

Aaja Ouellette, Victoria Lam, Joey Perrello

## Design Goals

We designed the structure of the game as a group and quickly decided on something that would let us work on separate pieces of the game before linking them together at the end. We conceived the basic structure of the game as follows: the initial scene, three character conversation scenes, and then accusation scenes, which would be unlocked depending on the results of your conversations with the characters. Each character storylet was to follow the same basic structure within their conversation of an initial meeting, conversation about various topics, and of course, something relating to the airfryer itself.

The exact details and tone of each scene were left up to the discretion of their respective writers, though we were going for a lighthearted tone. Further, we decided that the experience was not about solving the mystery, but more so to talk with strange and eccentric characters. We weren't as interested in writing a solvable mystery story as writing some goofy interactions. We hope they were amusing, they were intended to be.

For the conversation with MR S, this was envisioned to be a conversation-centric storylet similar to the Overboard example. Content is offered and selected based on the game state, such as which topic hooks have not been triggered and which topic was most recently surfaced. There are a breadth of topic hooks that cover a few different things, such as the character of MR S, some details about his life, and his relation to the crime. These topic hooks are static, and each can be broached once, always available in the conversation. The reactions, on the other hand, rely on the direct context of the line that enables them, and so are only available right after the trigger to which they respond. Finally, the accusation scene with MR S was written so that the player would be able to make callbacks to each of the seen suspicious things MR S had said during the conversation.

Also, MR S shouldn't contradict himself. If MR S has already claimed to be an insurance salesman, he will lie to say that he travels a great deal. However, if he has already admitted instead to rarely traveling, then when he claims to be an insurance salesman, you can press him with the apparent contradiction. In this way, the order that topics are visited also has an impact on the scene.

For the conversation with the Crow, this was intended to be a short encounter that featured a playful crow-man who keeps trying to flirt with the player whenever possible. The player can have the option to flirt back with the Crow throughout their interrogation of the character. Choosing the flirting options may slightly influence the dialogue with the Boss at the end of the interrogation. Certain options would reveal additional ones to gather more information about the crime, which would increase the amount of suspicion the character has. The accusation scene was intended to build on when the Crow mentions buttons on the airfryer. When the player reaches that dialogue option and has built up enough suspicion points from previous conversation, the player can accuse the Crow. The accusation scene will then revisit the topic of buttons on the airfryer.

The character of Max was inspired by a common trope: the failed businessman. This character trope may seem tired, but it allows for the potential of comedy with absurd business ventures and questionable ethics. The major problem with Max was to find a way that the businessman could break the airfryer. This led to the design of Max being a businessman who

goes above and beyond to close out deals, but is tragic in the situations he finds himself in due to his own ego and devotion to business. Max's story should feel similar to businessman characters like that of *Wolf of Wall Street* mixed with Erlich Bachman from *Silicon Valley*. In a more formal sense, the interaction with Max feels as though the player isn't talking to a smug, evil businessman, but rather a failed businessman caught in his woes that is simply trying to succeed. The absurd scallop story of Max reflects this. In this story he risks his life to deliver scallops to his business partner, solely on the suspicion he wouldn't be able to close the deal.

The businessman concept allowed for the player character to have a role in this story, rather than just an interrogator. This led to the development of the silk robe subplot to Max's story. In this story, the player tells Max about a fictional business idea, giving depth to the player's character. Additionally, the ending to this story perfectly illustrates Max's personality because he ends up stealing the idea for himself.

Max often contradicts himself within his conversations; he is a drunk, failed businessman after all. In Max's story it was decided that the player character should have the option to notice flaws in Max's claims and choose an option based on that discovery. This is primarily done within the burlesque story, as Max lies about the place even existing. He also later claims to have started a kitchen supplies business, then says he has no idea what an airfryer is. Our characters embody the whole concept of our game: an absurd, funny story that rewards attentive players through choice.