

What made you want to create a game like this?

Ever since I produced *Uncle Albert's Fabulous Journey* - a game for kids - lots of people I know were egging me on to make a game for adults. Since I was 15, I've always read loads of detective stories. It seemed to me that this genre didn't get much attention in video games, so I wanted to get to grips with it. I was convinced I could come up with something radically new.

Where did you get the idea of making use of the Internet within an investigation game?

The idea for *In Memoriam* grew out of personal experience. One day I received a screenplay. I did an Internet search on the author's name, and I ended up on a confidential site - almost as if I was a real hacker. One thing led to another, and I found out loads of things about this guy who - as it turned out - had a namesake. For a couple of hours, I felt I was living out a real-life detective story. As a result of this experience, it occurred to me that making use of the Internet within a game could add an intriguing imaginative dimension. Nowadays, most heroes of detective stories use the Internet in their investigations. Here, the players themselves have to use it, playing the part of the investigator.

How did you create the Phoenix character?

It goes without saying that I read a lot of contemporary thrillers about serial killers - in particular, novels by James Ellroy, one of the first authors to take an interest in them. What often struck me was this feeling of evil power they give off, because they kill without any rational motive and scoff at the investigators. They're not scared of being caught.

Contrary to what you might expect, it wasn't the killer's character that created the story - as in real life. Quite the opposite happened. The plot, with its twists and turns, shaped the profile of the killer. So his penchants for the past and esotericism were dictated by the plot and the game concept.

The graphic quality of the CD-Rom is striking. Is this also a product of the Phoenix's personality?

It's certainly part and parcel of the sense of power he radiates. He isn't a dumb brute. He speaks several languages, and he's very cultivated. He's an esthete of evil who sets out to accomplish a kind of total work of art through his murders. My killer uses ultra-modern tools. He uses the Internet to achieve his evil ends and creates a CD-Rom which is designed like a game.

The game characters are real actors. How does that change the nature of a video game?

One of the gambles with *In Memoriam* was to make the player feel he's involved in a movie. But he doesn't play a specific role. Instead, he's at the heart of a plot which blends reality and fiction. It seemed to me perfectly natural to use real actors to create this illusion.

The narrative mode leads the player into a real game of pursuit, with himself as investigator. How did you manage to create this feeling?

In fact, it begins before the actual game phase. From the moment he installs the game, the player knows that the CD-Rom he's putting into his drive is unlike any other. It's a program devised by a serial killer! Then, throughout the game, the player lives out real experiences. He receives e-mails in his personal electronic mailbox - even, at times, after he's stopped playing. He surfs through real information sites to pick up clues. He can go on playing at the office, without the CD-Rom - pursuing his investigations on the Internet. Unlike other games, the dividing-line between the game phase and reality blurs over, making the whole story highly believable.

What other techniques did you use to make the player believe in the reality of the experience?

We did an enormous amount of research. Since the scenario refers to real historical facts, and you're free to hunt down clues on the Internet, we had to exclude the possibility of turning up contradictory information. So, for example, when we filmed in Prague in front of the house of a 17th-century astronomer, it had to be the real house in which he lived – even if the house wasn't mentioned in historical guidebooks.

There are lots of references to the occult sciences in the game. Is this a subject that fascinates you?

I'm not an enthusiast, but esotericism is fascinating for anyone who creates games. It's fertile ground for creating enigmas, with intriguing iconography and a sense of mysterious links between things, as Umberto Eco demonstrated in *Foucault's Pendulum*, for example.

For you, what kind of game is *In Memoriam*?

For me, *In Memoriam* is a new concept of adventure game which, in its own way, gives concrete expression to the much-vaunted confluence of cinema, video games and the Internet.

Who would you recommend *In Memoriam* to?

First of all, to anyone who enjoys adventure games. *In Memoriam* breathes new life into a genre which – let's face it – hasn't evolved much in the last 4 or 5 years. But I'd also recommend it to a wider public, including occasional players who're fascinated by Internet culture, thrillers like *Seven* or DVDs like *Mulholland Drive*. I'd recommend it to girls as well, because they often enjoy detective fiction. When we tested it on male gamers, I noticed that lots of them enjoyed it, adding that at long last they'd found a video game they could play with their girlfriends!

