

Game Design Document

Recording 02:17

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Overview

Introduction

Recording 02:17 is a 2.5D psychological horror narrative game with semi-3D free movement, inspired by *Little Nightmares*. The player takes control of Beelzebub, a child trapped in a recurring traumatic memory inside a surreal family house. Swarms of flies follow or hover around the player, symbolizing his identity and the inescapable weight of trauma.

The game blends environmental storytelling, puzzle-solving, and exploration, creating a dream-like, oppressive atmosphere where memories, fears, and past events are distorted into each room of the house.

The player is immersed in a looping timeline fixed at 02:17, where every discovery brings them closer to uncovering the tragic story of the family while experiencing the psychological weight of being trapped in memory.

Game Structure

Control

Control & Perspective

The player experiences the journey in **2.5D with free 3D movement on floors**, semi-fixed cinematic camera, allowing exploration in all directions while maintaining a controlled framing for tension and horror.

- **Movement:** WASD
- **Look Around:** Arrows
- **Interact:** E

The house is interconnected, allowing fluid exploration without breaks or loading screens. Each room represents a memory, emotion, or fragment of the tragic past, revealed through notes, objects, surveillance footage, and environmental cues.

Gameplay Mechanics

Exploration: Navigate the house, uncovering rooms, hidden areas, and interactive objects.

Flies Interaction: Swarms of flies hover, follow, or circle the player, emphasizing Beelzebub's identity and tension.

Puzzle-Solving: Environmental and time-based puzzles, such as aligning clocks, decoding notes, or triggering events at 02:17.

Discovery: Access PC folders (Family, Cameras, Notes) to reveal story fragments and hidden truths.

Loop Awareness: Events repeat around 02:17, reinforcing the psychological loop and tension.

Puzzle Design

Puzzles are subtle and narrative-driven. The player uncovers clues naturally while exploring:

- **Observational Puzzles:** Notice details in the environment to trigger events.
- **Time-Based Puzzles:** Manipulate objects (e.g., clocks) to synchronize events at 02:17.
- **Code/Document Puzzles:** Read notes or access folders to uncover hidden messages or USB drives.

Each solved puzzle reveals a deeper understanding of Beelzebub's trauma and the family tragedy.

Art Direction

The visual style is dark, moody, and surreal

- Distorted 2.5D environments with semi-realistic proportions
- Aged furniture, scratched walls, distorted drawings
- Flies represented as dynamic particle systems
- Lighting emphasizes tension: shadows, flickers, soft glow highlights interactive objects

- The house feels oppressive, yet each room tells a fragment of memory and psychological state

Sound & Music

Audio design supports psychological horror and immersion:

- **Ambient Sounds:** Creaking floors, distant echoes, subtle whispers, fly buzzing
- **Flies Audio:** Dynamic buzzing that changes with proximity and tension
- **Narrative Cues:** AI-generated calm, reflective inner voice for Beelzebub
- **Music:** Minimalist, eerie, melancholic tracks emphasizing isolation and looping memory
- **Feedback Sounds:** Gentle chimes for interactive objects or triggered events