

Whispers Of Truth Game Design Document.

Document Contents

Concept.....	2
Narrative/Story.....	2
Moodboard.....	6
Design.....	6
Design/Björk and Holopainen Design Model.....	6
Boundary.....	6
Holistic.....	7
Temporal.....	7
Structural.....	8
Key Bindings & Actions.....	8
Game Mechanics.....	8
Flashlight & Batteries.....	8
Throwable Knives.....	9
Light switch & Breaker.....	9
Lore Notes.....	10
Puzzles.....	10
World Design.....	12
Inspirations.....	12
Game Map.....	12
Technical.....	14
Optimisation.....	14
File Naming Conventions.....	14
Player Teleporting.....	15
Enemy AI.....	15
Sound Asset List.....	15

Concept

Narrative/Story

Characters

Sarah Knight | 5 | Daughter

Sam Knight | 7 | Son

Mark Knight | 30s | Father

Sophie Knight | 30s | Mother

George Carter | 30s | Officer George

Miles Blackwell | 40s | Detective Blackwell

Joe Knight | 20s | Uncle Joe

A little girl is missing, a search party has been sent out, and officers are working to question any potential witnesses. The little girl's older brother has been notified about his missing sister and stays inside the house to try to find her himself. His parents have completely disassociated and neglected him since her vanishing. Sam's imagination goes wild, and he believes the house is turning into a giant labyrinth and that there is a monster hunting him down. The monster that took his sister.

Detective Blackwell brushes off what Sam mentions and instead decides to continue into the house.

The detective manages to find their way through the house and is presented with a phone in a dark area (perhaps a void?). The detective answers the phone, and they are asked if they have found the parents yet by a sinister voice. In an instant, the detective is transported back into the house.

Detective Blackwell runs out of the house with Sam and calls for an immediate order for the parents to be found and brought in for further questioning.

Sam's parents were part of a cannibalistic cult. The cult members wore dark grey robes with deer skulls as masks. The cult required an offering, young blood, and so Sarah was taken by her parents and killed to be eaten by the cult. Not all of Sarah was eaten, and so what was left of her body was stored in the home somewhere. The parents developed PTSD and began to go crazy, completely disassociating.

Officer George Carter is part of a search party in the woods for a missing girl called Sarah. He has gone off quite far on his own. He receives a radio message informing him that the girl's body has been found, but the parents are missing and are suspected to be escaping through the woods near his location.

He starts searching for them in the woods, which is very dark and eerie. He must check several creepy locations. Eventually, he catches sight of them and chases them to an abandoned building. He informs the other police of their location and then enters the building to apprehend them. He finds Sophie in a room on the 2nd floor.

She looks manic and starts to point a revolver at George. George, reacting quickly, shoots her before she can shoot him. Immediately after, Mark suddenly appears from around the corner of the door, screaming and strikes Joel in the head with a wooden board.

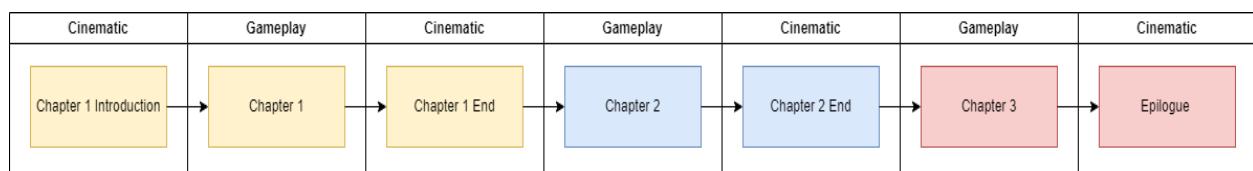
Mark is terrified and devastated over the death of Sophie. Seeing that she is no longer there, Mark hurries out of the building and continues through the woods, trying to escape. Mark evades capture for a while using Joel's gun to take out police officers who seem increasingly terrifying and monstrous to him. After running for a while, Mark is suddenly confronted by a horrific vision of a monster, which causes him to trip and fall a long way into a creek.

Mark lies broken on the floor, unable to move, unable to die. He breathes painfully in the cold wet night.

The player controls one character from the story in each of the three chapters. Chapter 1 players play as Detective Blackwell.

Chapter 2 has the player play as a police officer who is part of the search party for the missing girl. In the final Chapter, players are in control of Mark, the father of the kids and his desperate attempt to escape from the police.

The narrative will be throughout the game, with lore notes around the levels and moments where characters will provide dialogue for certain areas to situations. The game will begin with a short cinematic introduction before allowing the player to engage with any gameplay. At the end of each chapter, there will be cinematics that will lead onto the next chapter.



Intro Cinematic

- Dusk later becomes darker.
- Detective Blackwell is driving to the missing girl's home.
- The detective radios to notify that he will be arriving and entering the home soon.
- The screen fades to black as the sound of a car stopping plays.
- The screen fades back in, giving the player control of their character.

Chapter 1

- The Detective starts on the main street and can head into the main house.
- The inside of the house is normal.
- The 'Detective' explores all the rooms only to find that they might have missed one they never noticed.
- They are now in a tight room with only one door.
- The door turns out to be a fake and falls, revealing the rest of the house disguised as a labyrinth of rooms.
- There is a figure in the middle of the room. Who is this person? The one that took Sarah perhaps.
- There is a gate to what looks like a door, but the 'Detective' needs 3 artefacts.
- As the 'Detective' opens one of the 3 gates, the mysterious figure disappears and becomes a real threat they must be aware of.
- The rooms in this house repeat themselves. What is the reason for it?
- There are cryptic notes and drawings around the house.
- The basement leads to a generator and a gate to a store warehouse.

- What is a store warehouse doing here?
- Maybe the generators lead to an artefact?
- More lore is revealed through notes and items in the attic.
- A trap in an open space which could be used to take down the mysterious figure.
- Once all 3 artefacts are placed, the gate will open, and the detective can open the door at the end.
- The detective goes through the door and discovers something horrific.
- Sarah's body pieces in the bag.

Chapter 1 End Cinematic

- This is set near the entrance of Sam's home.
- The detective decides to call all units to find and bring in the parents.
- Additionally, the detective opens a case about the cult with the deer masks in connection to the mysterious man on the phone.

Chapter 2 (Police search for the parents)

- **The player is now Officer George Carter**
- The chapter starts with Officer Carter being informed that the parents are now the lead suspects and must be brought in.
- The parents were last seen close to Officer Carter's current location.
- Officer Carter is also advised to be aware of any individuals wearing white robes and deer masks.
- Officer Carter must traverse through the dark forest by himself.
- They come across different areas to search, such as sheds, public restrooms, abandoned cabins and more.
- Officer Carter will come across a small hideout where the cult would gather at times.
- Whilst searching the hideout, he must duck into cover as the parents enter the hideout looking for something.
- Officer Carter overhears the parents' frantic rambling before their confession to the kidnapping and sacrificial killing of their daughter Sarah.
- He is sick to his stomach hearing this.
- Officer Carter yells at them to put their hands up and stay where they are, but before he can even finish, the husband opens fire on him, and he must duck for cover.
- After 3 or 4 shots, the officer gets on his feet and chases after them.
- He notifies dispatch that he is in pursuit of the parents.
- He spots the parents entering an abandoned building and notifies command of their location before being told to hold back and wait for back-up.
- Detective Blackwell tells Officer Carter to stand by and wait for back-up, but he ignores this and follows the parents into the building.
- Officer Carter explores the building looking for the parents.
- A loud metal clanking sound comes from a distance, and the officer heads towards it.
- As they turn the corner, Sophie is there, standing shocked and crying.

Chapter 2 End Cinematic (Officer Carter & Sophie interaction)

- She looks agitated and crazy.
- Officer Carter tries to reason with her and asks her not to resist arrest.
- Suddenly, she yells to stay back before she draws the revolver used previously and aims it at the officer.
- At the same time, Officer Carter aims his weapon at Sophie.
- The screen goes black, and a gunshot can be heard.

Chapter 3 (Mark flees to freedom?)

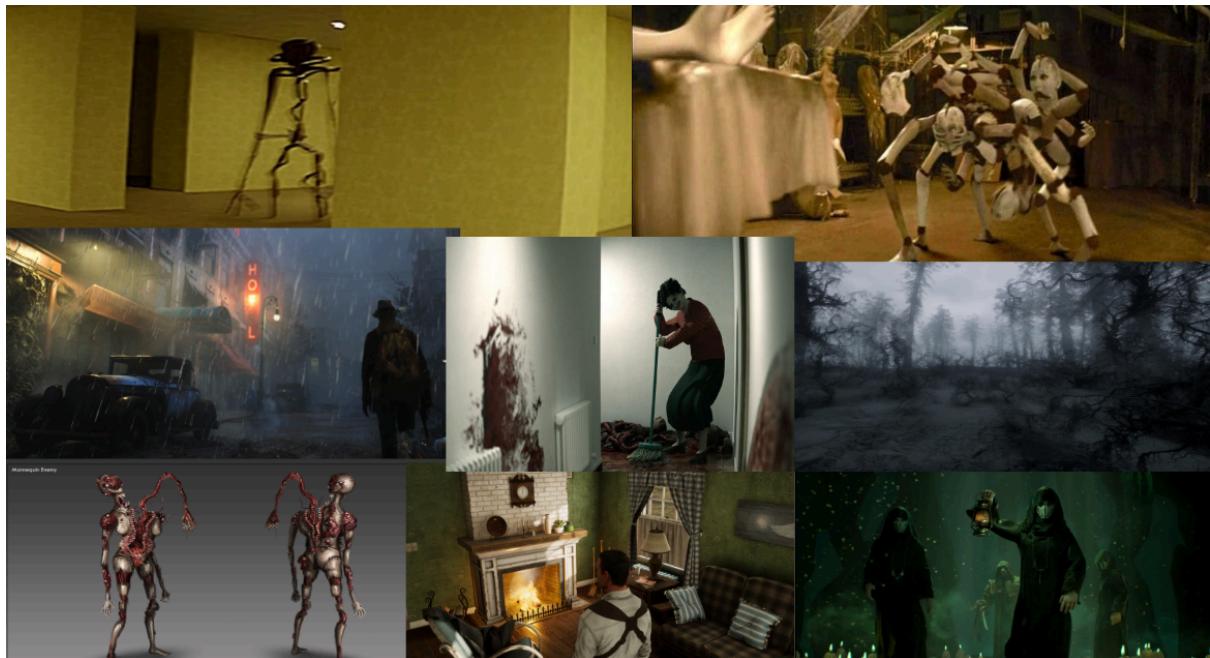
- **Chapter 3 is set minutes before Sophie and Officer Carter meet.**
- **The player is now playing as Mark.**
- The Chapter starts with Mark & Sophie heading into the building as they look to evade Officer Carter.
- They hear a noise and suspect that the officer is closing in on them, so Mark tells Sophie to wait in a room whilst he looks for a weapon.
- Mark looks through multiple rooms before he finds a sturdy wooden bat left there and takes it.
- Sophie starts going crazy and begins to hear voices.
- She gets frustrated and goes to walk around the room, but hits her leg on something which, causes metal objects to fall and create a loud noise.
- Mark hears the noise and runs back to Sophie in fear for his wife's safety.
- In fear that the officer would now find her, she leaves the room, but it's too late the officer has found the room she was in.
- The altercation happens, and Officer Carter shoots Sophie.
- Mark watches as his Wife is shot and sprints towards Officer Carter.
- Mark hits Officer Carter in the back of the head with the bat, killing him instantly.
- Sophie and the Officer are both dead.
- Mark hears police sirens and more vehicles pulling up to his location.
- Mark must now try to slip out of the building and escape whilst avoiding being captured by the police.
- Mark escapes the building and runs deep into the nearby forest.
- He's so focused on ensuring the police are not on him that he steps on a sharp branch that impales his foot, and he trips and falls into a deep ditch.
- The fall causes him to break most of his bones, and he is impaled through the abdomen by another branch beneath him.
- He screams in pain as his vision begins to go blurry, and he slowly loses his voice.
- Cut to black.

Epilogue Cinematic

- Set immediately after Chapter 3.
- Birdseye view of Mark lying in the ditch.
- The camera slowly spins anti-clockwise and moves upwards continuously as the camera cuts back and forth between Mark and other scenes.
- The camera cuts to the police discovering the dead body of Sophie and Officer Carter.
- The camera switches back to Mark, and some time has passed.
- The camera moves to Detective Blackwell and some officers checking out the cult hideout.
- Camera cuts back to Mark, and more time has passed.
- Camera switches to show the funeral of Officer Carter with his Wife and child there.

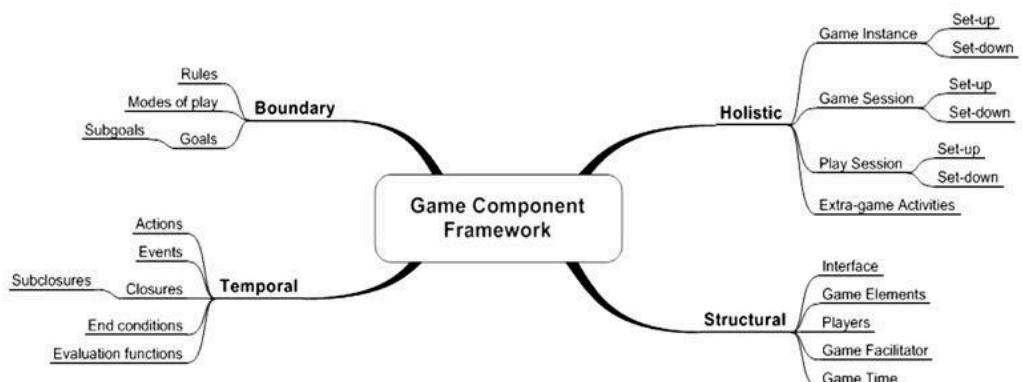
- Camera cuts back to Mark, and even more time has passed.
- The camera cuts to Detective Blackwell talking to Sam, and at the end of the conversation, shows Sam being consoled and now going home with his Uncle Joe.
- The final camera cut goes back to Mark, and months have gone by. He lies there, his breathing is weak, and his skin is pale.
- A deer is eating Mark's rotting flesh, his moans of pain are weak and barely audible.
- How can he be alive? Is this a part of the cult sacrifice? Maybe it's the consequences of sacrificing his daughter, or perhaps it's something the cult leaders never told him about.
- Cut to black and credits roll.

Moodboard



Design

Design/Björk and Holopainenen Design Model



Boundary

Rules:

1. The player moves at a slow speed but can run as long as they have enough stamina.
2. Lighting and sound are pivotal for the player's immersion.
3. Puzzles will be used to engage the player with mini goals they must complete.
4. Jumpscares will be used to give players more of a scare whenever they might feel safe. The tension should have the player constantly in fear of what could happen next.
5. The story should be interesting enough to encourage the player to learn more.
6. The player will not be able to see themselves at any point.
7. The player will only die or restart whenever they are caught by the enemy.
8. No inventory screen as items are held in front of the player and brought around with them as physical objects.
9. Unusual sounds and unexpected behaviours should keep the player constantly on their toes, in addition to the enemy roaming around them.

Modes of play:

- Standard Story Mode.

Goals and sub goals:

- Level Exploration.
- Reading lore notes that provide narrative context.
- Solve puzzles to gain access to new areas.
- Finish the story.

Holistic

Game instance:

- Setup – Drop the player immediately into the game, then provide more context near the end.
- Set down – Player is finished with the game; game will save and be ready for the next play session.
- Tension value – Handled by how the player is progressing.

Play session:

- Setup – Session starts with a dynamic menu before allowing the player to continue the game or start a new one.
- Set-down – Gameplay only stops when the player quits. Players' progress is saved based on checkpoints, autosaves and manual saves.

Extra-game activities:

- A few easter eggs are hidden around the level.

Temporal

Actions:

- Walking.
- Sprinting.
- Collecting key items/objects.
- Solving puzzles.
- Throwing knives.
- Using the flashlight.
- Interacting.
- Opening doors.
- Reading notes.

Events:

- The game starts. Players must traverse through their areas back to complete the puzzles and collect the required artefacts before they can leave.
- The player must place all the artefacts before they can open the final gate.

- The game ends after the player interacts with the ringing phone in the void.

Closures:

- There could be a final cutscene that ends this chapter and sets up the next one.

End conditions and evaluation functions:

- The player needs to use a key object in an area.
- The player finishes reading a note.
- The player interacts with certain items.
- All puzzles are completed.
-

Structural

Interface:

- Standard HUD from the original games.
- Included new modern UI, such as dialogue pop-ups.
- Standard WASD-mouse or gamepad support.

Game elements:

- Player character - A detective in search of a missing child.
- Hallways - must be big enough to move around the enemy, but also make the player feel a little claustrophobic.
- Rooms - They can contain various items which can be of use for a puzzle or stunning the enemy.
- Jumpscares triggers.

Players:

- Must solve puzzles.
- Explores the game world for clues.
- Not represented physically, disembodied.

Game facilitator:

- Game manager - Tracks player progress based on completed puzzles, enemy encounters, collected artefacts, and notes viewed.

Key Bindings & Actions

Key Binding	Action
Left Mouse Button / Right Trigger	Throw Knife
Right Mouse Button or Q / Gamepad North Button	Flashlight On/Off
E / Gamepad West Button	Interact
W or S / L-stick vertical	Walk forwards/backwards
A or D / L-stick horizontal	Strafe left/right

Game Mechanics

Flashlight & Batteries

The player will have access to a flashlight, which can be used to provide vision in darker areas of the map. The flashlight has 3 bars of charge and will require the player to collect more batteries to

recharge it. Batteries are scattered around the level in various spots, but they are limited, which means if the player runs out, they have to face the darkness.



Throwable Knives

There will be a large number of knives scattered around the map that the player can collect. Players will be able to throw these knives using the left mouse button. If a knife hits the enemy, then the enemy will be temporarily stunned for a second, giving more time for the player to escape. If the knife hits anything but the enemy, then it will not be consumed and will allow the player to pick it back up.



Light switch & Breaker

Each room will contain a light switch that can be used to turn the light on and off. If the player hits the light switch multiple times in rapid succession, it will cause the breaker to flip. This means that all lights in the zone will turn off and will remain that way until the breaker is interacted with. Each zone of the map will contain a breaker, which can be used to reactivate all the lights in the zone again.



Lore Notes

There are various short lore notes around the level that can provide some small story notes. Additionally, there are some notes on certain interactables which can help provide clues and help players who struggle.



Puzzles

The only puzzles in the game are the ones that provide the player with items that are required to complete the game. These are more searching for the key component instead of puzzles, but can be classed as such.

The Floor Trap

This is a puzzle that requires the player to find the red key, which can be used to prime the trap. Once the trap is primed, the player must then lure the enemy over and onto the red mark on the ground.

As soon as the enemy touches the mark, the steel ball will drop and not only knock them down but will also cause the enemy to drop one of the 3 artefacts.



The Storage Gate

At the back of the basement will be a locked gate that will require the player to activate 3 generators and present a keycard to unlock.

Once this has been done, the gate will open up, and the player will then have access to a storage room filled with food and water?



Uncle Joe

Uncle Joe is the last of the puzzles the player can complete to get an artefact. The player will be given a collection task to complete, meaning the player will need to go back out and find the required item to give to Uncle Joe. Once completed, Uncle Joe will give another task (3 tasks in total), and after all 3 have been completed, the player will receive one of the 3 artefacts.



World Design

Inspirations

The game map was inspired by a lot of the lore around the Backrooms game. The idea was to have the map feel weird, mysterious and have a supernatural element to it that intrigues and confuses the player.



Game Map

The Main House

The main house is designed to give the player enough space to manoeuvre around the enemy if needed, whilst leaving larger areas empty to make it more eerie. The level has certain jump scares that can be triggered as the players explore new areas. The jump scares have a chance of reappearing if the player returns to the same area.

There are various rooms that you would find in a normal house (living room, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, etc), and they are all sewn together in a way that makes this map seem like a Frankenstein.

This is also the only area in the game where the enemy will roam around and hunt the player.



The Attic

The attic is a small safe space that the player can use to take a break from the enemy chasing them. Additionally, it has a few interactables such as lore notes, breakable boxes, and key items for progression.



The Basement

In a similar way to the attic, the basement is a safe space that the player can use, but the basement holds a new area that the player can unlock to progress further. The player must unlock the storage gate to enter the door at the back of the room.

The door at the back of this room leads to the gas station.



The Gas Station

This is a small room with the typical gas station aesthetic, but it contains one of the 3 artefacts to open the final gate in the main house.



Technical

Optimisation

Since the project is developed for mid-spec computers, consideration should be taken to make the game run well at medium and high graphics settings as well as maximum, so that the audience may have a similar experience regardless. Meshes are made to fit the lower poly PSX style, so performance should be much higher. The project will be actively optimised as it is developed.

File Naming Conventions

Standard naming conventions are used throughout project files to make locating them easier. These can all be found here:

<https://www.unrealdirective.com/resource/asset-naming-conventions#:~:text=What%20are%20the%20rules%20when,Material%2C%20T%20for%20Texture.>

Naming conventions will start with the Prefix followed by the name and any other additions that are required. Examples will be shown below.

BP_[NAME] – Blueprints (BP_Door, BP_Tool, BP_Vent).

BPC_[Name] – Blueprint Components (BPC_Stamina, BPC_Flashlight).

BPI_[Name] – Blueprint Interfaces (BPI_Interact, BPI_Popup).

ABP_[NAME] - Animation blueprints (ABP_Player, ABP_Remnant).

SM_[NAME] - Static meshes (SM_Crate, SM_Crowbar, SM_Key).

SK_[NAME] - Skeletal meshes (SK_Player, SK_Remnant).

M_[NAME] - Materials (M_Couch, M_Glass).

T_[NAME]_[TYPE] – Textures followed by their types (T_Door_BaseColor, T_Door_Diffuse).

SM_[CATEGORY] – Sound Class Mixes (SM_MasterPlayer, SM_MasterUI).

SC_[NAME] – Sound Classes (SC_Master).

SCUE_NAME] - Sound cues (SCUE_DoorOpening, SCUE_BoxBreak).

P_[NAME] – Particles Systems (P_Glow, P_Shine).

LS_[NAME] – Level Sequences (LS_Intro, LS_Chapter1End).

W_[NAME] – Widgets/UI (W_Player, W_PauseMenu).

GM_[NAME] – Game mode (GM_Chapter1).

L_[NAME] – Game Levels. (L_MainMenu, L_Chapter1_House).

Player Teleporting

The player will have some form of teleporting with the addition of Vents and travelling to different sub-areas (Attic, Basement, etc).

When the player interacts with a vent or door that will take them to a new area, they will still retain all their data. The player's screen will fade to black as they teleport, and during the short black screen, the next area is loaded in whilst the previous area will be unloaded.

This is to assist with optimisation and provide a better experience for players whilst maintaining a seamless teleport.

Enemy AI

The Enemy AI will go through different states based on what is happening:

- Patrol State
- Investigate State
- Chase and Attack State
- Death State

The detection is based on a visibility detection cone in front of the enemy. Once the enemy detects the player, they will continuously chase and attack the player. The chase and attack state will only change if the player kills the enemy, gets far enough away from the enemy or if the enemy kills the player. The enemy will only investigate areas for a short while before going back to their patrol state.

Sound Asset List

Gameplay Sounds List

Description of Sound
Player footsteps (Walking & Sprinting)
Player panting (Out of Stamina)
Collecting items
Throwing knives

Gate opening
Gate closing
Trap turning on
Trap activating
Trap resetting
Door opening
Door closing
Crate breaking
Batteries charge
Vent opening
Vent closing
Keycard swiper declined
Keycard swiper accepted
Fridge door opening
Fridge door closing
Gas Station inside store tune
Gas Station door opening
Gas Station door closing
Light switch
Fuse box blown
Fuse box restarted
Flashlight on
Flashlight off

Cinematic Sounds List

Intro Cinematic:

Asset Name
Car moving
Car stopping
Footsteps on concrete
Phone call / ringing

Chapter 1 End Cinematic:

Asset Name
Footsteps on carpet
Calling on phone/phone ringing

Chapter 2 End Cinematic:

Asset Name
Woman crying
Woman yelling
Police equipment rustling
Drawing a weapon from the ground
Handgun pulled from holster
Gun shot

Chapter 3 End Cinematic:

Asset Name
Woman and Child crying
Police offices noises
SWAT team running / breaching

Heavy rain
Deer eating
Flesh and organs sloshing around
Blood squirting/bubbling