The initial time cycle should be canned and not quite as free form as the proper timeloop. As an introduction, we want players to get used to how the game plays and what their options are, but also understand that we’re not holding their hands and that they need to work for themselves.

Day 0 - This should mainly be a prologue in the form of an opening cutscene. Maybe Jimmy is driving into town while he’s getting a call from Gerald’s relative, telling him that Gerald still lives out in the old family home.

Day 1 - The very first day of investigation - The crime scene day. Jimmy can spend as much or as little time at Gerald’s house, investigating the warndown and unclean house. The police really didn’t come in and look around, but they did take the body and outline it, so you know where his body is was. As for anything else, the blood is caked on walls, dust everywhere, maybe flies around the garbage. - This day should be spent on showing the players their options in investigations.

Day 2 - Asking around town - Jimmy goes around and looks for any possible leads, either from specific people he got information from Gerald’s house or by going to the logical locations where people would be (bar, wednesday service at Peace Lutheran) etc. - This day should be spent introducing characters and their interactions, and how to navigate town

Day 3 - The character should have free reign at this point, but at the end of the day, a canned cutscene will play, reverting us back to Day 1. Jimmy will recognize that something is wrong, so he tries to trace his steps and start working this murder in a three day time span.

(At this point, I give you guys free reign as to how to reach Day 4. Whatever red herrings with whatever families, whatever leads Jimmy around to reasonably suspect someone, it’s yours. I’m satisfied with at least this opening and ending, so the rest is your playground. Enjoy - Aaron.)

Repeat until...

Day 4 - Jimmy receives news that the slug sent in by police was actually a bolt from some machine. He discovers the particle accelerator in a hidden room, and scans it over. The trajectory is right, and given how disconcerting this thing looks while its running, Jimmy pieces 1 and 1 and makes 2 - This was an accidental death by Gerald’s faulty machinery. Noticing that it is still running, he unplugs it, and leaves the house, unsatisfied by his answer as he returns to Gerald’s relative. His relative blows up at Jimmy, berating him for not giving them a good answer, but closure nonetheless. Jimmy leaves town, and doesn’t look back.