

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP EXPLORES THE WORLD

NOVEMBER 1996

3 2 1 **contact**®

Cool Contest:
Win the New Game Boy
Pocket!

YUM!
DINNER IS
SERVED!

**Web
Sights:**
Amazing Spider
Hangouts!

Sapped!

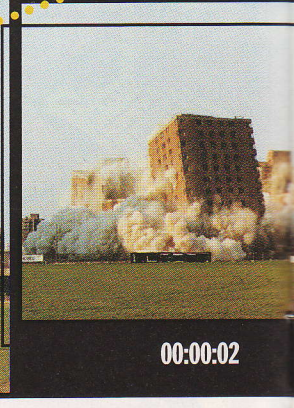
Amber Traps Prehistoric
Creatures

WHAT A

BLAS

Within seconds,
this explosion leveled
two apartment
buildings in
Newark, NJ.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONTROLLED DEMOLITION, INC.



THESE DEMOLITION EXPERTS BRING DOWN THE HOUSE

By Jordan Brown

When you were younger, you may have built skyscrapers with blocks—and then knocked the structures to the ground, pretending you were King Kong.

When Stacey Loizeaux (say: *luh-WAH-so*) was three, she pushed the button on a blasting machine. This turned a real bridge in Zainesville, OH, into rubble in a matter of seconds.

But Stacey didn't get in trouble. She was actually helping her father with his job. Stacey's family runs a company called Controlled Demolition Incorporated (CDI), in Phoenix, MD. During the past 50 years, CDI has torn down more than 7,000 structures around the U.S.

While growing up, Stacey traveled with her parents and learned all about her family's business. In 1985, when Stacey was 15, she went with her father to Mexico City. CDI had been hired to remove 26 buildings damaged by a major earthquake.



Three-year-old Stacey gets an early start on her future career.



00:00:04

00:00:07

00:00:10

"At one point, we came to twin buildings, standing side-by-side," Stacey recalls. "My father pointed to one of them and said, 'This is your building.' He gave me a crew of workers, and I helped plan and execute the demolition." Now, Stacey works full-time for CDI.

Old, Unwanted or Damaged

CDI is usually hired to demolish a building for one of three reasons. First, a building is falling apart due to old age. "Buildings have a life span," Stacey told CONTACT. "The materials in a building can become weak. So the building is no longer stable."

Second, a construction company wants CDI to remove existing structures from an area of land being developed. To build a new factory or an apartment complex, these companies need the older buildings torn down.

And third, CDI is called in on emergency projects—such as taking down buildings that

are damaged by bombs, hurricanes or earthquakes. Stacey told CONTACT that CDI faced one of its greatest challenges last year after the nine-story Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed in Oklahoma City. After this terrible disaster, the U.S. government wanted to tear down the remains of the building quickly and safely. So they called in Stacey's father, Mark, to do the job.

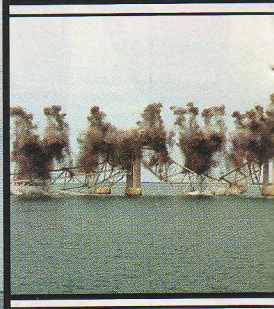
Mark's company uses one or more of three methods to demolish a building: smashing it with a wrecking ball, dismantling it with a crane, and/or collapsing it with explosives.

When the company uses explosives, it blows a building in, not up. In other words, the building implodes. In physics, something implodes if it violently bursts inward rather than outward.

Demolishing a building through implosion is similar to a 100-pound judo expert causing a 300-pound man to fall to the ground. The



Stacey's company blew up part of the five-mile-long Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Tampa Bay, FL.



judo expert doesn't need lots of strength or weight if she can get the larger opponent off-balance by lifting one of his legs.

Preparing for Implosion!

While pushing the button on the blasting machine is easy, demolishing a building requires careful observation, smart preparation and awesome teamwork.

Each time CDI demolishes a building, it follows these steps:

STEP 1: CDI's workers determine where the major support columns are. Support columns run up and down the building. They basically hold up the structure. It's important for the CDI team to know what material the columns are made of—structural steel, reinforced concrete or brick.

STEP 2: After all the people, furniture and equipment are removed from the building, the CDI team takes out all the unnecessary parts of the building and prepares the main columns to be destroyed.

STEP 3: Workers link together all the explosives with wires, and connect these wires to a blasting machine. This way, CDI can control

precisely when the explosives will go off. Since gravity does most of the work, CDI only uses enough explosives to knock out the main structural supports.

STEP 4: To help control the explosion, workers wrap protective material around all the columns that have been filled with explosives. This keeps large pieces of concrete from flying through the air.

STEP 5: After weeks of preparation, the big day arrives. Workers do a final check on all the wiring and covering and make sure everyone is out of the building, including any stray dogs or birds that may have wandered by.

Ten minutes before the button on the blasting machine is pushed, sirens sound to warn everyone. The actual implosion lasts about five to 10 seconds. During this time, the explosives are set off in a special order that causes the building to crumble under its own weight.

STEP 6: After the implosion is over, the CDI team walks around the outside of the building to make sure everything is okay. When they give the "all clear" signal, police are allowed back into the safety zone to help coordinate the clean-up process.





00:00:05

00:00:08

00:10

All in the Family

You don't learn how to demolish buildings in school. According to Stacey, "It's a craft that's handed down from generation to generation." Stacey's 19-year-old sister and 15-year-old brother are already helping with their family's business.

No matter how old you are, when you demolish buildings, safety comes first. Says Stacey, "The only time we have really challenging buildings is when there's earthquake or bomb damage—they're no longer predictable. But if we couldn't do a project safely, we wouldn't do it at all!" ♦

Timber! A smelting stack in McGill, NV, crashes to the ground. The dynamite can send things flying at a rate of 18,000 feet per second.



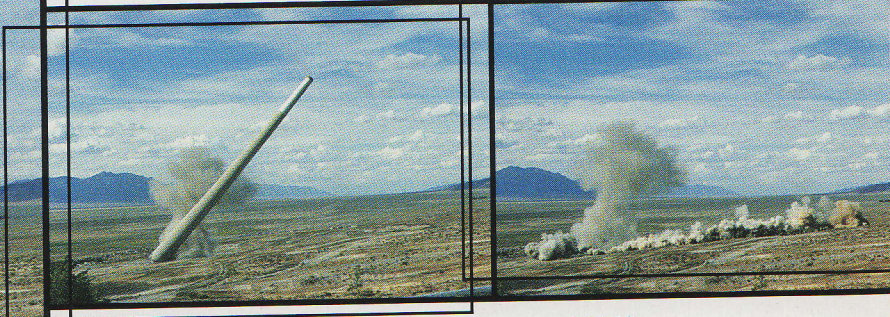
Stacey Loizeaux today.

Screen Blasts!

When movie makers want to have a building explode on the big screen, they'll often hire Stacey to help them. CDI's most recent project is *Mars Attacks*, due out next spring.

In *Mars Attacks*, invading Martians fire laser beams at large buildings. The movie's director, Tim Burton, had heard that CDI was going to demolish the 356-foot-high Landmark Hotel in Las Vegas. Burton asked if he could use this real demolition in his movie.

But Stacey wasn't sure Burton would be thrilled with the explosion. "Hollywood wants to see a big, flashy fireball," she points out. "Our implosions actually look pretty tame. So we have to create the flashy look by adding extra gasoline."



00:00:05

00:00:09