



# *Chasing Rabbits*

## Demo Design Document

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Produced by *Out to Space Studios & Pure Tech Productions*

\*\*\*Demo\*\*\*

\*\*\*Full Game\*\*\*

\*\*\*All Demo Elements will be Incorporated into the Full  
Game\*\*\*



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Overview .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Outline.....	7
Genres .....	7
Tones.....	7
Themes.....	7
Styles .....	8
Message .....	8
Drug Laws.....	8
Gameplay .....	9
Key Features .....	9
Story .....	9
Premise .....	9
Summary.....	9
<b>2. Game Mechanics .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Inventory .....	11
Non-Combat.....	11
Combat .....	12
Basic Powers.....	12
Weapons & Items.....	13
Physical.....	13
Imaginary .....	13
Power System.....	13
Monsters & Enemies .....	14
Choices & Consequences .....	14
Play Styles .....	14



Dialogue System.....	14
<b>3. Art Style .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Character Design.....	15
Environment Design.....	17
<b>4. Inspiration .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Combat .....	18
Tasks .....	19
Art.....	20
Perspective & Environment .....	21
<b>5. Demo Characters .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Charles LaRue.....	22
Benny LaRue.....	22
Natalie LaRue.....	22
Mr. Chu.....	22
<b>6. Demo Locations .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Environments .....	23
Metro 1 .....	23
Metro 2 .....	23
Chinatown.....	24
Hospital.....	24
11 <sup>th</sup> Street .....	24
Charles' Apartment .....	24
Bathroom Lair.....	25
Maps .....	26
<b>7. Backstory .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>8. Demo Summary.....</b>	<b>29</b>



Level 1.....	29
Metro 1 .....	29
Metro 2 .....	29
Chinatown.....	29
Metro 2 .....	29
Level 2.....	29
Metro 1 .....	29
Metro 2 .....	29
Chinatown.....	29
Metro 2 .....	30
Level 3.....	30
Metro 1 .....	30
Metro 2 .....	30
Chinatown.....	30
Hospital.....	30
Level 4.....	30
11 <sup>th</sup> Street.....	30
Charles' Apartment .....	31
Bathroom Lair.....	31
Charles' Apartment .....	31
<b>9. UI &amp; UX.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Health Bar .....	32
Objective Tracker .....	32
Menus & Options .....	32
Game Map.....	32
<b>10. Full Game Brief.....</b>	<b>34</b>



Main Missions .....	34
Multiple Endings .....	35
Ending 1 .....	35
Ending 2 .....	35
Minigame Ideas .....	36
<b>11. Full Game Locations .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>12. Potential Game Names .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>13. Scrum Methodology .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Breakdown .....	41
Team Roles .....	41
Game Creator .....	41
Game Directors .....	41
Game Designers .....	41
Programmers .....	41
Artists .....	41
Composer .....	42
Sound Designers .....	42
Sprint Cycle .....	42
Timeline .....	42
Pre-Sprint Planning: May 1 – May 11 .....	42
Sprint 1: May 12 – May 25 .....	43
Sprint 2: May 26 – June 8 .....	43
Sprint 3: June 9 – June 22 .....	43
Sprint 4: June 23 – July 6 .....	44
Sprint 5: July 7 – July 20 .....	44
Sprint 6: July 21 – August 3 .....	44



Sprint 7: August 4 – August 17.....	44
Sprint 8: August 18 – August 24.....	44
Wrap-Up: August 25.....	45
<b>14. Creator Personal Statement.....</b>	<b>46</b>



# 1

## Overview

### Outline

*Chasing Rabbits* is a 2D side-scrolling beat-em-up. The game is centered on the progression of Charles LaRue, a man battling drug addiction and the surreal powers it grants him. Set in a modern big city, the game begins with Charles at rock bottom. After an overdose, he awakens to a distorted reality where the line between psychosis and supernatural ability is blurred. **Players take on main missions that begin in the Bathroom Lair hub, where Charles prepares by choosing whether to use drugs or medicine—choices that affect his powers, withdrawal symptoms, and the paths available in each mission.**

As Charles fights literal and metaphorical demons, **he must also navigate his responsibility to his sickly nephew Benny, using the revenue from private investigation to support him.** The game emphasizes player agency through abstract, hallucinatory combat, **branching storylines, and multiple endings determined by how Charles handles his addiction—whether it leads to ruin or redemption.** With its chaotic visuals, supernatural foes, and emphasis on drug-altered perception, *Chasing Rabbits* delivers an immersive narrative grounded in real-world issues.

### Genres

- Action-adventure
- Cyberpunk
- Beat-em-up
- Neo-noir

### Tones

- Dark and moody
- Grim atmosphere
- Unease and unpredictability

### Themes

- Modern capitalism
- Battling demons and addiction
- Blurred lines between reality and hallucinations



- Power of imagination
- Moral choices and their impact
- Familial responsibility
- Struggle for redemption

## Styles

- 2D perspective
- Beat-em-up combat
- Retro pixel art
- Matte background paintings
- 2D character animation
- Immersive storyline with emotional dialogue addressing real world issues
- Visual and auditory glitches from drug use
- Unorthodox weapon play

## Message

- Destructive nature of drug addiction and its consequences
- The player must consider the impact of Charles' choices on himself and his family
- Multiple endings give a chance to redeem Charles or let him succumb to his addiction

## Drug Laws

- You can legally sell a game on Steam that includes drug use as a gameplay mechanic, including drugs as powerups as long as it's not glorified, promoted, or trivialized
- Steam does not explicitly ban drug-related content
- If drugs are powerups but include clear negative side effects (e.g., addiction, stat debuffs, withdrawal symptoms, narrative consequences), it's more likely to be seen as neutral or critical rather than promotional or glorifying—which is totally acceptable on Steam
- Don't reward or glamorize drug use
  - Ex. "take drugs to win easily"
- Show consequences
  - Physical
  - Mental



- Social
- In-game penalties

## Gameplay

*Chasing Rabbits* lies somewhere in the middle of linear gameplay and open-ended approaches. Prior to every mission, you prepare in your Bathroom Lair. During Main Missions you can encounter mini games, side quests, special weapons and items, and different ways to approach objectives.

### Key Features

- RPG systems including character progression, skills, and perks
- Minigames from entirely different game genres
- Powers player can acquire taking drugs
- Systematic gameplay with choices and consequences
- Combat with supernatural enemies
- Chaotic hallucinations
- Beat-em-up style combat
- Quick-time task fulfillment

## Story

### Premise

A man down on his luck, Charles LaRue, battles with wielding newfound powers as a result of his untenable drug addiction. In a constant struggle against his selfish tendencies, Charles must discover himself through his new job as a private investigator, cautious not to take his abilities too far and leave his family behind.

### Summary

The game opens with Charles at the breaking point of his addiction, convinced that his drug use is the only way forward. Charles soon overdoses and collapses, and upon waking up, finds that the lines between reality and his drug-induced psychosis have become blurred. Something profound has taken place in Charles' very essence: the euphoria of his addiction has granted him supernatural powers.



Early on, the player comes to learn of Charles' responsibilities towards taking care of his nephew Benny. Due to family turmoil, Charles' sister Natalie has placed her son in his care, who has fallen victim to a mysterious illness of his own. Charles soon turns to private investigation to capitalize off of his powers and escape the monotony of his previous life. The player weighs the options of working with clients of varied morality, fighting towards a future that can sustain both Charles and Benny.

Ultimately, the player will be forced to consider the consequences of their actions, resulting in branched storylines, dynamic alliances, and multiple endings. Charles' fate is in the player's hands... will his powers lead to his unraveling, will he use them for the betterment of those around him, or will he reject them to overcome his addiction?



## 2

# Game Mechanics

## Inventory

- Can pick up items to be used later
- Press a button for backpack access to situational items
  - Quick-select Toolkit Wheel items
    - Swiss army knife
    - Keys
      - Charles' apartment key
      - Chinatown business' keys
    - Drugs
    - Business cards
    - Phone
      - Phone has access to:
        - Menu settings
        - Calls
          - Incoming
          - Outgoing for help, information, more drugs, etc.
  - Accessing map
  - Calendar for objectives
  - Online item shop
  - Side quests

## Non-Combat

Use the Toolkit to address:

- Pop-up issues
  - Ex. Washing machine breaks
- Job demands



- Ex. Opening Chinatown booth on time
- Customer service
  - Ex. Handing out business cards

Interactions with the game world:

- Ex. Help business owner unload truck
- Ex. Picking up items to be used later

Speaking with main NPCs:

- Ex. Talking to Mr. Chu to start your shift in Chinatown

## Combat

### Basic Powers

- Regular Melee Attack (C)
  - Quick and weak punch
  - Quarter of Flurry Burst's damage
- Flurry Burst (Z)
  - Throw 5 or 6 punches in short succession
  - 10 second cooldown
- Ranged Business Card Shurikens (V)
  - Throw flying projectile that splits into 3 directions
  - Half of Regular Melee Attack's damage
- Glowing Parry Indicator (X)
  - Time correctly to prevent damage to Charles



*Charles LaRue Using His Powers Concept Art*



## Weapons & Items

- You can substitute the lack of advanced powers with weapons or items

### Physical

- Weapons and items you come across by playing side missions, visiting shops, and exploring the map

### Imaginary

- Weapons and items that serve the same purpose as physical ones but are silly and easier to collect
  - Only able to use if taking drugs during that mission

## Power System

- Before every Main Mission, Charles starts in his Bathroom Lair and opens the medicine cabinet
  - You have the choice whether or not to take any combination of medicine or drugs
- Taking drugs on 3 Main Missions will unlock imaginary weapons or items
  - This will not be explicitly stated to the player
- Going on 3 Main Missions without taking medicine will result in unlocking Level 2 powers, and so on
  - This will not be explicitly stated to the player
- Charles will always have some amount of superpowers
  - Taking medicine will not completely nullify base level visual powers, but it will eliminate withdrawal symptoms (input lag, glitchy character model, weird text, etc.) and weaken the effects of supplemental drug combos
- Choosing the “wrong” combo of medicine and drugs too many times will force Ending 2 (the bad ending)
- Drugs can unlock special entry ways or easier boss fights
- To limit the incentive of this negative habit, using drugs as a real-time consumable will not be an option



## Monsters & Enemies

- Under the influence of drugs, Charles cannot be certain of anything that he comes across
  - Are the fights really happening?
  - Are they all in his mind?
  - Does it really matter?
- Due to his drug use, Charles will see otherwise normal pedestrians as hostile enemies in the form of hallucinatory monsters
- Enemies will be highlighted with a variety of colors based on their intentions and feelings
- Enemy Examples:
  - Evil pizza delivery man
    - Throws pizza projectile
  - Angry crows
    - Swoops in for melee attacks
  - Woman pushing monster in stroller
    - Splits into 2 enemies:
      - Monster comes out of stroller for melee attacks
      - Woman beats Charles with melee stroller

## Choices & Consequences

- Players can recognize branching storylines based on different choices presented

### Play Styles

- Every mission will have multiple routes to complete
- Every mission can be completed without drugs

### Dialogue System

- Minimal dialogue by Charles
  - Mostly relies on one-sided conversations
  - Additional Dialogue Options are presented upon prolonged drug use
    - More gibberish and glitches are also presented with an increased use of drugs
- Certain words are highlighted in the dialogue subtitles based on emotional readings provided by the power of the drugs

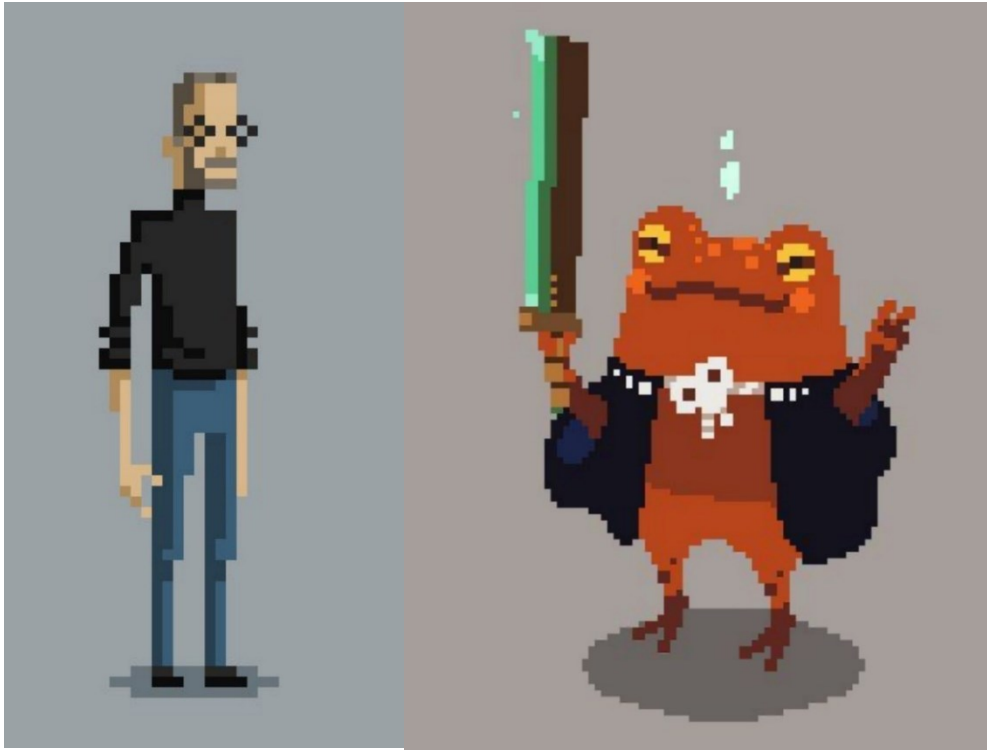


# 3

## Art Style

### Character Design

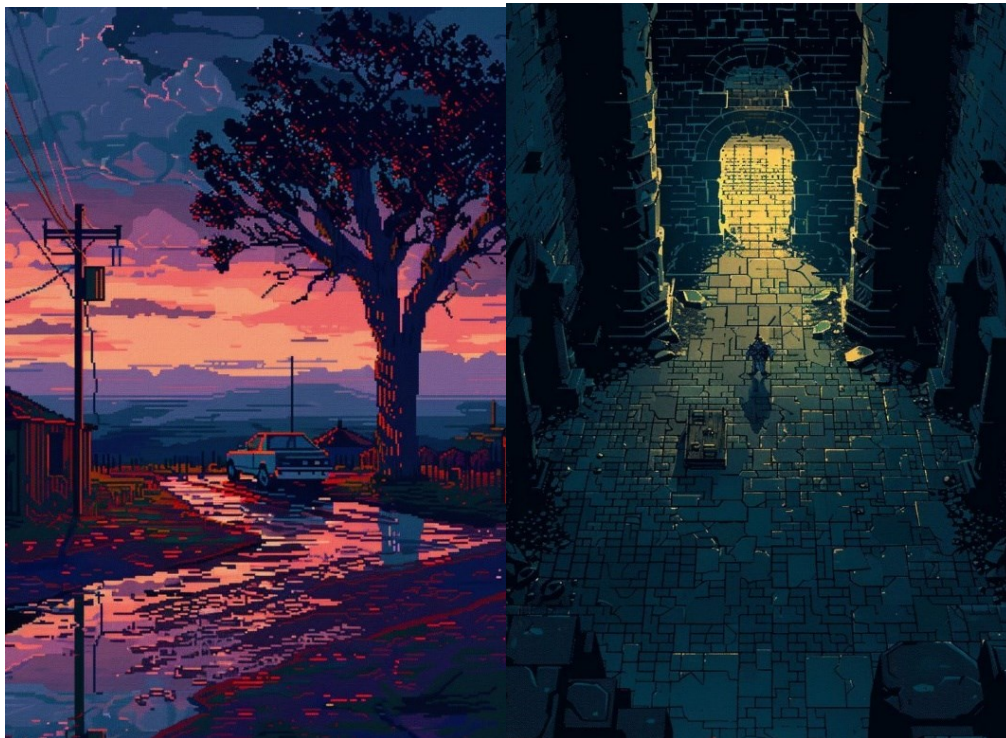
- *The Human Figure in Motion* by Eadweard Muybridge
  - Extensive collection of high-speed photographs capturing human movement
- AI for animation (?)
  - Use for intermediate frames
- 2D
  - 89 frames for Charles
    - Travel
      - 8 directions walking
      - 5 frames per walking cycle
      - 2 frames for idle
      - 3 frames for interaction
    - Combat
      - Parry
        - 2 directions blocking
        - 3 frames per blocking cycle
      - Ranged
        - 2 directions ranged
        - 5 frames per ranged cycle
      - Close
        - 2 directions close
        - 9 frames per punch cycle
      - Jump
        - 2 directions looking
        - 5 frames per jumping cycle



*Character Design References*



# Environment Design



*Environment Design References*



4

## Inspiration

### Combat



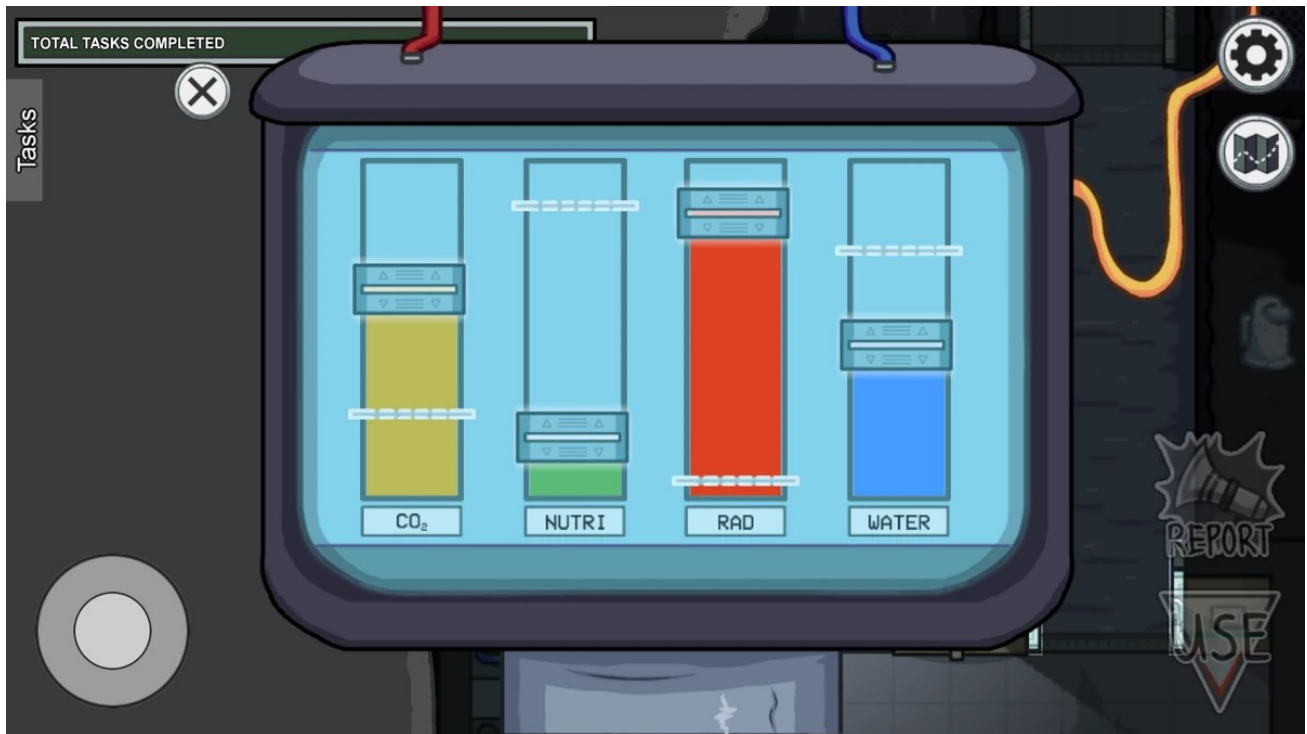
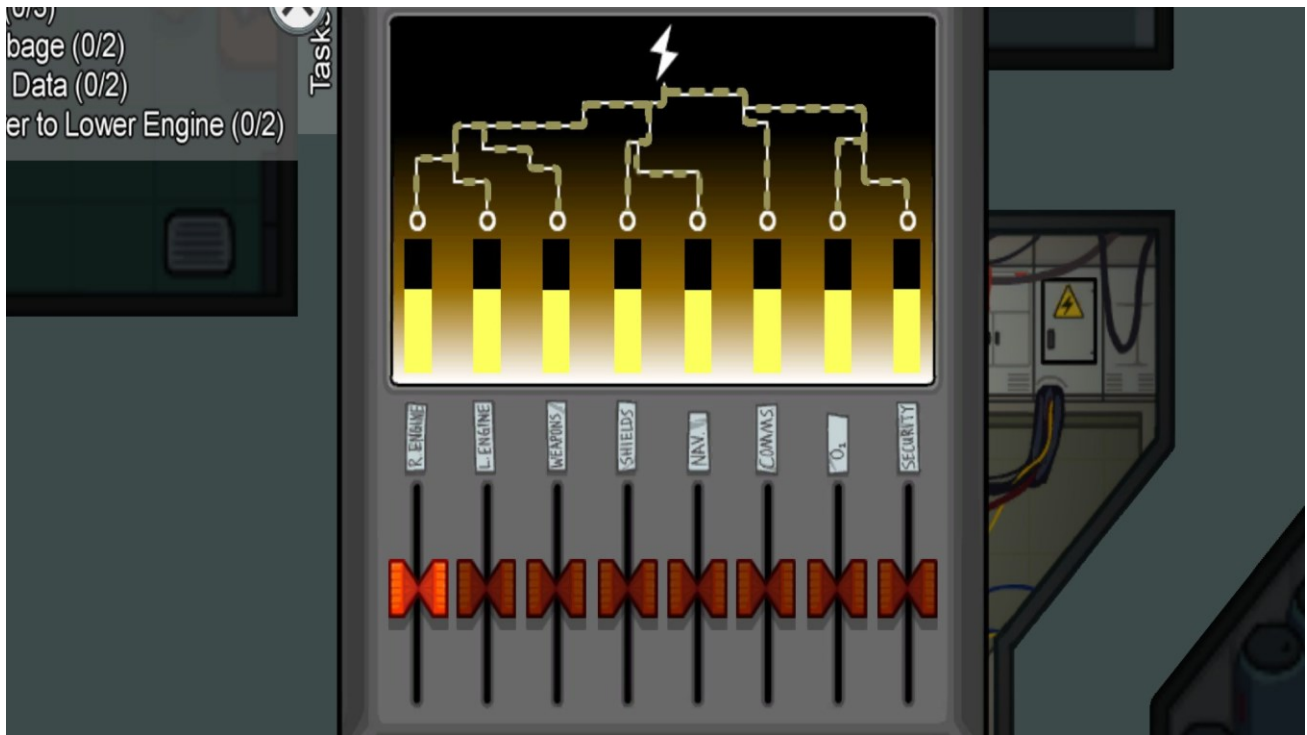
*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Shredder's Revenge (2022)*



*Bud Spencer & Terence Hill: Slaps and Beans (2017)*



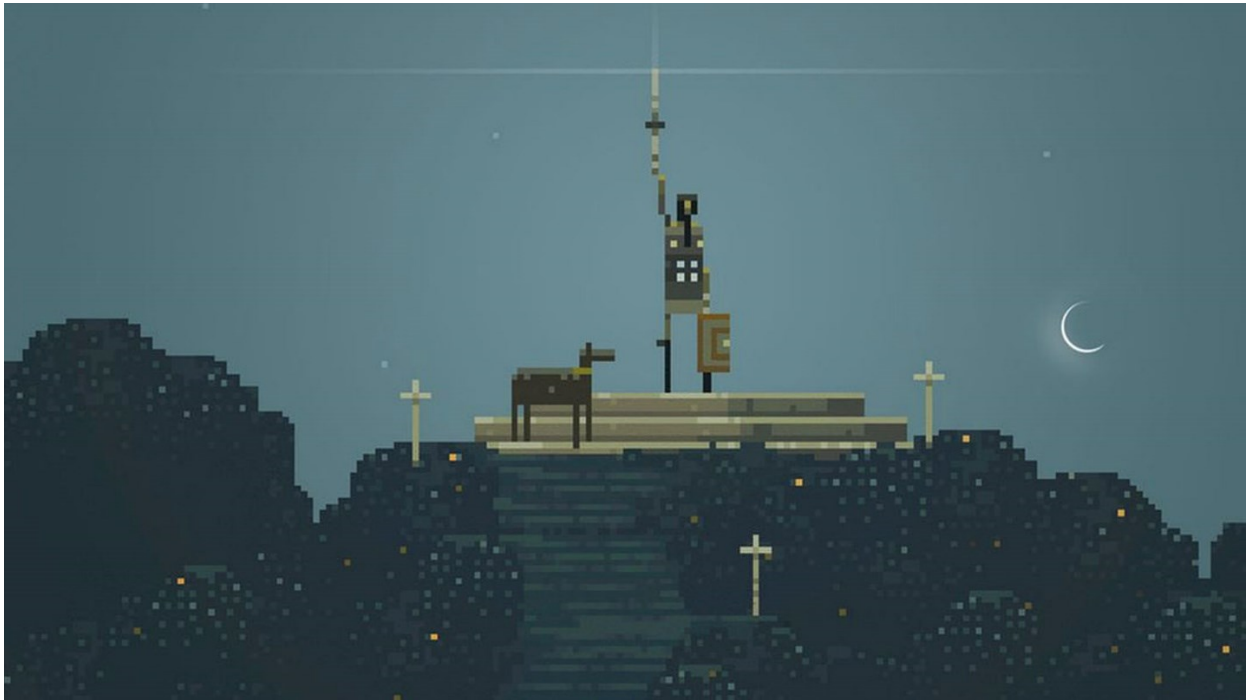
# Tasks



Among Us (2018)



Art



*Superbrothers: Sword & Sworcery EP (2011)*



*Hyper Light Drifter (2016)*



## Perspective & Environment



*The Secret of Monkey Island (1990)*



*Day of the Tentacle (1993)*



## 5

### Demo Characters

**Charles LaRue**, twenty-eight, is a careless scrawny drug addict. Charles' addiction causes him to gain powers, **opening him up to new possibilities as a private investigator**. He is driven by his need to care for his nephew Benny.

**Benny LaRue**, nine, is a sickly child struggling in school and suffering from an obscure disease with no known cure. From a young age, Benny has learned to take care of himself but remains optimistic.

**Natalie LaRue**, thirty-two, is a low-level investment banker trying to make her way through the world without much disruption. Resenting her brother for his immaturity, Natalie sporadically calls Charles to check in on Benny and voice her frustrations.

**Mr. Chu**, sixty-one, is Charles' boss in Chinatown. Managing many different storefronts, Mr. Chu cuts Charles a break and stays mostly out of his way while occasionally checking in.



# 6

## Demo Locations

### Environments

#### Metro 1

- Quiet, dim, brutalist concrete space
- Poorly upkept, minimal foot traffic
  - Pale yellow, muddy yellow, dark green, dark blue



*Metro 1 Concept Art*

#### Metro 2

- Visually cluttered, metal fencing and poles
- High foot traffic, smoky.
  - Light grey, light blue, black, sunrise colors



## Chinatown

- Tight spaces, hilly landscape, lanterns, flashy signs, scaffolding
- Friends gathering, social environment
- Complex color pallets



*Chinatown Concept Art*

## Hospital

- Simple, clean, cold, quiet
- Neon clusterfuck

## 11<sup>th</sup> Street

- Straight line, downtown French street, rows of tall buildings
- Magenta, baby blue, gold, sage

## Charles' Apartment

- Cramped, messy, low-end
- Browns and oranges



*Charles' Apartment Concept Art*

## **Bathroom Lair**

- High tech Batcave
- Iron Man talking computer
  - Dark, bright blue screens



# Maps



Game Map Sketch 1



*Game Map Sketch 2*



## 7

# Backstory

Charles grew up in a loving middle-class household. His father was a well-respected scientist, who was credited with discovering a new species of turtle, while his mother was a stunning lingerie model. After the passing of his father, the subsequent fading of his legacy, and the aging looks of his mother, Charles became disillusioned with the sense of making a lasting mark in this world.

Charles began closing himself off from his friends and family, with the influx of cash his father left behind for him leading him to drugs to ease his depression. When he had eventually consumed everything that was left for him, he conned his sister Natalie out of her share of the inheritance, convincing her it would go towards a lucrative business opportunity.

Natalie eventually came to realize what was going on with her brother and burst out in anger at his deception. Sadly, the brutal beating of her brother led the courts to rule that she was unfit to care for her son Benny. With no father figure in Benny's life and his grandmother no longer being competent enough to take care of herself, Natalie had to turn to Charles to house Benny, forcing him to pay back the money he stole and turn his life around.

Charles has been going steady for a year now, getting work in Chinatown. He pedals cheap souvenirs to tourists, oversees the upkeep of a rundown laundromat, and serves reheated street food out of a repurposed hotdog stand. By now, Charles has toned down his drug used just enough to function, but not enough to be compatible with his long-term health.



# 8

## Demo Summary

### Level 1

#### Metro 1

- Charles rides the subway

#### Metro 2

- Charles makes his way to Chinatown

#### Chinatown

- Charles meets with Mr. Chu to discuss his objectives for the day before clocking into work
- He snorts cocaine and begins completing quick-time tasks from various businesses around Chinatown
- After a long shift, he clocks out

#### Metro 2

- Charles gets on the Metro
- The screen fades to black

### Level 2

#### Metro 1

- Charles rides the subway

#### Metro 2

- Charles makes his way to Chinatown

#### Chinatown

- Charles speaks with Mr. Chu to receive new objectives
- Natalie unexpectedly calls to complain about Benny's grades slipping
- Charles hangs up and completes quick-time tasks from various businesses, using cocaine throughout the day to keep up with his tasks
- After a long shift, he clocks out



## Metro 2

- Charles gets on the Metro
- The screen fades to black

## Level 3

### Metro 1

- Charles rides the subway

### Metro 2

- Charles makes his way to Chinatown

### Chinatown

- Mr. Chu gives Charles new objectives, although now the responsibilities are substantially rising
- Natalie calls again to berate Charles about forgetting Benny's medication
- Charles hangs up and starts working with the help of cocaine
- He completes tasks at an impossible pace
- After too much use, Charles eventually passes out in the street
- The screen cuts to black

### Hospital

- Charles wakes up to find himself in the hospital
- A doctor informs him that in order to save his life, they had to fill his bloodstream with drugs
- Listening to the doctor, Charles sees the world in a new light and realizes that he has obtained superpowers through their treatment
- The doctor prescribes him medication to counteract those superpowers and dismisses him
- Charles leaves the hospital

## Level 4

### 11<sup>th</sup> Street

- Charles walks home
- He gets a call from Benny who asks him to bring home pizza



- Charles hangs up and explores the world with his new powers
- He eventually comes across imaginary monsters, who fight him and force him to learn how to use his new powers in combat
- Charles finally picks up a pizza for Benny
- He returns to his trip home

### Charles' Apartment

- Charles arrives at his apartment
- He gives Benny the pizza and asks about his day
- Charles excuses himself to go use the bathroom

### Bathroom Lair

- Charles walks inside his bathroom to find that he has walked into a superhero lair
- He explores it, finding a super suit and excitedly putting it on
- Benny suddenly knocks on the door

### Charles' Apartment

- The lair evaporates, proving to all be in Charles' head
- The screen fades to black



## 9

# UI & UX

## Health Bar

- During the Demo levels, the health bar is contingent on completing tasks around Chinatown
  - As Charles does more cocaine, his health decreases but he moves faster
- Static health bar along the top of the screen
  - Charles' health goes down if damaged during combat

## Objective Tracker

- Occasional wisps of color can lead your way to points of interest

## Menus & Options

- Accessible through Charles' phone in Toolkit

## Game Map

- Shuffle through a handful of hand drawn maps of both the overworld and the current level layout
  - It will be up to the player to decipher what they're looking at and where they are
  - No waypoint markers





# 10

## Full Game Brief

### Main Missions

As Charles struggles to scrap together enough cash to treat Benny's deadly disease, he figures out a way to parlay his new seemingly unhinged powers into a business! His abilities of extra sensory vision and accelerated communicative processing powers make him a private investigator to be reckoned with!

1. Figure out which one of the crates sold at the Comic Shop contains the Golden Ticket! Hand it in to the fellow members of the Superhero Fantasy Club (of which you are a member) to prove you are the first case of an actual real-life superhero!
  - a. From here the nerds with the Superhero Fantasy Club have your back, and they make sure you have gigs coming in.
2. Successfully identify the client's person of interest in a night club with raging bangers courtesy of DJ PTprods!
3. Sneak into a client's competing tech company and steal their blueprints!
4. Help a father in distress track down his off-grid daughter who has pursued a life of terrible drug addiction!
  - a. Unfortunately, you are too late to help her, and you have your first "fuck this" kinda moment!
5. Assassinate a dude in a penthouse with your new violent powers... Hey, at least it's good money!
  - a. Upon seeing the amazing capabilities that the drugs have granted Charles, one of the guys in the Superhero Fantasy Club wants in and asks you to share your drugs with him. You refuse, citing its destructive capabilities.
6. In order to deal with the guilt of your recent endeavors, you decide to take up a small gig helping out local fishermen track down the source of their lobster issue!
7. Hot on the path to redemption, you take up yet another virtuous gig helping out the good people of the city.



- a. However, halfway through its completion, you are interrupted by your friend, who was robbed.
  - b. You avenge him, but he remains unsatisfied, saying again that if only he had the same powers you did, this wouldn't have happened.
8. The mounting bills for your nephew's aid have become too much and these virtuous gigs aren't cutting it anymore. You take up a job to get between rival gangs and take out their whole operation. It'll be violent, but you NEED the money.
- a. You're not going alone; you'll have back up from this Superhero Fantasy Club wannabe-sidekick who keeps pestering you to get in on the action.
  - b. Lock and load, feed him the drugs... and he's instantly dead. Red with rage, you trek onwards and take the mission on by yourself, somehow succeeding.

## Multiple Endings

Amazing! Now you finally have enough to ensure your nephews health problems will go away... just spend the money on the right thing... just... don't... buy... more drugs.... Easy? Right?

### Ending 1: You resist the urge... *Resist* is an understatement...

9. You go through absolute hell, battling demons to make sure the money goes to the right place. Benny is saved, but your body runs out of drugs.
- a. You die, knowing at least once in your life you put others before you and your addiction.

### Ending 2: You give in...

9. What does it all matter, you did your best. You feel a deep relief in stopping the fight and giving into the temptation.
- a. But no. It can't end here. You can't just leave your nephew behind... surely you can have your cake and eat it too.
  - b. You break into Big Pharma, here you're certain you can find all the medicine you and Benny will ever need for life. You did it, it's all right there in your hands, but before you can turn and leave you see it, the holy grail: the medicine to end all medicines.
  - c. You take it, and unlock your final most intense power, you wield the ability to dive into other universes, create anything from nothing, roam the galaxy devoid of time and space, you are God, and you will stay in your fantasy land.



## Minigame Ideas

- Rock-Paper-Scissors but more options keep getting added after each win
- Medieval sword fight
- Super Smash game
- DnD dice game
- Pokémon battle
- Guitar Hero rhythm game
- Cooking Mama soup-making game
- XCOM tactical RPG
- Poker & Blackjack
- Chess with Charles as the pawn
- Mad Libs
- Racing game
- Timed events
- Rudimentary 3D FPS game



11

## Full Game Locations



*Red Light District Concept Art*



*Jerryville Concept Art*



*South Beach Concept Art*



12

## Potential Game Names

- *! Chasing Rabbits*
- *Gray Area*
- *Linewalker*



# 13

## Scrum Methodology

(Placeholder a/o 4/27/2025)

### Breakdown

- Different departments influence each other
  - Ex. Programming influences writing
- Achieve style through limitations
- Weekly meetings
  - Department heads meetings
  - Department meetings
- Project Goal: Create a functional, polished game demo by the end of summer

### Team Roles

#### Game Creator

- Sandro Colantonio

#### Game Directors

- Sandro Colantonio
- Joe Andaloro

#### Game Designers

- Brett Jones

#### Programmers

- Chris Kuntz
  - Matt Zalusky
  - Lucian Terhorst

#### Artists

- Sandro Colantonio
  - Annabelle Edwards-Stoll
  - Max Zhao



## Composer

- Joe Andaloro

## Sound Designers

- Joe Andaloro
- Ojany Santos

## Sprint Cycle

- 2-week sprints
- Each Sprint includes:
  - Day 1: Sprint Planning
    - Create task board for individual departments
    - Define Sprint Goal
  - Daily: Standups
    - Check-ins via Discord as needed
  - End of Sprint: Sprint Review
    - Showcase work done during meetings
  - Final day: Retrospective
    - What went well
    - What to improve

## Timeline

### Pre-Sprint Planning: May 1 – May 11

- Finalize Game Design Document
- Create initial task boards
- Prioritize features
  - Movement
  - Combat
  - UI
  - Environments



- Music
- Characters
- Setup tools
  - Discord server
  - Unity game engine
  - Trello task manager
  - Plastic SCM peer-to-peer sharing service

### Sprint 1: May 12 – May 25

- Goal: Core game loop prototype
  - Player movement
  - Perspective system
  - Basic level layout
  - Input handling
  - Placeholder art and audio

### Sprint 2: May 26 – June 8

- Goal: Combat and interactions
  - Attack mechanics
  - Enemy AI
  - Hitboxes and feedback
  - Health bar and system
  - Task system

### Sprint 3: June 9 – June 22

- Goal: UI and polish loop
  - Basic UI
    - Colorful whisps for objective tracking
  - Sound FX integration
  - Animations and transitions
  - Pause Menu flow
  - Dialogue system



### Sprint 4: June 23 – July 6

- Goal: Visual identity
  - Finalizing art direction
  - Replace placeholders
  - Lighting and shaders
  - Environmental detail pass
    - Rain effects
    - Garbage and trees blowing in the wind

### Sprint 5: July 7 – July 20

- Goal: World building and extra content
  - Refine script
  - Refine music and sound effects
  - Refine 2D sprites

### Sprint 6: July 21 – August 3

- Goal: Stability and playtesting
  - Internal QA
  - Playtesting feedback
  - Fix bugs
  - Polish controls
  - UX adjustments

### Sprint 7: August 4 – August 17

- Goal: Demo readiness
  - Final content lock
  - Title screen
  - Credits
  - Marketing assets

### Sprint 8: August 18 – August 24

- Goal: Final polish and trailer prep
  - Polish visuals and audio
  - Trailer creation



- Final playtesting

## Wrap-Up: August 25

- Submit demo
- Host playtest event
- Team retrospective
- Set roadmap for full game



# 14

## Creator Personal Statement

“I know that I know nothing.” – Socrates

Without a bloated production company feeding us a lazy script and a recycled formula, I want to emphasize that I plan to bring a game to life that will transcend the typical boundaries and be a point of pride for all of us. This game world should be a playground for an artist to create freely. I see my role as both a leader and a learner in this process. I have tried to make my vision as clear as possible in this document, but a large part of this game’s creation will come down to genuine discovery, collaborative brainstorming, and fluid criteria for our goals, which I hope does not discourage you, dear reader.

- Sandro