FPS Level Postmortem

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Youtube Link: https://youtu.be/8a94UR9W23g

Design Choices

Given what we've learned in class, I focused on making the level flow and pace well as the player progresses. On top of that, I tried to include vignettes throughout the level in a way that the player is also given bits and pieces of a story.

The level has a main hub that unlocks new doors whenever you reach a certain point. The exit is available to the player at the start of the level but is quickly blocked off, requiring the player to find a way through. Each section of the level will eventually lead back to the hub and will give the player an idea of what they can do next. Each area also becomes a rest area when the room is cleared of enemies, complete with some supply boxes for more ammo or health.

In order to make the level flow well, I tried to make almost every room in the level increasingly more difficult than the last. This often either meant more enemies or the same number of enemies, but of a higher level.

Implementation

Main Hub (Key Area 1)

The red lighting and alarm are used to indicate to the player that something is wrong in the prison they are in. The table blocking the way to the main hub (0:10) forces the player to grab the items on the desk to break the table. The metro police (0:20) are the first and weakest enemies that the player encounters. While there are four of them, only one of them has a gun and the player is given plenty of space to move around to get away from their attacks. The dead NPC on the ground is also an indication that the prison guards are killing people. The exit hallway (0:34) is wide open for the player to walk into. However, the shield wall turns on right before the player can reach it and the key that was in the slot on the wall is broken (0:38). This indicates to the player that they need to find a new key. The other two doors are locked, so the player is forced to go upstairs.

2nd Floor

Upon going up the stairs to the second floor, there is a desk with a box of pistol ammo and a health vial (0:56) and prison cells with more dead prisoners (1:01). The desk's items are the player's reward for clearing out the enemies and the prison cells are part of the environmental narrative. The player is then given two options. They go up the stairs that lead to the control room, or they go to the open prison cell and into the vents. By going up the stairs, the player is met with more metro police. Now half of them have pistols while the other half have stun sticks (1:06). At the end of the hallway with the metro police, there are some supply boxes and then there is a door to the left of the player. That door will lead to the control room. One of these supply boxes also contains grenades that the player can choose to use in the next fight or later on.

Control Room (Key Area 2)

By going through the door into the control room, the player is met with a small wall, as well as a desk with a shotgun and some ammo (1:30). Reaching for the new weapon, the player is greeted by five enemies. Three of them are metro police, while the other two are prison guards. This room acts as the first introduction to the prison guards. After defeating the enemies in the room, the player can look out the window and see, if it was not already seen before, that there is a wire stretching across the prison from one of the locked doors to a button in the control room. Pressing this button unlocks the door and changes the lights from a dark red to a bright white (3:06). As mentioned previously, the player could go into a vent system (1:54). This venting system would lead the player to a supply crate with grenades and two holes in the ceiling (2:15). The player can use these holes to throw grenades down into the crowd of enemies in the control room and then drop down behind the small wall and proceed as before. There is also a health machine at the other end of the room so the player can fully restore themselves (1:50).

Past the control room, there are two more prison guards (3:11). While one has an SMG, the other has a shotgun. This introduces the player to the variation in prison guards. Behind the prison guards are some more supply boxes and then a door that leads back to the main hub.

Lab (Key Area 3)

Opening the now unlocked door, there is a small security room. In that room, is an elite soldier as well as an SMG (3:45). This room introduces the player to the new enemy and provides them with a better long-range weapon. Past this room, there is a staircase that leads down to a lab. The door to the lab is locked, but there are wires that connect the door to the security room, forcing the player to go into that room if they want to go out that way. Within the room, there is also a monitor with the feed of the lab ahead (4:00). This gives the player an idea of what enemies they will have to deal with and lets them plan accordingly. There is also another venting system that the player can use to get into the room instead (4:59).

The lab itself is a test of the player's ability to defeat the various enemies they've encountered so far (4:26). There is only one elite soldier, like in the last fight, but the player now has to also deal with the enemies they've encountered before. Upon defeating the enemies, the player can take a look around and notice that there are caged zombies in the room (4:45). This indicates to the player that something more sinister is happening inside the prison. The lab also becomes a resting area as there are some supply boxes underneath the staircase for the player to regain some health and ammunition. Past this area, the player will never deal with metro police enemies ever again, further increasing the overall difficulty of the fights they will encounter.

Test Subject Holding (Key Area 4)

The small hallway past the lab contains only two prison guards (6:05). This is to give the players more time to rest as they have dealt with these enemies multiple times already and should not have a difficult time defeating them. As they go down the hallway, there is a slight jump scare as one of the doors in the hallway is busted down and a fast zombie comes out (6:13). This is the only time the player has to deal with a zombie and they are relatively easy to

take down. Inside the zombie's room, the player can see some bones and blood, as well as a hole in another room (6:29).

This room contains some ammo, health, and a revolver, which I deemed to be one of the strongest weapons in the game, so I gave no ammunition to the player outside of the six rounds it has when first picked up.

Continuing through that room, the player has an alternate entrance to the room past the test subject holding room (6:35). This gives the player a new opportunity to ambush the enemies waiting for them. This room has four elite soldiers and two prison guards. Given much more powerful weapons, it stands to assume the player can handle stronger enemies in higher volumes. This same room also has three supply boxes that the player can use to recover from the fight.

Warden's Room (Key Area 5)

The player walks into the room leading to the warden's room via a catwalk (7:13). Below them, is a group of enemies, half of them are prison guards while the other half are elite soldiers. While the distribution of enemy difficulty is more equal than the previous room, the player is given fewer supply boxes at the end and then has to enter the warden's room. The difficulty is also still provided that the player just dealt with a small room filled with enemies and is still somewhat not fully recovered from that fight.

The warden's room contains three enemies (7:50). Two elite soldiers, and then the warden themself. The room is small and provides nothing in terms of supplies, but defeating the warden grants the player a new key to disable the shield wall in the main hub. Behind the warden's desk is a button that opens a secret passageway back to the main hub (8:10).

Going back to the main hub with the key in hand, the player can insert the key in the slot on the wall and the shield wall will be disabled, allowing them to exit the building (8:25).

Prison Yard (Key Area 6)

Before opening the doors to the prison, the player can open one final room (8:30). This room is an armory of sorts that consists of several supply boxes, a suit recharge station, a health station, and the AR2. This large number of supplies should indicate to the player that whatever comes next will be the hardest fight.

As the player walks out of the building and into the prison yard, the doors close and lock behind them, forcing them into the fight (9:00). The player is, however, given plenty of cover in the form of vans and a barricade right outside the prison doors. There are nine enemies of varying difficulty for the player to go up against. Most of the enemies will stay behind cover, while some of them will try to advance toward the player and pressure them. After five of them are defeated, three more squads of three enemies will appear and the fight will continue (9:29). One of these squads is stationed above the player on a balcony in the center of the yard, giving the player a sense of layered combat. If the player proceeds forward to a certain point past their cover points, two squads of five elite soldiers will spawn as a final test for the player (10:48). This is the player's last challenge as this wave of enemies consists only of the strongest enemies the player has faced.

This entire fight is the longest and most difficult as more enemies will spawn and they become increasingly more difficult. Once all the enemies are defeated, the player is able to safely exit the prison yard to a vehicle nearby and the level is finished (11:53).

<u>Feedback</u>

One of the biggest changes to the level was the final fight. One person mentioned that most of the fights seemed bland. The large number of enemies in the prison yard made them believe that the best thing to do was to stay where they were and stay behind cover within the prison. This was fixed in a couple of ways. As mentioned previously, the doors to the yard now close when you walk out of the prison. This forces the player into the fight and stops them from going back inside to where it is safe. I also lowered the number of enemies at the start of the final fight to make it seem more appealing to go out and fight the enemies. However, instead of getting rid of all the enemies that were in the fight originally, I had them spawn later when five enemies were defeated. I also tweaked the AI of some of the enemies in the yard. Some of them will stay around their barriers, while some would advance toward the player and pressure them, making the fight more interesting. The AI of the enemies in some of the other fights has also been tweaked so that the enemies know where they can move to in order to avoid damage from the player.