

Project Embers

3D isometric cover shooter game.

Gameplay

The basics

The game borrows the main core game mechanics of NOT A HERO. Not the core philosophical ideas and concepts that made up the game, but the core that made the gameplay.

- Sliding
- Getting into cover
- Shooting out of cover
- Sliding into enemies
- Executing downed enemies
- Critical hits at close range
- Automatically interacting with something when near
- Using grenades and deployables
- Having a primary objective in the level
- Having 3 secondary and optional objectives per stage

Additional gameplay systems have been added

- Frenzy mechanic
- Armor system

Health system

The game will have chunks of health, which will be reminiscent of NOT A HERO, but they will not regenerate over time.

Instead, the player will have armor, which will take damage first.

New mechanic : Frenzy

In order to develop the concept of NOT A HERO, a frenzy meter will build while playing the game and doing combos. Getting kills is part of the combo, and the higher the number, the faster frenzy builds. The frenzy meter decays over time after some idle time.

At maximum frenzy, kills grant stacks of “Thrill”, which grants 4%hp/s health regeneration and 10% move speed, each lasting for 3 seconds. There are no other ways to regenerate health, so this is a way to allow aggressive plays and regenerate health. Frenzy drains instantly upon reaching its maximum, and can be filled during this draining by getting kills.

Combos, activating frenzy, time in frenzy and getting kills during frenzy all grant hidden points that factor into the level ranking (seen later).

Regenerating health

Despite having health in chunks, health is regenerated over time in big numbers. What gives ?

Every chunk will be worth an amount of health. Let's say hypothetically 20. When health regenerates, it will create a greyed out chunk that is increasing. Once it reaches the value of the chunk, it will become a real health chunk for the player.

Progression

The game will feature a progression system that earns you money every time you beat a level, with bonus cash for those side objectives.

Money can be spent to buy weapons, equipables, consumables, and perks. Armor is a system that allows you to take damage, and to have a form of regenerating effective health, but health is permanent.

Objectives, bonus objectives and rewards

Like NOT A HERO, each level will prominently feature one objective that is required in order to complete the stage. Doing such will reward the player with the base cash reward. A rank will be given based on your performance (speed, kills, combos & frenzy). The rank is unrelated to objectives. There is a rank for completing the level and one for completing all objectives at once.

Completing side objectives will grant the player more cash than the base payout. When a player completes a level, its payout will be reduced. If the player hasn't done secondary objectives, the base payout reduction will be less significant. The player receives additional money from ranks.

Money can be spent to buy weapons and gear. Accomplishing specific bonus objectives or an amount of them unlocks weapons to buy and perks to equip.

Weapons

There will be many weapons in this game, all with varying uses. The player will be able to use two weapons at once after buying the upgrade. There are also melee weapons, in case the player uses the melee dash perk, the melee weapon will be used for that dash on top of being for executions.

The game will feature different categories of weapons that all have different weapons in their class, each with upsides and downsides, but generally some being better than others.

Type	Benefits, upsides, stats	Negatives
Pistols	All around good weapons. Medium Range Medium damage Cheap Can be dual wielded with perks Run and gun tactics are good Doesn't lower speed	On average lower mag sizes Spamming lowers to a very bad accuracy

	Semi auto (with exceptions) Fast reload	
SMGs	Doesn't lower speed High fire rate Medium mag sizes Run and gun tactics are good Fast reload	Less damage More reliant on critical hits Lower accuracy
ARs	High damage, accuracy and lower spread Medium mag sizes Medium fire rate Medium reload	Slower movement Run and gun is nearly pointless
Shotguns	High power Breaks doors down Critical hits cause funny gibbs	Short range Low fire rate Slower movement Reloads are shot by shot (with exceptions)
LMGs	High power, high fire rate, high mag size	No critical hits Accuracy quickly becomes abysmal Very slow movement Very slow reload Expensive
High explosives	High power AOE	Very slow movement Self damage Low mag size Slow reload Expensive
Misc	Depends on weapon	Depends on weapon

Melee type	Benefits, upsides, stats	Negatives
None	Pushes enemies away in a direction 5 dashes Short recharge Fast executions	Executions cost ammo. Are slower if no ammo Almost no damage Don't use this if you use the dashes
Small hammer	Short recharge 3 charges Fast executions	Doesn't kill all enemies instantly
Knife	Fast executions 3 charges Deals double damage if backstab	Mediocre recharge Doesn't kill all enemies instantly Lower damage
Crowbar	Medium length execution	Slow recharge

	5 charges Can be combo-ed into itself for more damage	Doesn't kill all enemies instantly Can slow player
Bat	3 charges Sends enemies flying in a direction	Doesn't kill any enemies instantly Can slow player Mediocre recharge Slow executions
Sledgehammer	1 charge Deals great damage Sends enemies that don't die to it flying in a direction	Slow recharge Can heavily slow player Very slow executions
Katana	1 charge Deals great damage	Doesn't recharge automatically Requires kills to recharge part of the charge Melee kills instantly recharge it. Can slow player Slow executions

Equipable perks and gear

In order to add back character specific perks from *NOT A HERO* while keeping the singular character, unlockable and equipable perks will serve as a replacement.

Perks and gear are different slots and serve different purposes.

Perks change how the game plays by switching stats and encouraging different playstyles. Most can be used together, though some will try to prevent conflicts.

Gear can upgrade or improve certain facets of the character, and serve different purposes depending on what you choose. They are more involved and thus are less numerous. Holster is the first item to equip as it is received early in the game.

You can have a lot more perks than gear (6/7/8 to 3 max ?), and slots for both can be unlocked, bought or received throughout the game.

Gear	Effect
Holster	Gain 1 weapon slot. Weight of weapons reduced by 15%
Dual wield	Can equip the same pistol (or some SMG) in both slots to dual wield. Use the special key to shoot in both directions
Exorbitantly luxurious suit	“Join the high class men and the wannabes. Smells like rotten guts and is highly radioactive. Has small text written on it that reads “CEO mindset”. Offers no protection.” you die in one hit. (Cruelty squad reference.)

Reinforced armor	Gain 20% damage reduction when taking armor damage
Iron skin	Gain 25% damage reduction when taking health damage.
Passive armor	<p>Armor is split into three chunks. Regenerate a damaged chunk or a full chunk if no chunk is damaged every 3 kills or after not taking damage for 6 seconds. Normal armor regeneration removed.</p> <p>Cannot be equipped with Adaptive armor.</p>
Adaptive armor	<p>Receiving armor damage will cause the armor to regenerate for 75% of the damage taken in the next 1.5 second. Getting hit during this time interrupts the regeneration and prevents the effect from happening again for 5 seconds.</p> <p>Cannot be equipped with Passive armor.</p>
Bomber pouch	Can hold many grenade types at the same time. Hold “throw grenade” button to switch grenade type.
Melee Weapon holster	Have 2 distinct melee weapons for both dashes and executions
Deeper magazine	Increases magazine size by $5 + 10\%$ rounded down (15 mag size is increased by $5 + 1 \rightarrow 21$; 30 by $5 + 3 \rightarrow 38$)
Conversion kit : health	<p>95% of armor is turned into health. The combined health is increased by 10%.</p> <p>Only one conversion kit can be equipped at a time.</p>
Conversion kit : armor	<p>90% of health is converted into armor. The combined armor is increased by 10%.</p> <p>Only one conversion kit can be equipped at a time.</p>

Perk	Effect
Close call	Taking damage that breaks armor will negate any damage that would have affected health
Combat training	Reload weapons 25% faster
CQC	Weapons deal additional damage the closer the target is.

Dodge roll	Dodge slide is replaced by dodge roll Lower distance, no burst of speed. Reload magazine (or is 1 by 1 reloads : 1 on the chamber) when doing it
Cover shooter	Can move laterally behind cover if the cover allows for it
Greed	Take 20% more damage. You receive 20% more money from payouts.
Avarice	Take 20% more damage. You receive 20% more money from payouts.
Negotiator	Take 40% more damage. Subsequent payout penalties are reduced by 50%
Quick dash	Use your special to dash towards an enemy with your equipped melee weapon, dealing damage. 50% damage reduction during a dash.
Sleight of hand	Executions are +50% faster (speed divided by $1 + 0.5$)
Boomer shooter	Run and gun accuracy is heavily improved
Adrenaline	10% faster base move speed. Gain movespeed based on weapon weight. Heavier means more.
Give it back	Hitting critical hits have a chance to return +1 in the mag. Scales with mag size. Minimum 25% chance. 40 mag is 100%.
Melee frenzy	Melee kills have +100% increased frenzy build up. Every stack of thrill multiply melee damage by 1.5.
Blood lust	Frenzy lasts 25% longer. Stacks of thrill last 33% (1 sec) longer. Takes 10% longer to fill the meter.
Stone cold	Removes the frenzy meter. A stack of thrill is permanently active at 50% efficiency.
Thrilling killing	Thrills heals 15% of max health instantly instead of 4%/s over 3 seconds. Thrill no longer grants movement speed.
Agile critical thinking	Exiting a slide grants you the ability to deal critical hits further away for 1 second. Cooldown of 2 seconds.
Flippant fury	Frenzy depletes faster (50%), but Thrill is more efficient (50%)
Controlled outbursts	Frenzy isn't automatically started upon reaching maximum gauge. Frenzy can be started upon pressing [key]. Trill bonuses are reduced (40%)

Level Design

General philosophy

The levels are Isometric in nature and thus require the mapper to handle seeing through walls and ceilings when needed.

This is a cause for concern : do levels need to be linear to avoid doing additional work, or are levels going to be more complex with more work required to make the game seamless. [Adding floors that need to be transparent 50% of the time may cause the game engine to shit itself.](#)

Enclosed environments are preferable. Office spaces, hospitals, nightclubs, small districts, warehouses etc. Open areas are not out of consideration, rather they will be needed to break up the pace. Unsure about free roaming / non linearity.

Objectives

To be determined. So far, *NOT A HERO* objectives can be copied to experiment the gamefeel.

Story

World

The year is 2044, in an alternate world where the 2030 economic crash led to many people losing their jobs and the standard of living regressing.

The world can be loosely called a “Cyberpunk-ish” world, but it is more of a technological dystopia. Companies hold massive influence over the government, poverty is at an all time high, and technology is barely advancing, with only buzzwords governing what product is being made, if any at all.

The real latest technological advancement are replacement Body parts like limbs, hands, eyes and mouth. These prosthetic parts are available across the world, and while some can be expensive and convincing, some are rough terminator-skeleton-esque that are cheap and affordable, yet prone to errors and both safety and health concerns.

Many private militaries have cropped up due to the influence of corporations, and they offer their services in many wars across the globe. The most war prone areas are in the middle east, the border between north america and central america, and many borders of asian countries of the East. The government’s militaries can barely compete with private militaries, mostly due to financial issues, and thus have to resort to private ones, increasing their reliance on corporations.

Due to the corporation’s influence, the current European government, the ‘Alliance for Europe’s Prosperity’ is corrupt, and recently had many representatives and presidents elected thanks to being on the side of the corporation’s interest. As the corporations decide who gets to be president, the role of president is to be a puppet and lie to the masses.

The events happen in what was dubbed “the city of Embers”, a large city that has become the capital of a country that was formed from the ashes of the great war of Europe : Prosperity.

The technology available to the world in this universe is no different from ours. Apart from certain advancements in weapon technology, barely none of common appliances have evolved or changed. Only differences are the most expensive products will have the newest “feature” added before not including it once the fad is over. Whether it is “AI”, “Touch sensation”, “Immersive smell” or the newest “Alternate reality” (where companies use a rebranded form of Augmented reality), companies will drop the new buzzword in order to avoid costs. Some companies exist to give barebones products, and are the most popular due to the constantly lowering standard of living.

Unfortunately, due to a shortage of resources, technology has become restricted to the richest, and technology has to adapt to it. Screens were replaced with holographic projections, chips have majorly reduced performance, internet bandwidth was reduced, some data centers were purged to reduce data bandwidth. Many datacenters that were used to power previous buzzwords have been scorched by their owners to avoid having to deal with the inventories of hardware that could be a potential liability.

The web has digressed into the Web1.0, and people can no longer interact online, with only corporations and celebrities being able to use these websites. A lot of internet content was removed due to excess content, making personal archives of these contents extremely valuable.

The first type of content purged from the web was mature content, including porn, horror themed content and content with gore, whether it was real or fiction. The second type of content removed was content politically aligned towards freewill and against corporate interest. Finally, social media was outlawed in every country ever. That deleted 99.99% of the internet.

Corporations do not want archives to persist as they highlight the regression of the internet, and corporations have secretly funded terrorist groups that have the goal of destroying personal archives at all costs.

Televisions and radios have become the main way for people to learn information, as social media has stopped existing. Niche independent news sites keep appearing and mysteriously shutting down online. All attempts at making forums have failed as they are considered social media, and get banned for it.

Overview

The game would happen in a cyberpunk-ish world, where you play as a female protagonist, she takes on contract work for an agency that works with private detectives.

The game is framed by her reciting the whole story to a private investigator sent by the government, in a pitch black interrogation room.

The game story would be kinda like Max Payne. The story is personal. You care about the protagonist because of her situation and predicament. She isn't hateable because she doesn't try to be quotable 24/7. She is a sometimes funny person in a miserable moment, a real person with friends in a world where people expect to be backstabbed, and considering the work as a contract killer, she is lucky for both herself and her friends to not be dead yet. The criminal

record was always justified as detective work, so there was no real criminal background. The friends at work and outside of work will all help the protagonist have revenge on those who killed her family. There is no talk out of revenge by her friends, everyone is a toxic yes man, everyone is as upset and emotional about the whole situation as she is, leading to actually awful and heinous things being done.

The people who committed the crime aren't overly evil companies or corporations. It instead are low level dealers and bullies who ruined many people's lives, including the protagonist's. She wasn't even a specific target, it was impersonal, like she wasn't accounted for as a person, only as a potential victim to get a message across to the agency she works for. Searching for information reveals an underground drug deal black market that has wormed its way into the government that the player dismantles piece by piece, little by little.

The protagonist does missions that her friends gave her in the pretext to help another detective (which is just an excuse to send her do her revenge thing). As she does that, she does things people would consider evil, such as storming night clubs, hospitals, parks, private warehouses and more, and killing many people during these missions. I am thinking about adding civilian NPCs that could alter the end of the game, but it would be complex to code in and would be more work.

In the end of the game, the investigator asks if you (the character) believe you **should** go to prison. Regardless of the answer, you are pardoned, with your actions having been covered-up.

The moral of the story is that there are none. Maybe working on instincts has made you do horrible things, but that also destroyed an entire drug dealing business. Maybe next time you won't be so lucky.

After beating the game and seeing the ending, radios that usually spout ads and garbage news that no one cares about (celebrity culture), will instead tell the news of how the government has fought the corporation's influence and how they will begin to treat the populations living in slums with some seriousness. Also corporations's relations to drug dealing were outed and stock prices are crashing, allowing anyone to join in on the free market, even the poorest.

I guess the message is that the government needs to take care of people and not boot lick corporations ?

Protagonist

Inspired by the artstyle of this twitter artist, [Ghost](#), I imagine the protagonist as a dark grey haired female character. She wears a dark red synthetic polyester windbreaker hoodie. Under the hoodie is a slightly dark grey bulletproof/tactical vest over a dark grey, nearly black, long sleeved shirt. Her hair is short to medium length, and goes in seemingly random directions. She wears a black male sports short that goes down to about $\frac{1}{2}$ of her thighs, that short has dark red decorative stripes and an in-game brand name. She has dark tights that are vaguely transparent, which barely shows her few scars underneath. Her shoes are whatever, just basic dark grey kicks. Her hoodie has a gradient from a dark grey-ish crimson red in the bottom to a slightly lighter dark-red up top. Her hood is on very often.



More reference images (im deeply sorry if any are AI but i need to point and say “ya, that”):



Achievement ideas

Name	Requirement
Stone cold archetype	No emotions, no remorse. (Finish a level without filling the frenzy meter without Stone Cold or Controlled outbursts)
The exclamation mark	Finish the game
I've done it all	Complete all objectives
Loyal customer	Buy all weapons
Expensive toolset	Buy the XM25 CTE grenade launcher (most expensive weapon in the game)
Quick intervention	Beat the first level
Some name here idk so far	Beat the [nth] level (one of each i guess) (and one for each bosses if there are any)
Executive decision making	Execute enemies X times
Bullseye	Score X critical hits
Rough landing	“Game features fall damage” (Die of fall damage)
What could possibly happen	“Not your brightest idea” (die from self damage from an HE weapon)
Medical assistance required	Finish a level after surviving from the brink of death
Oddball runner	Slide the distance of a marathon
[name] District cleared	Complete all of the objectives in the [name] district
Millionaire	“Dictionary required” (have 300k money in your pockets)
Radio tuner	“Avoiding media bias can't do much right now”
Blazing the 204th	Corrupted senator Beckkett, ministry of drug deal busting outed.
Snowed in	Corrupted senator Drawde, ministry of intelligence outed.
The heart's embers	“The fire within the heart of anyone can hardly be extinguished. The will remains, and the resolve is ever lingering.” (Progress in the story and witness a riot in the street)