BLANKED OUT GDD

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## Team

Project Lead/Design/Story/Documentation  
Touko

2D Graphics  
Sara and Sami

3D Graphics  
Eelis

Audio  
Daniil and Sami

Programming  
Eelis

Disclaimer: GDD was pretty much written by Touko, but many of the mechanics and features here were discussed as a group. Just think of me as the secretary. :P

## Development Overview

Week 1: Planning and Writing GDD

Week 2: Preliminary Programming and Asset Placeholders

Week 3: Programming and creating assets

Week 4: Finalizing Player Programming

Week 5:

Week 6:

Week 7:

Week 8:

## Overview

The game is a horror and cartoon-themed puzzle platformer in vein of Abe’s Oddysee. You would be a realistic human trying to escape cartoon creatures, (Visually similar to Who Framed Roger Rabbit) that are trying to murder you in cartoony ways.

## Yhteenveto

Peli on kauhu- ja piirretty-teemainen pulma-tasoloikka Abe’s Oddyseen makuun. Sinä olet realistinen ihminen joka yrittää paeta piirretty-olentoja, (Ulkonäöllisesti matkien Kuka Viritti Ansan, Roger Rabbitiä) jotka yrittävät murhata sinut piirrettymäisin tavoin.

## Target Audience

Adults that are into mascot horror, but seek something a little different from the usual first-person 3D games. Also appeals to fans of slow, methodical puzzle games and fans of the games like Prince of Persia (old school ver.) and Oddworld-games.

The game won’t hold your hand, but every screen will be like a small puzzle on its own, bringing with it both the sensation of “I’m an idiot” when the plan fails and “I’m a genius” when it works. Themes are probably familiar to the working adult generation that grew up with these cartoons and can feel a connection to the poor, overworked corporate slave of a protagonist that the game has.

## Setting

You are an animator who, in a fit of desperation over forgetting to bring your own tools to work, buys a “magic pencil” from a rather crazy-seeming, self-proclaimed “magician” peddling his dubious wares out in the street. Never being a superstitious type, you think nothing of it only to wake up after an arduous day of drawing elephants to find that your cartoons have literally come to life… and they want the pencil to create more of themselves, regardless of if they have to pry it from your cold, dead hands.

The game is set inside a big animation studio during wee hours of the night, maybe with a nice blackout, (which may or may not be caused by the cartoon world bleeding into reality.) which would include a variety of animation-related areas such as movie sets, dressing rooms with creepy mannequins (maybe one that’s clearly a toon that follows you with its gaze.) These seemingly mundane studio sets could then further be warped by cartoon features.

## Characters

**Frank Pastel (Concept Art by: Eelis)**

*“Oh god, they’re real. My WORK is ACTUALLY trying to KILL me!”*

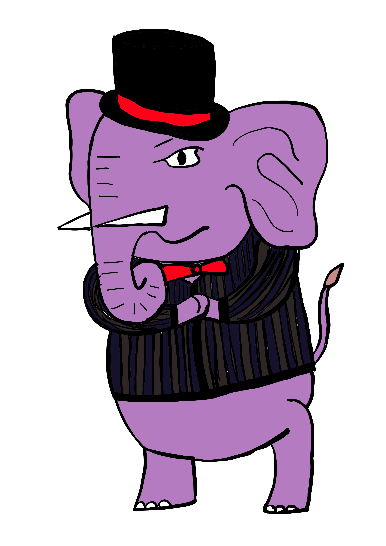
An overworked, 30-40 year old animator who works on a cartoon series called “Of Mice and ‘Phants” as the character animator for the villain of the show, Mr. Phant. He’s been penning a draft for a feature-length animated film of the show in hopes of finally getting promoted to an Art Director, but turns out his fervent workaholism may actually get him killed in a way he didn’t anticipate. Grumpy and skeptical, but not without a sense of dark humor when things go his way.

Kuva, joka sisältää kohteen lelu, animaatio, nisäkäs, Eläinhahmo

Tekoälyn generoima sisältö voi olla virheellistä.**Ricky Rodent (Concept Art by Eelis)**

*“Oy bruv, this is a bit of a jam, innit?”*

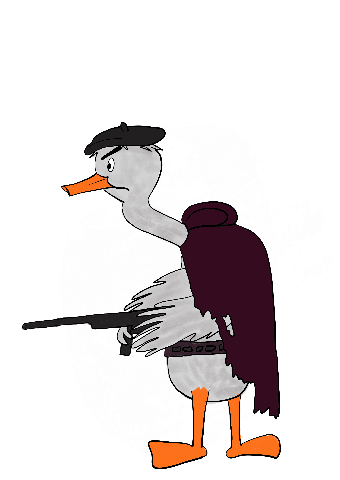
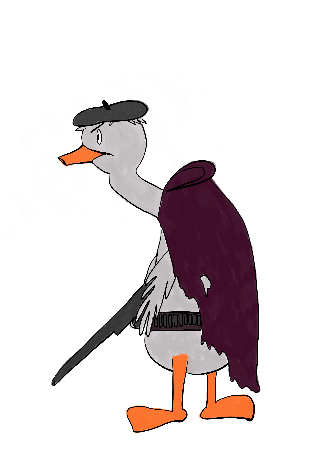
A mischievous and frivolous protagonist of “Of Mice and ‘Phants”. He claims to be a “friendly ‘toon”, but tends to cause more trouble for Frank than help whenever they meet owing to his clumsiness and greed. He does, however, often walk right into traps and enemies so Frank has a chance to see them in action before he has to survive them himself. But no matter how badly he is maimed, Ricky cannot die due to his status as a VIC, or “Very Important Character”. He will simply spring back from any injury, as a cartoon protagonist would.

**Mr. Phant (Concept Art by Sara)**

*“Now listen, pal-o…”*

The archnemesis of Ricky Rodent in “Of Mice and ‘Phants”. This boisterous and cunning elephant can present himself as quite charismatic when he needs to, but he is quick to anger and resort to violence when he doesn’t get what he wants. He commands a gang of Goons to do his dirty work and wants Frank’s magic pencil using any means necessary after manipulating Frank into showing him how it works. As he too is a VIC, he is incapable of permanent injury, making him a horrifying enemy.

**Goons (Concept Art by Sara)**

*“Hey guy! Stop!”*

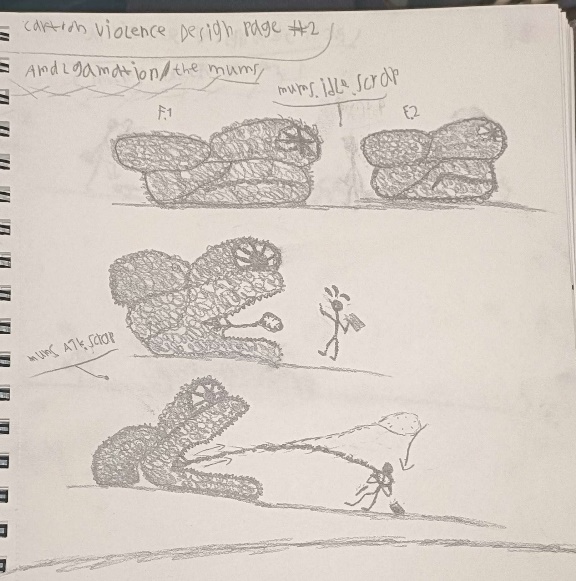
Mr. Phant’s minions appear as animals in clothing. They share their boss’ love for carnage and work together to kill Frank but tend to be cowardly around Freaks. As they’re just common side characters, they can be killed and most of them are pretty frail at that, dying to most hazards. Frank can even knock them out temporarily with just a whack with his drawing pad. (Art by Sara)

Some examples of Goons:  
*Duckers*These billed buffoons can’t climb, can’t really jump and can’t fit their big tommy-guns into tight gaps, but they can perforate our poor hero with bullets if they see him. The slap of their feet is a telltale sign that they’re near, but they also have to take a moment to load their guns before firing away. Although later on an puzzle allowing there’s also Duckers that always keep their tommy-guns loaded and fire on sight, but you can see if the ammo reel is attached to the gun or their belt to tell the two types apart. They do have one special ability: they can swim across bodies of water. One of the most common types of Goons.

*Neener-Nya*More of a nuisance than a threat, when it detects you it’ll stick close being goofy and loud. They’re hard to get rid of, which becomes a problem when they start attracting unwanted attention from Freaks and Goons alike. They do fear the one thing all cats hate: water. You also can’t draw while one of them is distracting you.

*Bully Moonahans*The big, strong, dumb sort. These bovines treat Frank much like a red flag, when they see him, they’ll blindly charge at his general direction until they either gore him or hit an obstacle of some kind. Smacking them stuns them only very briefly, whenever it’s by drawing pad or an anvil to the head, but they can be killed by bombs. As typical for this kind of character, they’re stupid and will run off cliffs and into traps if they’re charging after Frank.

*Mimic Creep*A master of disguise who dresses up as seemingly harmless background objects. But if Frank walks past one, it will start to creep behind him. If Frank looks at it, it stops. If it catches up to Frank while his back is turned, it’ll drop its disguise and attack. (Think Boos from Mario.)

**Freaks**

*“Grrrr…”*

Odd cartoon creatures that don’t really have it out for Frank, they simply follow their instincts like animals. They’re visually weirder than Goons and don’t wear any clothing, but they’re also made of sterner stuff. You’ll need to either avoid or take special measures to kill them, but unlike Goons many of them aren’t immediately hostile. Freaks cannot be knocked out with the drawing pad.  
  
Fun Fact: Lipsmack started as a Mumms-design!

Some examples of Freaks:

Kuva, joka sisältää kohteen teksti, luonnos, muistikirja, paperi

Tekoälyn generoima sisältö voi olla virheellistä.*Mummses, (sing. Mumms) (Art by Eelis)*  
Small, shaggy piles of fur that just kind of shuffle in a line along a set path (even up walls and on the ceiling!) while mumbling a repetitive “num num num”-chant. If anything gets in their way though, they’ll first growl and then reveal a huge, toothy mouth to snap the offender in half with. But they won’t care if it’s Frank or one of the Goons, so you could use them to your advantage.

*Streckos*These hungry creatures stretch and contract like accordions, allowing them to squeeze into small gaps and latch onto a ceiling to follow you up ledges. (But only if there IS a ceiling.)  
Their running speed is a little slower than Frank’s, but on the other hand their crawling speed is a little faster.

*Migraine Mortons*Every day and night is a bad day and night for this creature, which spends most of its time quietly moaning about its splitting headache. But that headache makes them very sensitive to sound, even running while they’re on screen will enrage them! They avoid leaving the floor their nest is on, but can attack above and below themselves through the floor. Anything to get some peace and quiet. They’ll calm down once they kill whatever makes the noise, be it Frank or something else. Very loud noises, like explosions, can even trigger them off-screen.

*Lipsmacks (Idea and Concept Art by Eelis)*A froggy Freak that can be seen hanging from ceilings or walls. If you cross their line of sight, they’ll open their eye and fling out a sticky tongue in an attempt to eat Frank. You can duck under or jump over the tongue though, it’s fast. Lipsmacks will eat anything, even bombs, which is an effective way of getting rid of them.

*Annows*If you see an eerie glow coming from a pit, better not fall in because the pit is full of these ravenous glowworms. They essentially serve as a bottomless pit and cannot be destroyed by any means. If Frank falls in, you can see them reach up and drag him to his doom. (This could also just be an acid pit if this is inconvenient to animate/program.)

The Big Scaries

Unique, bigger and badder toons that serve as the main obstacle in the areas they appear in. While most of them are possible to kill, it takes some ingenuity and just getting away alive can be considered a victory. You could consider them “bosses”, though you’re intended to respond with flight rather than fight in this case.

*Mr. Phant*The big cheese himself. Mr. Phant’s footsteps sound like drumbeats. He will be briefly stunned by anvils and bombs, but not by much else. When he spots Frank, he will let out a realistic elephant scream and stretch his face into a horrific visage before giving chase. He is slightly slower than Frank and can’t climb ledges or fit into tight gaps, but he will reach out and try to grab you tenaciously if shaken this way. His tenacity is his most notable trait, you’ll run into him a couple of times and each time he’ll learn from his mistakes from last time, getting harder to shake off.

*Mrs. Creeps*A giant black widow who really takes a fancy on Frank when he lands in her web. Unfortunately, she has a habit of eating her crushes. She can climb walls and ceilings and deploy sticky (and rather flammable) web to snare Frank. She makes her nest in the dressing rooms. She was designed for the show, but her design was rejected. As such, she tries her hardest to appear attractive and greatly resents her looks being insulted. She is afraid of fire.

*Kuva, joka sisältää kohteen teksti, luonnos, piirros, muistikirja

Tekoälyn generoima sisältö voi olla virheellistä.Mr. Patches (Idea and Concept Art by Eelis)*A teddy bear from a stop-motion animation whose limbs are connected to him by nothing but a few tacks. That makes it easy for him to fall apart, but also easy for him to recombine, which he uses as a deliberate tactic to catch new “friends”. He is very lonely, but as he tends to hug a bit too hard, his friendships are often short-lived. Literally. Haunts the animation set, he can detach parts of himself to chase Frank into parts he can’t reach himself.

*Mrs. Longsong*An extremely long eel designed for a trippy musical number, which shows in her love of singing and in the fact that she lives in… I Don’t Even Know Anymore, a bizarre space of colors, doors, stairs and god knows what else. Her wriggling body seems to go on forever, making it easy for her to crush people while getting absorbed in her musical number. She can go through cartoon doors, but not realistic ones, leading Frank into a frantic chase so he doesn’t get crushed by her massive, angular chin or chomped by her enormous teeth. Her gullibility makes Fake Doors effective.

## Game Mechanics

Basic Movement

Frank Pastel is no action hero, he can’t make incredibly high jumps or fistfight with demons or anything like that. He can move either by sneaking, walking or running, jump and smack things with his drawing pad. If there’s a ledge above him, he can grab on and pull himself up.

**Different Modes of Movement**

Sneaking (Toggle: Hold L2 or Q)  
Move slower, but won’t alert enemies unless they see you. Also won’t trigger pressure-sensitive things on the floor.

Walking (Left or Right/A or D)  
Regular mode of movement, mostly intended for fine-tuning your position.

Running (Toggle: Hold R2 or E)  
Fast, but WILL alert nearby enemies from farther away than just walking.

Crouching/Crawling (Hold down or S)  
Make yourself smaller and shorter so you fit into tight spaces, but move as slowly as when sneaking. If you’re crouching on a ledge, pressing Jump button will lower yourself to hang off the ledge.

Jumping (South face button or Space)  
Frank will jump 2 spaces from standstill and 4 spaces from a run. If holding on a ledge, this will also pull Frank up.

Interact/Smack (East face button or Tab)  
If there’s something of interest, Frank will perform the needed action. Otherwise he will just swat the air with his drawing pad. Holding Up/W will have you interact with objects in the background, such as doors or switches.

Draw (Hold West face button or Ctrl)  
Frank enters a stance to draw something on his drawing pad. We would like to make it so that you can draw simple shapes with your mouse to spawn things for puzzle solving, but if that ends up being too hard to code, it will bring up a simple menu to choose one of Frank’s “Ideas” to draw. Gameplay does NOT pause while drawing, however, so you can’t do it unless you can stand around for a bit without getting killed. We’re still considering if you can spawn objects anywhere or just right in front of Frank. We also thought that you can only spawn a certain number of objects before your drawing pad’s battery dies, forcing you to go recharge it at designated spots. Recharging despawns all spawned objects.

This is one of the main mechanics of the game, used for a lot of puzzle solving.

Some of the “Ideas” you can get include:

*Anvil*A classic cartoon object that’s heavily affected by gravity. Can be pushed and can snuff out even the toughest Goon if dropped from a ledge onto their head. They also make for good wedges and weights for scales and buttons.

*Bomb*  
An another staple of cartoons, the humble cherry bomb will hiss for 3 seconds before exploding. Hissing will alert enemies and the blast will kill Frank if he gets caught in it, but the blast will also kill most enemies that are either too dumb to flee or can’t get away in time. It can also be used to break structurally weak parts of the level or maybe even as a weight on a switch that’s less… permanent than an anvil. Falling into water defuses it.

*Campfire*You cannot move it after setting it, but the crackling fire won’t just bring some comfort. It can burn through certain flammable things and a lot of Freaks are afraid of fire. It will also prevent a lot of Goons from passing through, though Duckers can still shoot through it. Unfortunately, it’s useless in wet areas.

*Fake Door*No, you can’t make a hole through walls with it, but it just might trick a toon into stop chasing you, unless they smash headfirst into it, in which case it’ll just fall down. It can be useful in other ways too, though, such as blocking light or flowing water. (Again, just don’t expect it to hold against great force.)

Esc/Start  
Pauses the game and opens the main menu, from where you can review your Ideas, (maybe add a map if skill/time permits), look at your collected Animation Sheets, maybe quicksave the game and the usual Exit/Options.

Saving the game  
The doors in the game would serve as permanent save points or checkpoints, but quicksaving would either let you take a break anywhere or have a spot that you can continue off of, with the added benefit of dying sending you back to the last door you went through.

Objects & Items

*Doors*Your sole safe haven in this madness. As we all know, toons can’t open closed doors for the life of them, so getting through one will make any chasing you give up. (Well, Mr. Phant doesn’t seem too convinced…) This also serves as a check- and save point. The door you last entered is the door you come out of when you start the game or die.

*Ropes*They’re usually tied to a variety of things. You can pull on ropes to lift or lower whatever’s tied to the other end, but they can also be burned with a Campfire.

*Wall Switches*They toggle between on and off. Simple enough. The question of WHAT they toggle depends on the gimmickry in the same screen. Push up/W and interact to flip it and watch what happens, just pay attention to your surroundings so the effect doesn’t catch you off guard.

*Shadows*While not an object per se, the shadows will provide you with a cover to sneak past and hide from enemies. If the enemy has already seen you though, hiding on the same screen won’t be much help. Frank will be just a vague silhouette in the dark, but toons’ eyes will be clearly visible.

*Pressure Plates*You know what they do, when anything stands on it, it’ll activate a gimmick of some kind. Whenever it’s a shutter or a conveyor belt or a flamethrower, only way to find out is to step on it… Or have someone else step on it, or move an anvil on it… You get the point. Usually the gimmick is on the same screen, so look before you press.

*Charging Docks*A glowy dock for charging your drawing pad at. (Maybe these could be “proper” save points too?) Charging takes a moment, so you can’t use these under attack and it’ll despawn any object you’ve drawn. There’s at least one in every area between doors, but sometimes you have to be frugal to avoid having to walk back.

*Signs*These signs are posted on the background and offer more or less useful hints. Press up/W and Interact to take a closer look, but once again you can’t do that if there’s an enemy after you.

*Water*Some areas may have bodies of water. Frank is not a great swimmer, but he can slowly swim or wade over water. Some toons aren’t hampered by water, but most of them are either equally slowed down or simply won’t get in. A nice dip is also a good way to get anything clingy off you. (Like Neener-Nya, for example.)

*Animation Sheets*These are the art sheets Frank was working on before this all started. They got scattered all over the building, usually in deviously hidden and more dangerous places. Collecting them unlocks some concept art for the game and Frank needs them in his presentation tomorrow, leaving you with the moral dilemma of which is more important: career or living? The ending changes depending on how many you collected with 3 possible outcomes: Frank is fired, continues at his dead-end position or gets promoted to an art director.

*Beehives*A hazard that releases an angry swarm of bees when disturbed by anything. The bees will attack whatever’s closest, so Duckers might shoot at it from a distance to get the bees to attack Frank. They won’t immediately kill him, but if they surround him for say, 3 seconds total before he can get into water or find fire, he’ll die. On the other hand, Frank can also trigger beehives to use them to kill enemies if he’s clever enough.

*Closets*It’s not a DOOR, but it’s closet enough. (Sorry.) They’re essentially a less convenient shadow, as you can hide in them, but can’t move while inside. If you’re being chased though and have enough time to get in, toons will just run past instead of finding you like while in shadows. Duckers also can’t shoot you from inside a closet, but if you get caught while entering, you’ll still die. They can be found in the background here and there.

*Keys & Key Dispensers*The big kind. Frank can’t draw while holding one, but it can be thrown to knock out Goons and to get it through difficult segments that Frank needs his hands for. Don’t worry, they’re really durable! If they’re somehow destroyed or lost, the Key Dispenser will provide a new one with a simple smack. Opens locked doors and mechanisms.

Other Mechanics

**Dying**Frank is just a regular joe, which is why most things kill him in one hit, although there are some hazards that take a moment to cook his goose. Most common sources of death are from getting caught by enemies or hazards but also falling from higher than 2 whole floors is fatal. (Frank can fall 1 floor no problem and will stumble from a 2-floor fall but still survive.)

When Frank dies, he automatically restarts at the last door he went through. (After a short death scene, of course.)

**Carrying**You can pick up and carry keys and bombs (and maybe other objects too) by ducking next to them and pressing Interact. Frank cannot use his drawing pad or climb ropes while carrying one, but it can be chucked by pressing interact again. Lipsmacks will grab the thing you’re carrying first, so they can be used as a panic shield too.

## Story

**Intro**

In a nondescript, somewhat British-y city in the early 20th century…

Frank Pastel has been working as an animator for the popular “Of Mice and ‘Phants”-show for almost 20 years now and finally he has a chance to advance his career to his dream job as an art director for a feature-length animated film. However, the deadline for the animation sheets and designs is tomorrow and Frank has been worked to the bone for longer than he cares to remember, so when he rushes out of his home in the morning to get the final crunch done, he forgets to bring his personal drawing tools.

Frank only notices while already sitting on the bus, so after getting off he frantically searches for the nearest source of some pencils. (He is something of an old-schooler, preferring to draw out drafts on paper and finalize them digitally.) The first place that he sees is a rather seedy-looking “Magic Shop”, really a shack vendor by the roadside, manned by an equally seedy-looking weirdo in a robe and a comically large top hat. The weirdo speaks in a thick Manchester accent and claims that his assortment of trinkets are magical in value, but Frank only wants the large graphite pencil lying on the counter and tries to brush off any sales talk to buy it as soon as possible. The weirdo claims that the pencil is an excellent choice, raving about how it will really bring Frank’s drawings to life, while Frank is just like “Yes-yes-yes, take my money and let me be on my way.” and the weirdo is like “You and me bruv, we’re both kind of inna same boat. We’re both just *humans* out of our element, innit?”

Finally getting to work, he draws like a man possessed for hours, mumbling about if he just can get that promotion, he can say goodbye to this broom closet of an office and endless hours of drawing Mr. Phant, the villain in “Of Mice and ‘Phants”. It’s already dark outside when the exhaustion finally catches up to him and he begins to nod off.

Then he is suddenly jolted awake by a thick, creased hand pulling his animation sheets from under him. “Sleeping on the job eh, pal-o? What do we have here?” A rough voice speaks and Frank looks over to see Mr. Phant examining his designs in all his animated glory. Frank rubs his eyes and then stands up throwing his hands in the air. “That’s it!” he exclaims, “That’s my cue that I’ve worked for too long! Time to head home.” With that, Frank grabs his coat and walks off despite Mr. Phant calling after him.

Outside he notices that the lights are out and some strange, cartoony growths have broken parts of the hallway. “Oh, now they’re saving on infrastructure, too? I should file a complaint.” Frank grumbles as he has to jump and climb his way through a simple and relatively safe tutorial area.

Then Mr. Phant appears again. “Now listen, pal-o. I just wanna have a nice chat about that drawing skill of yours.” He says, trying to sound pleasant. “You’re still here? I must be more tired than I thought.” Frank replies with a deep sigh. “Just play along for a bit, pal-o.” Mr. Phant says, getting slightly annoyed, and then he instructs Frank on how to use his drawing pad.

Frank is mildly astonished that he can materialize things he draws, but brushes it off as a particularly vivid dream. “It is a cool ability to be sure. But if you’re having a dream, pal-o, you wouldn’t mind letting me try my hand at that, too, now would you?” Mr. Phant asks with a pleasant smile. “I think not! This is bizarre enough without a cartoon elephant drawing god knows what into life!” Frank exclaims and turns to leave. Mr. Phant’s expression hardens. “Oh, you haven’t seen bizarre yet, pal-o.” He snorts sinisterly as Frank goes through a door into a proper first area.

**Area 1: Office Hallways**This is where the first enemies appear. When Frank first runs into Duckers, they approach him like gangsters trying to rough him up to make him relinquish his drawing pad and pencil, but when Frank brushes them off as phantoms from his mind, they open fire on him. Frank manages to run, but a bullet grazes his cheek and he falls down on a lower floor. Brushing the blood trickling from his wound, it hits him that he’s actually in danger. “Oh my god. I felt that. I’m actually bleeding! This is all REAL! My WORK, is actually trying to KILL me! I-I need to get out of here!” He stammers and fumbles up, checking that his sole tool of survival, the drawing pad, is intact.

Figuring out his way through the hallways, he runs into Mr. Phant again. “You look terrible pal-o. How about we make a deal? You get off the hook if you just give me the pad and the pencil. You trust your old pal-o, Mr. Phant, don’t you? More than you can those Duckers, at least.” Mr. Phant tries to sweet talk Frank, but Frank is even more rattled than last time. “No, no, absolutely not! I’m not your ‘Pal-o’, buddy! I won’t have some kids’ cartoon character unleash hell just because he asks nicely!” He exclaims. “Kids!? Now listen, pal-o! Cartoons aren’t just for kids. If you wanna deal with it like adults, then I have to ask you… Meanly!” Mr. Phant gets angry, then he bares razor sharp teeth and lets out a bone-chilling shriek. Frank yelps and runs away while Mr. Phant gives chase with a crazed look in his eyes.

During the frantic chase, Frank manages to delay Mr. Phant momentarily. “You won’t escape me, pal-o! Me and my Goons will find you!” Mr. Phant yells while clearing the way to Frank.  
Frank sees a door at the end of the hallway. “DOOR!” He yells panickily and slams against the said door, frantically turning the knob while Mr. Phant manages to get through the obstacle and runs roaring towards Frank. Frank gets the door open and runs inside, only to scream as he falls into darkness since behind the door is just a big hole.

(For demo, here could be your play stats, followed by this short teaser of things to come.)

His fall is stopped by an animated, oddly well-knitted spider web. While he struggles to free himself, a sultry voice speaks from the darkness. “My, my… It looks like my web has snared quite a hunk today…” The silhouette of a giant spider (with silken gloves in 4 legs!) emerges from the shadows.

<The Demo Ends Here>

**Area 2: Dressing Rooms & Mocap Studios**

“Oh no, no not you!” Frank exclaims as the giant spider wearing makeup and fake eyelashes draws closer. “No need to be shy, little fly… I’m not poisonous…” The spider giggles. “Yes, you’re venomous, not poisonous. I get it. Can you let me go? You can find a better guy than me for sure, Mrs. Creeps!” Frank exclaims, trying to buy some time. “Oh, but you’re just my type. Such well-defined shading… And such an adorable design too. I could DEFINITELY make you my hubby.” Mrs. Creeps chuckles. “T-that’s very flattering, but understood that you… Well… Tend to… Ea… Eat your husbands?” Frank stammers. “Oh yes. Such passionate love is enviable, isn’t it? It’s like a shooting star, so bright… But then it’s over in an instant. Fitting for ‘widow’ like me, wouldn’t you say?” Mrs. Creeps says and runs her sharp claw across Frank’s boot, clicking her fangs.

Frank has to think fast, but manages to draw a campfire under the web to light it on fire. Mrs. Creeps screams and backs off while Frank hastily brushes off the small fires on his jacket and runs off. “Don’t play hard to get with me, mister!” Mrs. Creeps screams after him, but Frank manages to reach a door and lets out a sigh of relief. Now he has to get out of the basement without getting snared again, though. The mannequins hanging from the web, both real mannequins and animated ones with eyes that track Frank’s movement, set up the stage for this area.

It's here that he also runs into Ricky Rodent for the first time. Ricky will present himself as an ally of Frank’s, though Frank is very paranoid. It doesn’t help that when Ricky instructs him to ride an elevator to a specific floor, Frank immediately gets ambushed by Mrs. Creeps when he gets there. Ricky’s motivation and loyalties are often unclear and sometimes even conflicting, leading Frank (and hopefully the player too) to not trust him at all. However, Ricky can sometimes be seen in background, foreground or on a upper or lower floor triggering new, more complicated traps or enemies so players can see what they do before having to tackle them themselves. Also, Ricky DOES give good advice every now and then, but each time you’ll have to really think. “Should I trust him?” Wrong answer usually results in a more difficult challenge or bad situation. Ricky also warns Frank that he and Mr. Phant are considered “VIC”s in the cartoon they came from. Very Important Characters can never die, as they’re integral to the continuation of the show, so it’s impossible for Frank to cause any kind of permanent injury to either of them.

There could also be some motion capture equipment that makes Frank grumble “I never thought I’d wish that these plastic props were real weapons.” Maybe even get a new idea to draw something here?

Near the exit you would be chased by Mrs. Creeps again, possibly being insulted by being thought of as “ugly” since she was a rejected design. You could either evade her or catch her on fire, which would kill her. (Foreshadowing that “real” fire is the toons’ greatest weakness, as opposed to cartoon fire.)

Other areas are still very conceptual, but here are some plans:

-All “Big Scaries” would have Mr. or Mrs. at the front of their names to bring some unity.

-Mr. Phant would re-appear every now and then, even if the area has a different Big Scary too. Every time he does, he gets cleverer about chasing Frank, moving furniture to climb to higher floors, running to the other end of tight gaps to cut off Frank there and finally he learns to open doors, which has been the one consistent safe feature from toons. At least one encounter would be in the printing area, where you must trick Mr. Phant into falling in a printing machine and get flattened. (It doesn’t stop him for long, of course, but gives a nice hands-on example of VIC-status protecting him. Not to mention some cheesy banter with Frank going “Ha-HA! How’s that feel, you creased cretin!?” only for Mr. Phant to reply smugly with “Like a fresh coat of paint, thank you!” after he re-flates himself with the age old blow-in-the-thumb-method.)

-The first time one of the Duckers shoots down a beehive on Frank, Frank could exclaim “You mother Ducker!” in surprise and anger.

-Another cheesy exchange between Frank and Mr. Phant would be after Mr. Phant suddenly jumpscares Frank from somewhere. Frank exclaims “Jesus Christ!” and runs off, to which Mr. Phant replies “Try praying to somebody else, ‘cuz he isn’t helping you!”

-In the stop motion set you would see a billboard with posted designs of what seems like paper doll parts. Once you go past them though, the parts will jiggle themselves free and form a paper doll teddy bear called “Mr. Patches”, who was a minor character in an old stop-motion show. Mr. Patches would tower over Frank and has difficulty speaking, but he would make it clear that he wants friends. He could maybe grab and squeeze Ricky until his eyes pop out, alarming Frank that he would die if Mr. Patches hugged him like that. Thus you would have to flee Mr. Patches, who would come apart and recombine in increasingly twisted ways to chase you. Though eluding him is a choice, I’m not sure how to kill him. As he is a character from a stop-motion show, he could be shredded in a paper shredder maybe.

-When you reach the lounge, almost getting to the end, you “destroy” Mr. Phant using real fire only to have him block you from exiting. When Frank reacts with shock and horror, asking if real fire didn’t actually circumvent the VIC-status, Mr. Phant reminds him that he’s been drawing Mr. Phants thorough the whole day. More Mr. Phants appear as horrified Frank flees.

The final area could be a boiler room or something else with a furnace in it. Ricky would explain that he had been drawn to this world by the previous owner of the magic pencil, which had its “graphite” made from a material said owner developed themselves. Ricky had caused the previous owner’s death, according to his own words due to negligence that real people aren’t as durable as toons, but then he had realized that he was trapped in the real world and couldn’t bring himself to “undo” himself. Because of this, he had been hanging around the animation studio that his former creator had worked at in disguise, looking for an opportunity to pass the pencil to someone who could use “real gimmicks”, but Frank had left before he could explain how to make all the drawn things disappear.

Maybe toons can’t cause “real” phenomena, like real fire, which is why Ricky’s been trying to help Frank reach the boiler so he can chuck the pencil into a real fire, in turn causing all the toons to return to being just drawings too. He claims that all the mishaps and mischief is just due to him not being able to deny the toon’s natural penchant for bad luck and his own mischievous nature and never intended to really harm Frank.

However, a Mr. Phant will chase Frank down the basement in desperation, even violating the safety of the doors so that Frank will not be safe anywhere he goes. When Frank first goes through a door and sighs in relief, thinking that Mr. Phant cannot follow him, he would hear the knob turn, flinch away from the door as Mr. Phant stands in the door way, smiling smugly. “How did you turn the knob with nubby fingers like that!?” Frank asks, but Mr. Phant says nothing. He just smirks sinisterly and raises his trunk, tauntingly waving the upper trunk-finger at Frank to show that he grabbed the knob with his trunk and not his hands.

At the end though, when Frank gets the boiler fired up, Mr. Phant corners him and Ricky to the boiler, realizes what Frank is going to do, and returns to his sweet-talking attitude. Sweating profusely, Mr. Phant nicely says “Come now, pal-o. It doesn’t have to come to this. Look, can you really trust that rat? He is just using you to destroy the pencil to render you and the rest of the reals helpless. You’ve seen the things VICs like me and him can survive, if he decided to take over the world, not one of you could stop him. ***I*** couldn’t stop him, you’ve seen me try! I just want to create more toons, maybe we can even coexist. If you don’t trust me, you can keep using it. Just work for me, and I’ll make sure no harm will come to you or the rest of the realies. What do you say, pal-o?”

He is lying of course, as real fire has shown to be quite effective on toons, but he does cast Ricky’s true motive into question. Not sure if there will be a straight-up choice on who to trust, but if Frank chooses to destroy the pencil, he will scoff that “Well, *‘pal-o’.* I thought we weren’t playing NICE.” before he tosses the pencil into the furnace. Again, the aftermath is still being thought of, but Frank gets to finally stumble home and fall asleep face first on his bed.

The next morning, he reluctantly goes to work only to find that the workplace has returned to how it used to be, further causing him to question his sanity. Regardless, he goes to the meeting. If he only collected a few animation sheets, his boss (who has a little bit of similarity to Mr. Phant) yells at him and fires him on the spot, resulting in an end screen where Frank just lies in bed and a little epilogue says that whenever because of trauma or burnout, he would never draw again.

On the other hand, if you collected a respectable amount (over half?) of animation sheets, the boss would just kind of nod and tell Frank to keep at it, with ending screen resembling the final screen before the game began, Frank sitting on his desk, drawing elephants.

Finally, if you manage to collect them all, the boss will be really into the drawings and presentation and Frank will be promoted to art director, leading the film to be a success. And he never has to draw an another elephant again.

## Tools Used

* Unity
* Audacity
* Krita
* Blender
* VisualStudio
* Adobe Fresco

## Notes

-Main character and the backgrounds are semi-realistic 3D, but enemies and pretty much anything interactable is clearly 2D cartoon.

-Doors are your safety from monsters chasing you. After all, cartoon characters can never open closed doors… or can they? Maybe later they could learn how to open doors if they see the player enter or there could be a specific monster that just breaks through.

-Main character could be an animator who can draw things into reality to solve puzzles and fight off monsters, but he needs to stand still and pull out his drawing board. (Work as an inventory? Collected items could be called “ideas” and be summoned at will, granted that you have the time and space to draw them.) He could be a very overworked, very tired man in his 30s who at first thinks he’s just in a dire need of sleep before the danger of the situation becomes obvious. He could also collect animation sheets, which would determine the ending. (He has to present the animation to his bosses the next day?)

-The idea is to play around with how gruesome cartoons would be in real life, such as getting hit with a falling anvil will squish a cartoon character in a funny way, but a real human would be reduced to a bloodstain on the ground.

-You could also just hit things with the drawing board to solve some puzzles and stun some smaller, weaker enemies that haven’t seen you yet. Such enemies could be like those annoying and loud sidekicks that don’t hurt you directly, but they draw the attention of bigger, more dangerous enemies.

-You have 1 hit before death, (with the exception of very small things like bees that take like, 3 seconds of standing in the bee cloud to actually kill you.) so you have to observe your surroundings and carefully plan your actions, but also be fast on your feet. Enemies are defeated with cunning, not brute force.

-You could use shadows to hide from enemies. Main character could be either completely invisible in dark or have a faint outline, but enemies’ presence in the shadows is signaled by their eyes being visible in the dark. Game would play around a lot of cartoon sensibilities like this to create an unnerving atmosphere.

-We could make a jumpscare where a 3D object becomes a 2D object or vice versa. Maybe a cartoon character becomes “real” and jumps at the screen?

-Maybe a fire where the flames are animated? Or reverse, a cartoon character catching real fire and burning away like they were made of paper?

-Maybe there could be enemies disguised as background objects, such as a tablecloth hiding a monster that cartoonishly inches sideways to follow you until unveiling itself. We could use other cartoony antics like this to create a sense of paranoia, such as a clearly cartoony sign on a real door saying things like “This Way” or “Look Behind You”.

-If he had time and skill, it’d be nice to make simple animated signs or film reels that teach you basic movements as a cartoon.