Michael Longo

12/15/14

**Ultimate Final: Railroaded**

***Title:* Railroaded**

I believe this title is very fitting for a game that mostly takes place on tracks where you are trying not to get nailed by oncoming trains. ‘Nough said.

***Genre:*** First person platformer, puzzle, stealth. Real time.

The first person platformer part is because you ride on a train, often jumping from train to train, to get up the railway. The catch is that there are far more trains heading towards you than going in your direction. And you have to avoid them. This is not a side scrolling platformer. It is first person. This view gives the player the feeling that everything (especially oncoming trains) is coming right for them. This gameplay is divided into stages. In between each stage is a station to break up the stages and also provide different gameplay. The puzzle aspect involves having to solve puzzles to get trains safely onto the railways, or sometimes they come mid phase where you might have to, say, flip a switch or three so that your train doesn’t hit an oncoming one. The stealth aspect comes from having to potentially sneak past guards and other security systems in order to steal trains to continue down the railways. There strict is no time per say. Everything is real time and each of the phases has a pace that comes with the speed of all the moving trains. Sometimes, certain aspect of puzzles might have a limited time for you to do things or you might fail, but there is no given time limit.

***Premise:***

Ride up the railway to reach the end where the elusive Gregarious Train Factory is to shut it down and complete your mission. There’s just one catch: Most of the trains are coming your way!

***Theme:***

The main theme is survival through reflexes, athletic ability, and wit in a world of trains, and arguably, survival in a world of evil trains. At least as far as the main character, Agent Thomas, is concerned during his mission as the trains are an almost constant threat to his life.

***Theme related to Gameplay:***

The main gameplay revolves around riding up the rails on trains and avoiding the oncoming trains. The majority of trains are coming at you so it is difficult. This is because the majority of trains are coming from where you are headed: the Gregarious Train Factory. So the player must navigate their way through the oncoming train traffic. The secondary gameplay involves sneaking around security at guarded stations and solving puzzles to steal trains to get back on the rails. But even that is all geared so Agent Thomas can continue his journey up the main rails, which involves the main gameplay. So basically, you have to survive in an environment that is based on trains which are a constant threat to your life. To do this, Agent Thomas must rely on his wit, reflexes, and athletic talents.

***Theme related to Story:***

The story is about an agent from a secret government organization and his mission to shut down an out of control train factory. Why? Because the government is (for some unmentioned reason) not happy with Gregarious Railways and has ordered them to shutdown. They aren’t exactly cooperating. So that’s where the mission comes in. This is both train related and potentially quite hazardous to his health. So again, this goes back to surviving in a word of dangerous trains.

***Environment related to Theme*:**

The environment changes a lot throughout the game. However, there is one constant throughout the vast majority of it. That constant is it takes place along the railways or on the stations, rail yards, and other things directly related to the railways. So the trains are just about always prevalent. Of course it is dangerous having to dodge oncoming trains all the time, so that goes back to survival. The security at the stations can also be a threat to life.

***Platform:***

The main platform is computer if we have to list one. It might be neat if the game was on Steam purely for the train puns. However, it would be easily adapted for consoles and it would be worth doing. Ideally, I would like consoles like PlayStation and Xbox to also be included.

***Target Rating:*** **T for Teen.**

I think there is a bit too much violence (trains smashing into you guards shooting at you if you get caught) to be Everyone or Everyone 10+. I think I can keep out enough bad language and gore to keep it Teen at the worst. Anyone younger than 13 might have a difficult time with the game anyway, so the Teen rating will work well.

***Target Market:***

The short answer is anyone who wants to play. But to narrow it down, really we are looking for males 13 – 35. Not that females can’t play as well. We want to attract them, too. But the main characters (the agents) in story mode are male so that will most likely be the target audience. The age range is because we are looking for teenage to adult gamers. There is no restriction per say. But too much older than 35 might not be the most easily targeted market. I think it will appeal all over the world. But to narrow it down, I would say English speaking countries are the main focus because the game is meant to be in English. If we have the funds to translate it we could go for a broader market.

***Player Motivation:***

The player wins by getting to the end of the line, and shutting off the Gregarious Train factory. To do this, the player must avoid all the incoming train traffic, solve puzzles, sneak past guards and security systems, and steal trains to continue up the railways. The player will not only be attracted to the unique main gameplay of traveling the railways, but also the different gameplay from the stations that come with a combination of puzzles and stealth aspects that come with stealing the trains. The player will be driven to get to the end by beating the game, finishing the story, overcoming increasingly difficult challenges and puzzles, and taking in the varying scenery along the way.

***USP:***

My game is unique because there aren’t many games where you have to avoid oncoming trains heading at you while you head in their direction. And I certainly don’t know of any that do it in the way Railroaded does. On top of that, the stations also have other challenges, like puzzles and a stealth aspect, to break up the game between stages with different gameplay. This unique combination of gameplay, the game’s atmosphere, and the main gameplay will combine to create a one of a kind gaming experience. There is nothing like it.

***Competitive analyses:***

I had a hard time doing this, because the game I came up with is pretty unique. I really couldn’t think of anything that was all that much like it. So I just took games that matched some of the mechanics.

**Subway Surfers –** Subway Surfers is a game where the player plays as a young graffiti artist, running up the tracks away from the police officer. You play by running away from the screen as long as possible, while collecting coins and points. It is like Temple Run, except there are no tilt mechanics (you swipe the left or right screen) and there is a train theme. The main differences are that Railroaded is more serious, has different controls, is first person, has more tracks and oncoming trains, and the only goals in Railroaded are to survive and progress. There are no coins or points to collect or screen to outrun. Railroaded also has phases and station gameplay to break up them up.

**Portal –** Portal is a first person puzzle platformer. That is the main reason why I put it in my competitive analyses. The genre is as similar to mine as I could find. Also, the portal gun is not a weapon but a device used to solve puzzles. The ZING gun doesn’t make portals, but it is used in a similar way. The ZING gun in railroaded is used to hack into trains, machines, and other mechanisms like switches in order to solve puzzles and to help guide the train along the system of rails. And although the jumping in railroaded is different, the first person view in a platformer is also somewhat similar. For the stealth aspect, turrets in portal require careful positioning so the player can stay out of their site line and/or firing range. And similarly to portal, the player cannot directly fight back and will likely die when something opens fire on them. In Railroaded, turrets and guards (which behave somewhat like mobile turrets) require the player to be careful with their positioning and not draw attention to them. Atmospherically, Railroaded does a few things like portal. One thing is a lack of heavy music. Portal probably has less music. But even so, Railroaded keeps most of its music in the background and there are silent periods. Another is the graffiti and messages that can be found at some of the stations. This idea is very similar to the writing on the walls in Portal.

**Grand Theft Auto –** Railroaded is somewhat like Grand theft Auto, except way less violent and stealing a train is totally different than it was in GTA IV. The main reason why I put this game in my competitive analyses, though, is because stealing a parked car in GTA is somewhat similar to how you steal a train in Railroaded. In GTA, you have to get in it hotwire it. In Railroaded, you jump on top of it and hack it from range with a ZING gun. The way they walk around the environment in GTA games is also somewhat similar to Railroaded when the player is at the station. For the comparison of stealth aspect of Railroaded, the GTA series has missions where you can sneak past enemies or they attack. But unlike in GTA, Railroaded doesn’t let you solve everything by getting into a firefight against the world.

***Goals:***

The expectation is to provide players with an enjoyable game experience that also has some diversity. We want to constantly throw new challenges at the player in a number of creative ways. There is the main gameplay of riding up the railways, jumping from train to train, and avoiding oncoming trains. Then there is the station gameplay, which provides a number of puzzles and some stealth gameplay. We want the main part of the story to be gradually revealed over time. We want the rest of the story to be less obvious. Much of it will be more open ended and cryptic. We wish to leave it up to the player. Hidden messages and things like that may suggest certain things.

The mood of the game will be another main focus. Due to the nature of the game, progression will be largely linear. So we want to draw players into the world by creating the right moods and atmosphere for the environment. There will be some variation depending on the stages and the station. But overall, we want the mood to be darker, rougher, often bleak, often largely desolate, and to have some beautiful scenery along the way. Some phases and stations will be more serene than others. This is not a horror game, but many areas will have a creepy and/or haunted vibe to them. We will have various messages and graffiti around some of the stations, to add the mystery and feel of the game. Weather will also add to the atmosphere, and in certain cases may pose unique challenges. The music will vary, but will be largely minimalistic and in the background. Sometimes it will be silent for extra effect. The atmosphere and overall feel of the game is incredibly important in establishing the vibes the player gets from our game.

***Backstory:***

Gregarious Railways has gone out of control and the government has ordered them to be shutdown. However, the government is having trouble shutting down the Gregarious Train Factory because they don’t know exactly where it is. They just know that a certain set of railways will eventually lead to it. Agent Thomas is an agent from the secret government organization C.R.O.S.S. who has been tasked to ride up the railways to eventually to turn off the massive automated train factory from Gregarious Railways that lies at the end of the railway.

***Synopsis:***

The player plays agent Thomas, a member of the secret government organization C.R.O.S.S. The player plays through his mission to find and shut down the Gregarious Train Factory. The story is quite simple. Along the way, there are many obstacles and challenges Thomas must overcome. It gets progressively harder as it goes, and gets resolved when Thomas gets to the end and shuts down the factory.

The game starts off with a brief cut scene describing the very basis of your mission. “Gregarious Railways has gone too far. Agent Thomas, your mission is to make your way up the railways to the train factory and shut it off. It won’t be easy. Try the simulator one last time to make sure you are prepared.”

At this point, it gives control to the player who can walk around the room. There is a simulator in the corner which is marked as your objective. This teaches the core mechanics of the game. The simulator puts you on a very easy (at least comparatively) stage where you make your way up the rails and avoid oncoming trains. The player must pass this to move on. Once they do, they are free to move about the room. You then have the option either to talk to Agent Gordon to learn a little more about the backstory, explore the room a bit, or just make your way to the station to ride the rails again sooner. When you choose to depart, you follow agent Gordon out of the building and then through a few eerily empty city streets to the station. It is nighttime when this happens.

Once you arrive to the station, it is still night and the entrance the underground station is gated and locked. Gordon gives you the ZING gun. (This is a play on words. The government organization you work for is called C.R.O.S.S. That is also on the ZING gun. When reading it, you see C.R.O.S.S. and then ZING on the gun or C.R.O.S.S ZING. This can be taken further because the game is called Railroaded. It can be known as the Railroaded C.R.O.S.S. ZING gun.) This ZING gun is not a weapon. It is a hacking device that allows you to hack into and control certain mechanisms from a distance by shooting at them. The game then tells you to use the gun on the gate to open it. There is a mini-train waiting for you at the station. Gordon tells you to jump on, and shoot the ZING gun to get it running. Agent Gordon does not come with you, but can communicate with you from time to time in most environments. There are of course, exceptions.

Once you make it past the first stage, you arrive at a station with an underground rail yard. There is a platform. The game makes you jump onto the station platform from the train. Agent Gordon also tells you to do it. There is no other way to continue, because just as you arrive, all the rail lines are filled with oncoming giant trains. Either you jump off in time, or you die to oncoming trains as your mini-sized train gets crushed. Once you successfully jump off to the station, it saves.

The stations act as the bridge between stages. Agent Gordon explains this to you. This is NOT a cut scene. You are free to walk around the station while you and Gordon exchange dialogue. Almost all future exchanges are handled in this way, without stopping the game and taking control away from the player. You are free to walk around, explore, or just wait while the dialogue goes on. Gordon will instruct you how to properly “seize” (really steal but you know how government terms are conveniently hilarious) another mini-sized train. You open the gate with the ZING gun, jump on the target train, shoot it to get it started, and shoot any switches and other things to get it going the right way. For now, there is only one gate and no switch. Later on, there are also stealth and puzzle components to this. Guards may be stationed which you have to sneak past. And there may be a series of gates, switches, and other things you need to successfully hack in the right order to successfully get the train out onto the main railways. But for now, it is pretty simple and straight forward.

Game play continues with you making your way up the main railways in phases. At the end of each phase is another station where you must find another train to hack and get going again. Later phases and stations will introduce new challenges. As you overcome the challenges and make your way up the railways, the main story unfolds through the events that take place as you progress and with the back and forth dialogue between agent Thomas and agent Gordon.

After you make your way to the final stage, which is the massive train factory, you have additional challenges to shut it off and upload the map of the railways and the factory. Once you complete the final stage, the game ends and launches into the final cut scene to wrap up the game. Then queue the closing music and the credits.

***Characters:***

The game only has two characters. Agent Thomas and Agent Gordon are it. There is not a third.

**Agent Thomas**

***Background:***

Agent Thomas is the main character and the player character. His full name is Thomas Thomas. (His last and first name are the same.) He is an orphan and does not know his real last name so he kept it the same as his first name. He has made some choices in his life that put him in a lot of debt prior to joining C.R.O.S.S. There is a deal worked out where the government will pay his debts in exchange for his services.

***Physiology:***

Agent Thomas is a young, healthy, and fit man at 24 years of age. He is pretty athletic, boasting great speed and jumping ability. He has black hair, blue eyes, white skin, and is around 6 feet tall. He wears black jeans, blue shoes, and a black vest over a dark blue camo long sleeve shirt. He is clean shaven and his hair is somewhat untidy.

***Sociology:***

Thomas is an orphan who does not know his family. He is single. He is a white atheist who finds politics and religion to be tedious. Thomas has graduated high school and went through government funded training instead of college. He works as an agent for the secret government organization C.R.O.S.S. and financially he is in a lot of debt. This is due to gambling and some other risks he took in the past. His relationship to agent Gordon is as an acquaintance from work at C.R.O.S.S.

***Psychology:***

Agent Thomas is a risk taker by nature. This has led to him to his current debt situation. He is a bit of a hot head, but always remains level headed enough to think things through before acting. He is quite intelligent and good at solving puzzles. Despite his risk taking tendencies, his risks are always calculated risks. His athleticism and ability to think quickly on his feet make him a good agent. He is often sarcastic in nature and sometimes asks if there is a better way to do his dangerous mission. Despite his words and reservations, he is actually very brave and motivated to finish the job. Thomas is also quite resilient psychologically. Even in the face of life threatening and occasionally traumatic experiences, he remains in control and able to push forward. He doesn’t bother with politics or religion as he finds topics like that tedious and uninteresting. He is currently straight and single.

***Verbal characteristics:***

Agent Thomas has a voice of one of those badass player character heroes that can survive anything. To get an idea of what I’m talking about, think Troy Baker. He is the guy who voiced Alec Mason from red Faction. Or even Gunner Wright who voiced Isaac Clarke from the Dead Space series. It doesn’t have to be those guys or exactly like that. But this is the sort of idea I am aiming for with the voice. He is a badass and should sound like it.

Thomas often speaks with a sarcastic tone. Here are a few samples:

*“Great. I’ll get right on that as soon as I don’t risk getting crushed by giant trains.”*

*“You have to be kidding. Isn’t there a* ***safer*** *way to do this?”*

*“Now you tell me. Couldn’t you have started me a little closer to the factory?”*

*“Oh. So it’s ok to take things that don’t belong to you as long as it is in the best interest of the government? That’s called stealing, Gordon.”*

*“Uptown… It’s… It’s… It’s gone, Gordon! It’s gone!” (Spoilers)*

**Agent Gordon**

***Background:***

His full name is Gordon T. Hatt. He is the supporting character who guides Agent Thomas through his mission. He loved Spy movies as a kid, and this led him to becoming a secret agent. He was recruited into C.R.O.S.S. not long after high school and has been a loyal agent ever since. He tends to deal more with information than actual field duty.

***Physiology:***

Agent Gordon is a white male with black eyes. He is a tad portly, bald, and has a very round head. He is clean shaven. He is 36 years old. Gordon wears a black suit jacket over a gold vest, which he wears over a white dress shirt and tie. He has a white handkerchief in his right suit jacket pocket. He also wears gray dress pants, and black dress shoes. Gordon wears a black top hat which he is very fond of. He is a little shorter than Thomas, being around 5 feet and 9 inches tall. But the top hat makes up for it.

***Sociology:***

Gordon is a fairly well to do man who comes from a lower upper class family that has roots with merchants from 2,000 years ago. He works as an agent for the secret government organization C.R.O.S.S. He is a white male Gordon is a government Loyalist and almost always takes the side of the government which employs him, even if the methods are somewhat shady. When the topic came of his sexual orientation, Gordon says that he believes he comes off as more “mysterious and aloof” if he doesn’t answer. However, on his personal files it says he is married and has a wife. His relationship with agent Thomas is as an acquaintance at work.

***Psychology:***

Agent Gordon is very level headed and almost always appears in control. He is very smart and has an affinity for problem solving and business. He has great deduction skills. He has an excellent memory and tends to work with secret intelligence rather than in the field. Gordon loves his job and is generally pretty down to business. When he does show it, he does have a decent sense of humor at times. Often times the humor is very dry. He is a government Loyalist and almost never questions the government which employs him. He is often very quick to defend the government even if they may not be morally correct. He is quick to write off most of the concerns and complaints of agent Thomas and generally appears unconcerned for his well being. However, it is shown in rare circumstances when it is really bad that he does care some.

***Verbal characteristics:***

Agent Gordon has a fairly deep voice and a British accent. Much of the time, his speech is a tad slower and more drawn out than the average person. His volume is average.

Gordon is quite the taskmaster. Here are a few samples:

*“Oh quit your whining. You are supposed to be an agent, aren’t you? Tough it out, chap!”*

*“No. Of course there isn’t a* ***better*** *way to do this. Why do you think we have you out here?”*

*“And just who do you think is going to pay off those* ***awful*** *debts of yours? That’s right! The same government you are mocking. The same government you work for, I might add.”*

*“It’s not stealing. It’s a government* ***seizure*** *which is legal, authorized, and quite appropriate for the situation. I dare say you have no idea how the real world works. Besides, Gregarious Railways is being shutdown. They blew it and these are the consequences. It’s not like they will need the trains now either way…”*

*“Thomas? Tom… Tom… Are you alright? Thomas?!?!?”*