

= The Portopia Serial Murder Case =

Portopia Renzoku Satsujin Jiken (??????????? , literally The Portopia Serial Murder Incident) , also known as The Portopia Serial Murder Case , is an adventure game designed by Yuji Horii and published by Enix (now Square Enix) . It was first released on the NEC PC @-@ 6001 in June 1983 , and later ported to other personal computers . Chunsoft ported the game to the Family Computer (or Famicom) , the Japanese version of the Nintendo Entertainment System (or NES) , on November 29 , 1985 , and to different mobile phone services starting in 2001 . It is the first part of the Yuuji Horii Mysteries trilogy , along with its successors Hokkaido Chain Murder : The Disappearance of Ohotsuku (??????? ????????? , Hokkaidou Rensa Satsujin : Ohotsuku ni Kiyu , 1984) and The Karuizawa Kidnapping Guide (??????? , Karuizawa Yuukai Annai , 1985) .

The game is an investigation adventure , sophisticated for its time , in which the player must resolve a murder mystery by searching for clues , exploring different areas , interacting with characters , and solving item @-@ based puzzles . The game , especially its Famicom version , was received positively in Japan , where it was an influential title that defined the visual novel genre . An unofficial English fan translation of the Famicom version was released on June 16 , 2006 by DvD Translations . DvD Translations released an improved Rev. B patch on October 31 , 2010 .

= = Gameplay = =

Portopia Renzoku Satsujin Jiken follows a first @-@ person perspective and narrative . The various events are described with still pictures and text messages . The player interacts with the game using a verb @-@ noun parser which requires typing precise commands with the keyboard . Finding the exact words to type is considered part of the riddles that must be solved . While sound effects are present , the game lacks music and a save function . It features a branching dialogue conversation system where the story develops through entering commands and receiving answers to them from the player 's sidekick or non @-@ player characters .

The game allows multiple different ways to achieve objectives , adding an element of nonlinear gameplay . This included travelling between different areas in a generally open world and making choices that determine the dialogues and order of events as well as alternative outcomes depending on who the player identifies as the culprit . However , only one of the characters is the true culprit , while the others are red herrings ; if the player closes the case with the wrong culprit , then the player will face criticism from the police chief and need to re @-@ open the case . The game includes a phone that could be used to manually dial any number , which is needed to contact several non @-@ player characters . The game also features an inventory system requiring the examination and collection of items , which could be used as evidence later in the game .

With no keyboard , the Famicom version replaces the verb @-@ noun parser with a menu list of fourteen set commands selectable with the gamepad . This is similar to the command selection menu system introduced in Yuji Horii 's murder mystery adventure game Okhotsk ni Kiyu : Hokkaido Rensa Satsujin Jiken , which was released in 1984 , in between the PC and Famicom releases of Portopia . One of the commands on the menu allowed the player to use the D @-@ pad to move a cursor on the screen in order to look for clues and hotspots , similar to a point @-@ and @-@ click interface . The Famicom version of Portopia also features branching menu selections , which includes using the pointer as a magnifying glass to investigate objects , which is needed to find hidden clues , and as a fist or hammer to hit anything or anyone , which could be used to carry out interrogation beatings on suspects . Additional sequences were also added , notably an underground dungeon maze reportedly influenced by Wizardry , giving those sequences a style similar to role @-@ playing video games .

= = Setting and characters = =

Although the story of the game is fictional , it is set in real Japanese cities ; mainly Kobe , in addition to a few sequences in Kyoto and Sumoto . The president of a successful bank company ,

Kouzou Yamakawa (山崎 光雄) , is found dead by his secretary Fumie Sawaki (相馬 文恵) inside a locked room in his mansion . Signs seem to indicate that Kouzou stabbed himself ; however , the police sends a detective to investigate further .

The detective in charge of the case is an unnamed , unseen , and silent protagonist who essentially embodies the player . He works with an assistant named Yasuhiko Mano (渡辺 泰彦) , nicknamed Yasu (やす) , who is the one who actually speaks and executes most of the player 's commands . Other characters include , among others , Yukiko (雪子) , daughter of a man named Hirata (平田) ; and Toshiyuki (利幸) , Kouzou 's nephew and heir .

= = Development and release = =

The game was conceived by Yuji Horii around 1981 , when he was 27 years old , shortly after he bought his first computer and learned to program with it by modifying other games . During this time , he read a PC magazine article about a computer game genre called adventure games in the United States . Horii noticed the lack of such games in the Japanese market and decided to create an adventure game of his own , one that was " a program in which the story would develop through entering a command and by receiving an answer to it . " The game was developed using the BASIC programming language .

Following its 1983 release , the game was ported to various Japanese personal computers . A Famicom port was then released in 1985 and was the first adventure game to be released on that platform . The Famicom version was also the first collaboration between Yuuji Horii and Koichi Nakamura of Chunsoft , before Dragon Quest . The Famicom version was programmed by Nakamura , who was 19 years old at the time . The game was never released in the Western world , largely due to its mature content , involving themes such as murder , suicide , fraud , bankruptcy , interrogation beatings , drug dealings , and a strip club . The lack of a Western release prompted ROM hacking group DvD Translations to develop an unofficial translation of the Famicom version .

The first mobile phone version of the game was branded as a part of a Horii Y?ji Gekij? (山井 雄二 劇場 , " Y?ji Horii Theater ") trilogy along with mobile versions of Hokkaido Rensa Satsujin Okhotsk ni Kiyu and Karuizawa Y?kai Annai . It was released in 2003 on EZweb and Yahoo ! Keitai services . It features a list of set commands similar to the Famicom version but also improved graphics , no free @-@ moving cursor , and a save function . The games of the trilogy , which was retitled Yuuji Horii Mysteries (山井 雄二 探偵 事件) , were re @-@ released in 2005 and 2006 on the same services . The second Portopia version possesses the same content as the first mobile one , in addition to updated graphics , background music , a bonus function obtained after completing the game , and a hint option which nullifies the ending bonus if it is used too frequently .

= = Reception and legacy = =

The Famicom version of the game sold 700 @, @ 000 copies . The game was well received in Japan for allowing multiple ways to achieve objectives , its well @-@ told storyline , and its surprising twist ending . The Japanese press described it as " a game without game over " because " there was technically no way to lose . " According to Square Enix , it was " the first real detective adventure " game . The game , along with Super Mario Bros. , inspired Hideo Kojima (creator of the Metal Gear series) to enter the video game industry . He praised Portopia for its mystery , drama , humor , 3D dungeons , for providing a proper background and explanation behind the murderer 's motives , and expanding the potential of video games .

In 2003 , Portopia Renzoku Satsujin Jiken ranked 19th in a poll to determine the thirty best Famicom games ; the poll was conducted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography as part of its " Level X " exhibition . The English @-@ language webzine Retrogaming Times Monthly compared the game to the later @-@ released Shadowgate where the player must examine and collect objects and find their true purpose later on , and recommended Portopia to fans of " slower paced games that require [players] to think through puzzles " . John Szczepaniak of Retro Gamer called the game simple , but praised its pacing and quality of writing , and considers the gameplay

and plot to be sophisticated for its time . He also considers it " one of the most influential games " as it was responsible for defining the visual novel genre , comparing it to the role of Super Mario Bros. , Tetris and Street Fighter in defining their own respective genres (platform game , puzzle game , and fighting game , respectively) . He noted that it contains elements found in later titles such as Dragon Quest , Snatcher , Déjà Vu , 428 : F?sa Sareta Shibuya de , and 999 : Nine Hours , Nine Persons , Nine Doors . 1UP also noted that Portopia is very similar to ICOM Simulations ' Déjà Vu released several years later and that Horii 's own seminal console role @-@ playing game Dragon Warrior used storytelling techniques and a menu @-@ based command system very similar to Portopia . Nintendo 's successful Famicom Detective Club series of adventure games were also inspired by Portopia .