

Zombie King

By Joseph Ennever, Daniel Lasry,
Miles Lennon, Benjamin Ludman,
Conor Russomanno, Jordan Schau



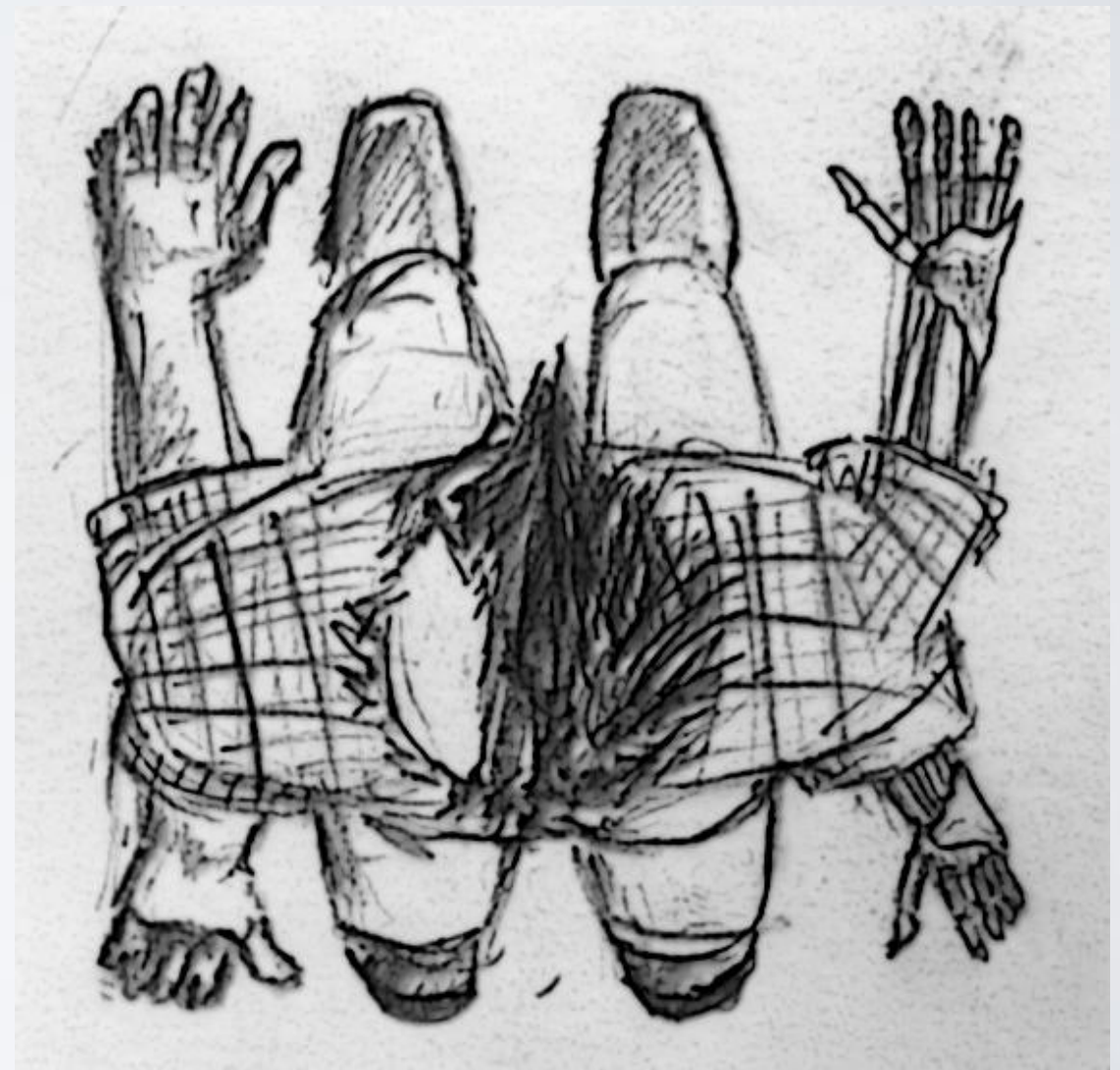
Initial Concept

- Team Goal: Play as a Zombie
- Implementation:
 - Benevolent zombie that remembers h humanity
 - Try to keep zombieism under control
 - Eat humans only as a necessity
 - Find a cure for zombies



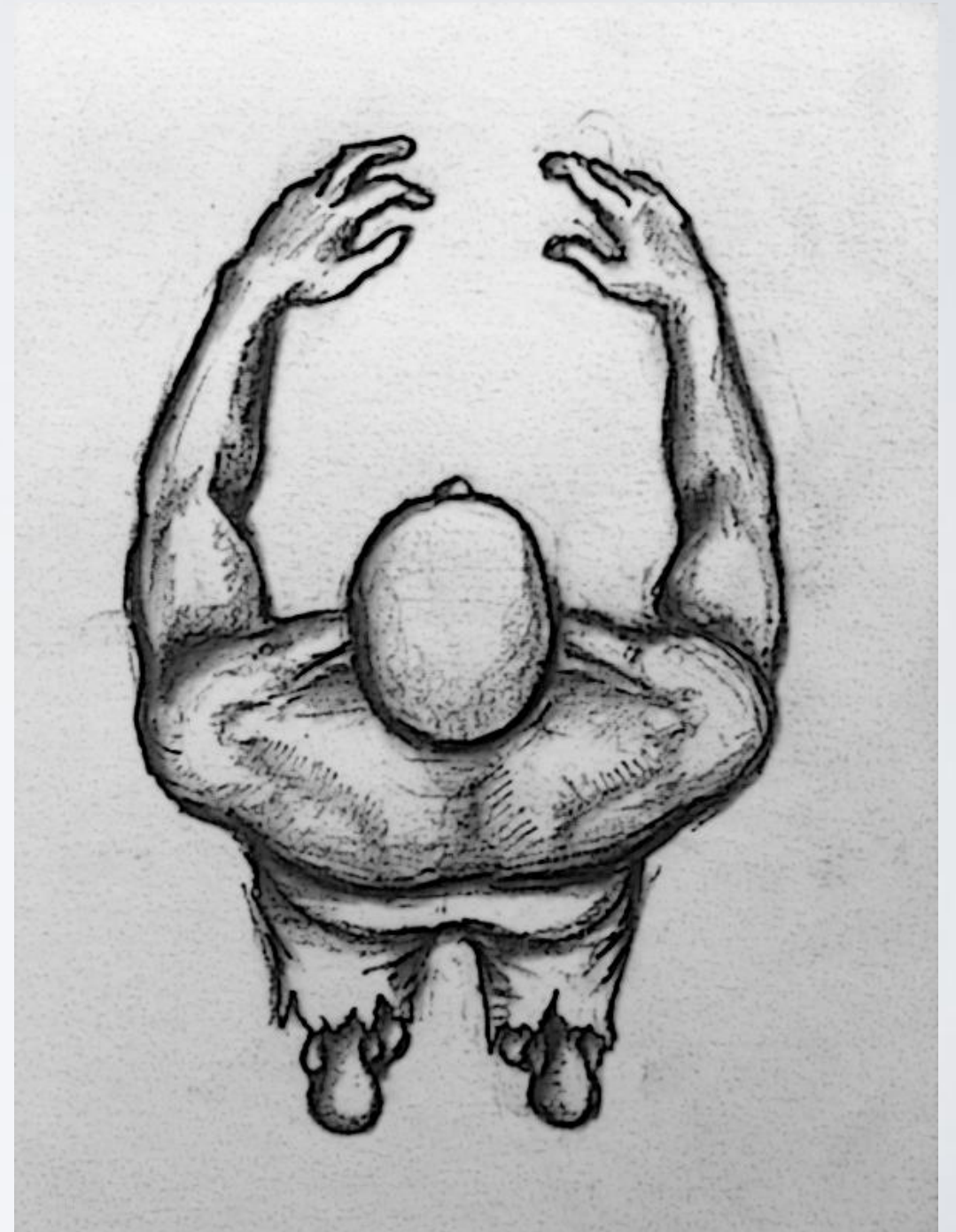
What resulted (First DEMO)

- Built an adventure game with powerups, powerdowns (consequences), and melee attacks
- No infection, no uncontrollable craving for brains, no other zombies
- Focused on negative consequences of zombie behavior (benevolence), not playing as zombie



Pivot




- Focus on the player *being* a Zombie!
- What we could salvage:
 - Game framework
 - Enemy AI
 - Enemy / Player combat
- What we left behind:
 - Powerups / Powerdowns
 - Level traversal
 - Aversion to killing humans



Game Flow

Start

Arrow Keys - Move
A - Send minions to attack
S - Call minions to follow you
Space - Attack

 - **Regular Cop**
 - **Fearless Cop**
 - **Cautious Cop**

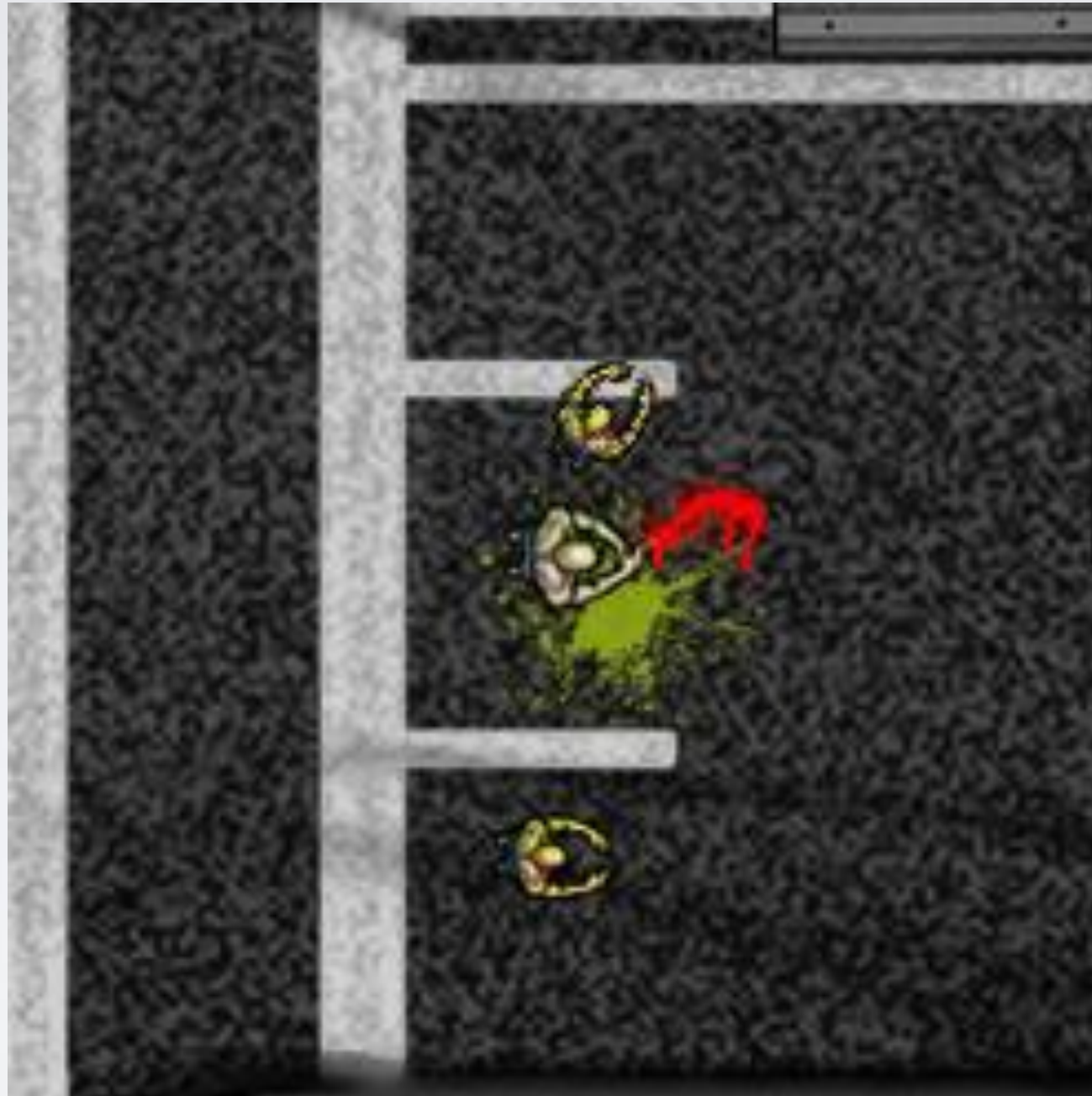
Start Screen

Game Flow



Combat

Game Flow



- Build your horde

Game Flow



Survive

Game Flow

You Died!

Start Over

**You ate 0 brains.
Your minions ate 0 brains.
Your total survival time was 00:21
Your score is 210**

End game screen

Revised Concept and Mechanics



- Went back to original goal: Play as a Zombie
- What does it mean to be a zombie?
 - Constant craving for human flesh
 - Slow, constant health decay
 - Killing humans and eating their brains increases health
 - Zombie horde gives you more health too, incentivizing infection
 - Hunted by humans
 - Humans band together to eradicate infection
 - Terrifying
 - Make humans more vulnerable when they are scared
 - Sluggish
 - Humans are faster than zombies



Revised Concept and Mechanics



- First revision lacked player agency
- Let the player take control of his zombie horde
 - Tested the game with and without zombie horde management
 - Play testers had a better experience when in control of the other zombies
 - Played more consecutive rounds
- Result: Add fine grain controls to manage the zombie horde



Revised Concept and Mechanics



- First revision lacked progression and scoring system transparency
- Play tester didn't know whether they were doing well or poorly
 - HUD brain counter alone still didn't clearly communicate progress
- Result: Added scoring system based on survival (time) and infection (brains)



Revised Concept and Mechanics

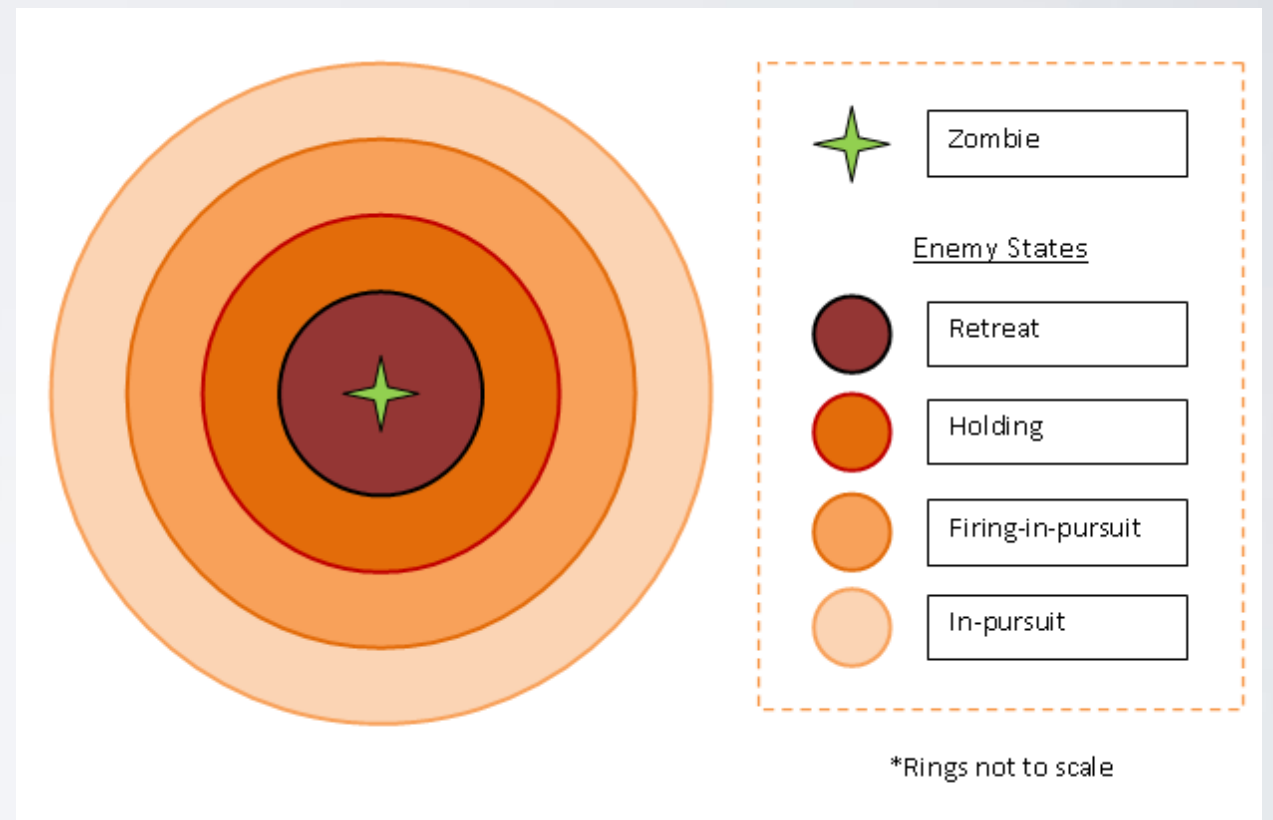


- First revision had one big endless wave of humans
- Constant flow of humans lacked dramatic curve and the feeling of progression
- Predictable entry points of humans led to undesirable strategies
- Result: Multiple Waves
 - Waves increase in difficulty over time creating tension
 - Humans enter randomly from different entry points



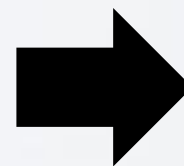
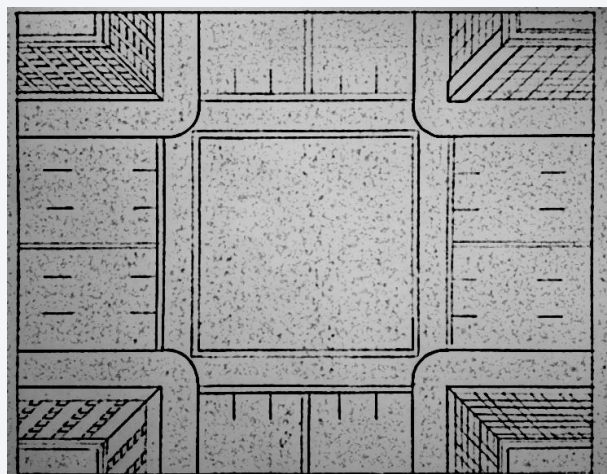
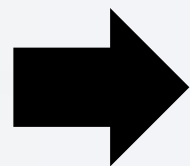
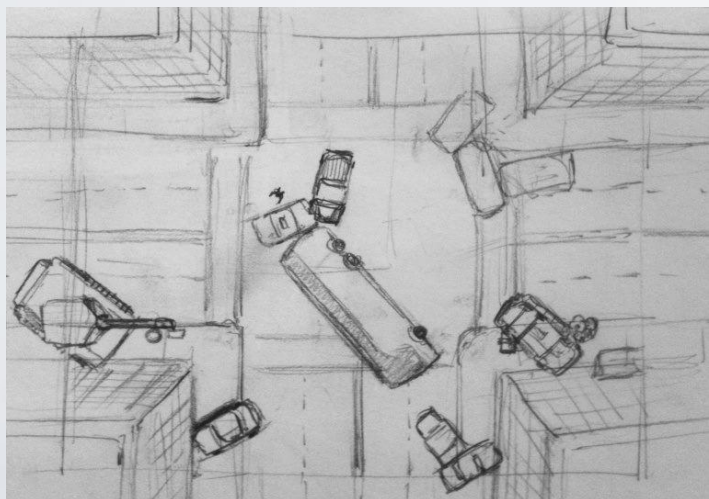
Revised Concept and Mechanics

- First revision had *really* primitive AI
- Play testers commented that AI was far too predictable and easy to overcome
- Result: Improve AI and introduce multiple enemy classes
 - Follow, firing, hold and retreat radii
 - Three different enemy types: Regular, Cautious and Fearless



Revised State of the World

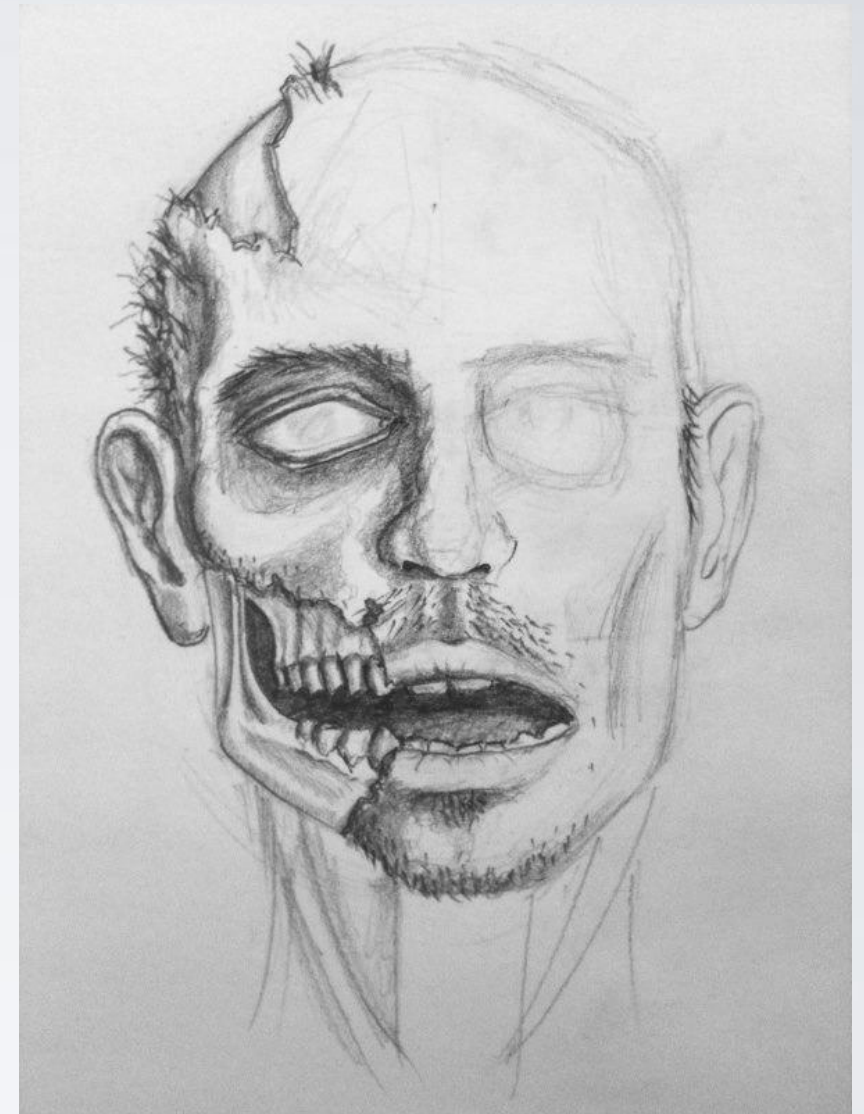
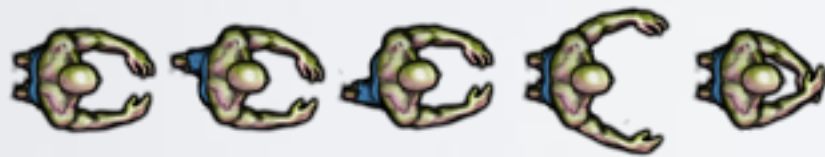
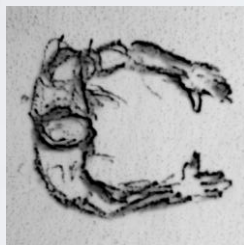
- Zombies are nearly eradicated
 - Day 100: The humans are winning
- The player is surrounded by human defense forces
- Switch from level maps (adventure) to contained combat area (action) that incentivizes mayhem and havoc





Revised Art Direction

- Switch to darker, less iconic sprites



Emergent Strategies

- Fine controls over horde during the first couple of waves
- Use horde as cannon fodder for later waves
- Make enemies vulnerable by cornering them when they retreat (eliminates speed advantage)

What's next

- Improve AI
 - Pathfinding
 - Obstacle avoidance
- Saved Scores
 - Personal bests
- Leaderboards
 - Compete against other players
- Choose a map
 - Increase replayability even more
 - New terrain may lead to new and interesting behavior
- More enemy classes at later waves
- UI
 - Start Screen
 - End game screen

