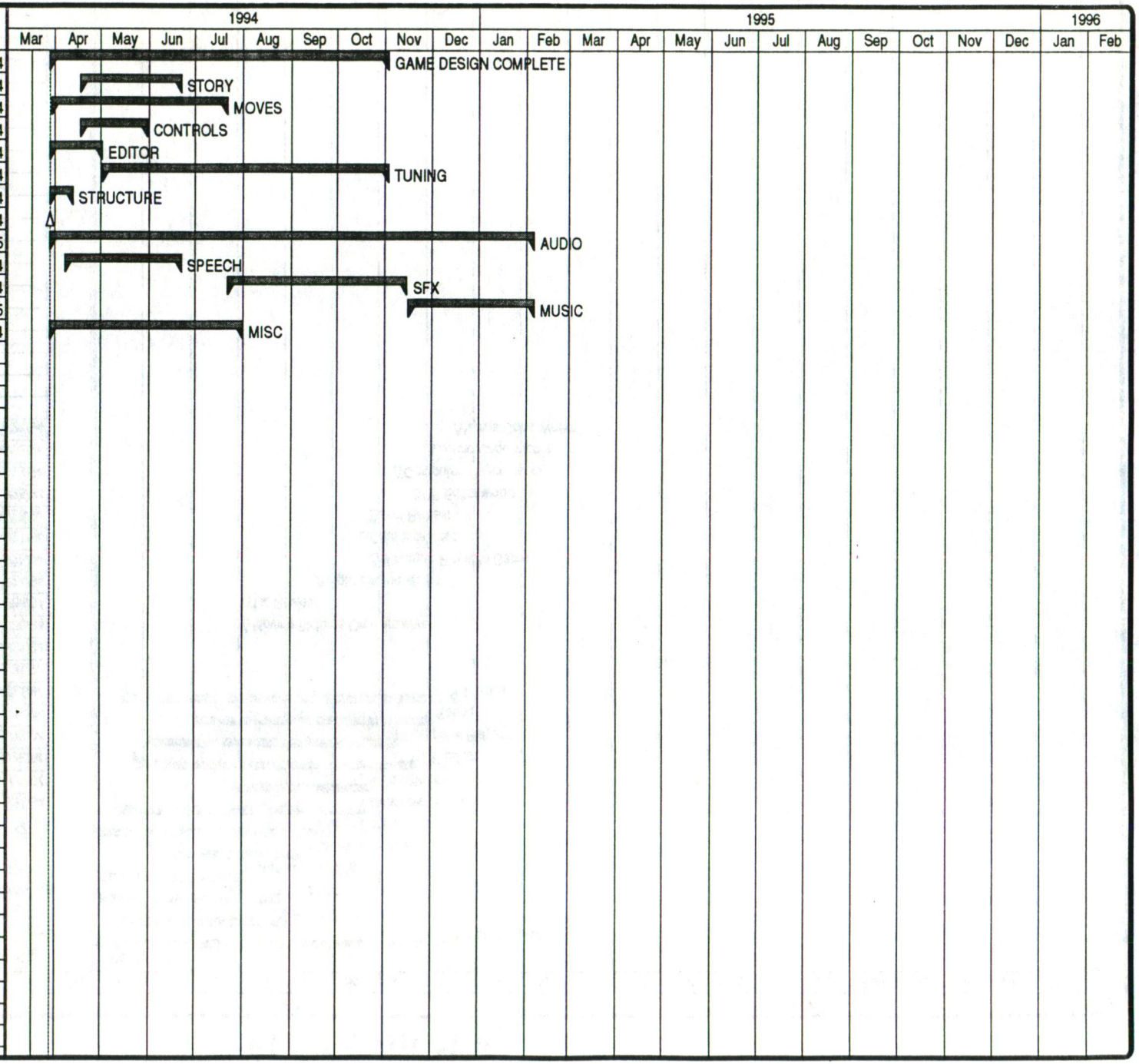
Milestone Δ Summary

Game Design/Audio

Task Name	Effort (Days)	Start	End
GAME DESIGN COMPL	191.50	Mar/29/94	Nov/03/94
STORY	18.00	Apr/18/94	Jun/22/94
MOVES	45.00	Mar/30/94	Jul/22/94
CONTROLS	6.00	Apr/18/94	May/31/94
EDITOR	12.00	Mar/29/94	May/02/94
TUNING	101.50	May/02/94	Nov/03/94
STRUCTURE	9.00	Mar/29/94	Apr/13/94
	0.00	Mar/29/94	Mar/29/94
AUDIO	87.00	Mar/29/94	Feb/06/95
SPEECH	20.00	Apr/08/94	Jun/22/94
SFX	34.00	Jul/22/94	Nov/15/94
MUSIC	33.00	Nov/16/94	Feb/06/95
MISC	0.00	Mar/29/94	Aug/01/94



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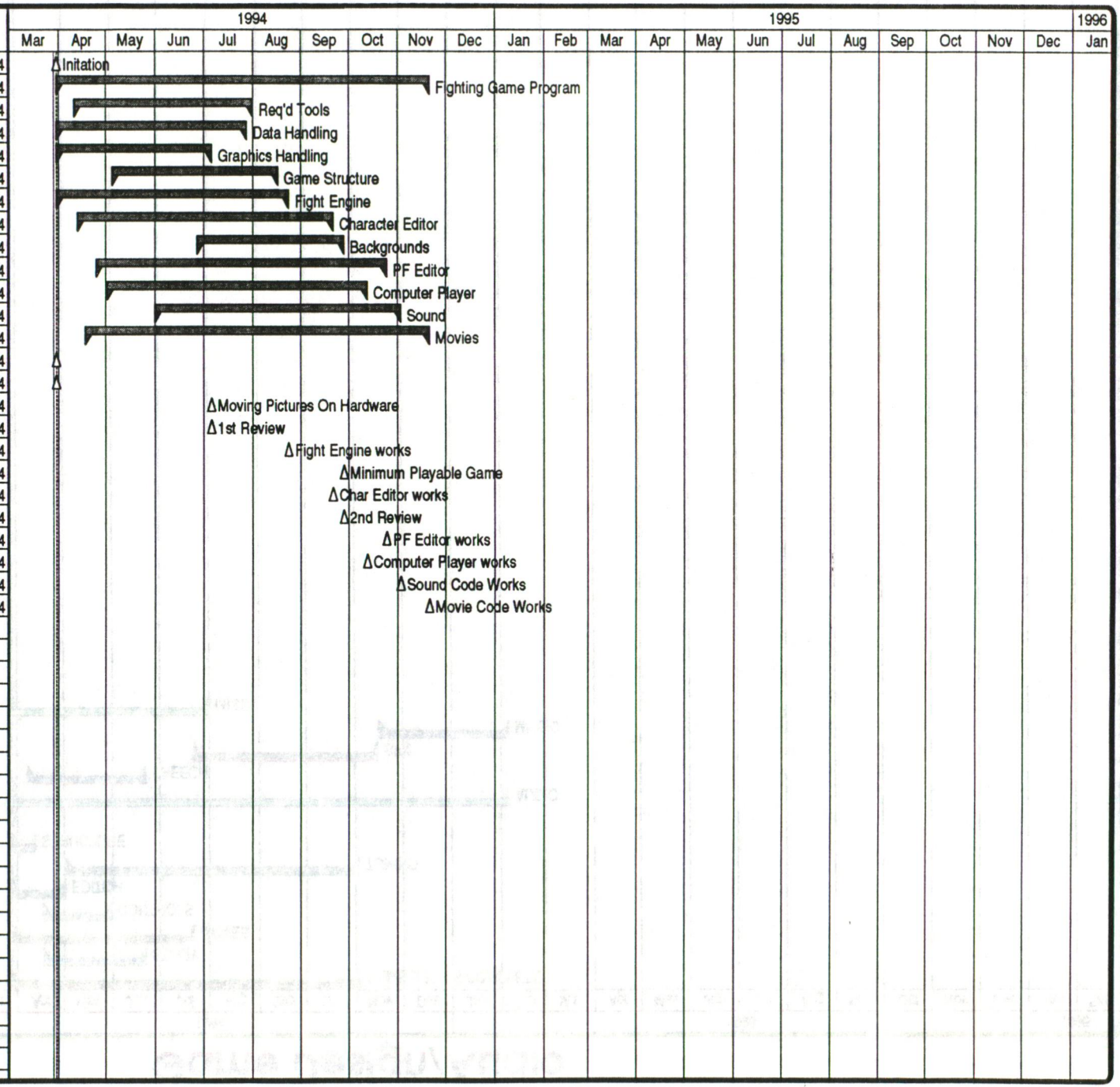
Milestone Δ Summary

Programming

Task Name	Effort	Start	End
Initation	0.00 d	Mar/31/94	Mar/31/94
Fighting Game Program	226.00 d	Mar/31/94	Nov/21/94
Req'd Tools	0.00 d	Apr/11/94	Aug/01/94
Data Handling	27.00 d	Mar/31/94	Jul/28/94
Graphics Handling	62.00 d	Mar/31/94	Jul/06/94
Game Structure	17.00 d	May/05/94	Aug/17/94
Fight Engine	44.00 d	Mar/31/94	Aug/24/94
Character Editor	12.00 d	Apr/13/94	Sep/21/94
Backgrounds	15.00 d	Jun/27/94	Sep/28/94
PF Editor	12.00 d	Apr/25/94	Oct/25/94
Computer Player	10.00 d	May/02/94	Oct/13/94
Sound	14.00 d	Jun/01/94	Nov/03/94
Movies	13.00 d	Apr/18/94	Nov/21/94
	0.00 d	Mar/31/94	Mar/31/94
	0.00 h	Mar/31/94	Mar/31/94
Moving Pictures On Hard	0.00 d	Jul/06/94	Jul/06/94
1st Review	0.00 h	Jul/06/94	Jul/06/94
Fight Engine works	0.00 h	Aug/24/94	Aug/24/94
Minimum Playable Game	0.00 d	Sep/28/94	Sep/28/94
Char Editor works	0.00 h	Sep/21/94	Sep/21/94
2nd Review	0.00 h	Sep/28/94	Sep/28/94
PF Editor works	0.00 h	Oct/25/94	Oct/25/94
Computer Player works	0.00 h	Oct/13/94	Oct/13/94
Sound Code Works	0.00 d	Nov/03/94	Nov/03/94
Movie Code Works	0.00 d	Nov/21/94	Nov/21/94



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Milestone Δ Summary

reviewed by _____

Approvals

GO ❑ *for it !!!*

❑ *back and do it again.*

❑ *away*

Comments