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Table of Contents

Section 1 – Game Overview	4
Introduction	4
General Points.....	4
Genre.....	4
Audience	4
Unique Selling Points	4
Inspiration	5
Visual Media Inspiration	5
Gameplay Inspiration.....	5
Section 2 – Narrative.....	6
Central Characters	6
Frank	6
Todd	6
Customers	6
RED	7
Detective Sasha Simmons	7
Story/Gameplay Progression:	7
Possible Character Dependent Outcomes:.....	7
Section 3 – Gameplay	8
Core Gameplay Loop (layers 1, 2, and 3)	8
Start Day (Layer 1).....	8
Get Order (Layer 2)	8
Complete Tape Order Requirements (Layer 2).....	8
Collect Evidence (Layer 3)	8
Complete Order Fulfillment and Delivery Requirements (Layer 2)	8
Complete the Day (Layer 1)	8
Gameplay Mechanics.....	9
Audio Tape Splicing / Rearranging.....	9
Audio Tape Re-Recording / Copying	9
Audio Tape Transcription.....	9
Audio Tape Adjusting.....	9

Audio Tape Re-Casing	9
Audio Tape Dusting.....	9
Video Tape Color Adjustment.....	9
Packaging	9
Calling to Confirm	9
Achievement Tapes (OPTIONAL)	10
Upgrades	10
Auto-Splicer.....	10
Tape Cleaner	10
Label Printer.....	10
Feedback Systems & UI.....	10
Layout Design.....	11
Section 4 – Art & Technical	12
Technical	12
Graphical Fidelity	12
Systems List.....	13
Visual Art.....	14
Color Palette Choices	14
3D Concept Art for Layout and Lighting	15

Section 1 – Game Overview

Introduction

Rewind is an 80s retrowave mystery thriller casual narrative game. It takes place in a fictionalized neon-filled New York storefront that deals in VHS and audio tapes. The player takes control of *Frank*, a tape repair specialist that works in the back room of this store called *Rewind*. *Frank* receives tape repair orders that come in the mail, he must adjust, repair, recase, or more to satisfy the order's requirements. One evening, in the cozy room at the back, *Frank* receives a red audio tape from an anonymous customer that requests an audio adjustment. On the tape, he hears audio from what seems to be a kidnapped person pleading for help. In the order envelope, he finds a warning message detailing his address, name, family members, and more. *Frank* must gather evidence and find out who is sending him these tapes, and hopefully escape the grasp of this dangerous person.

General Points

Genre

Mystery / Thriller / Narrative-focused / Retrowave / Casual.

Audience

Ages 15 and older. Very little gaming experience necessary.

Unique Selling Points

The game's uniqueness comes from the combination of cozy gameplay, the delivery of the narrative, and the environment in which the game takes place. The story unfolds directly through player curiosity, by reading and analyzing tapes and gathering evidence. It scratches the itch of being an amateur detective. This, coupled with the cozy, comforting, and satisfying gameplay of fixing the audio tapes, would drive home the aesthetic required to sell.

Inspiration

Visual Media Inspiration

- Kung Fury (2015) – Short film directed by David Sandberg.
- Blade Runner 2049 (2017) – Feature film directed by Denis Villeneuve.
- Blade Runner (1982) – Feature film directed by Ridley Scott.
- Hotline Miami (2012) – Video game developed by Dennaton Games and Abstraction.
- Stranger Things (2016) – TV show created by Matt and Ross Duffer.
- Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon (2013) – Video game developed by Ubisoft Montreal.
- Pacific Drive (2024) – Video game developed by Ironwood Studios.

Gameplay Inspiration

- Papers, Please (2013) – Video game developed by Lucas Pope.
- Assemble with Care (2019) – Video game developed by Ustwo.
- Killer Frequency (2023) – Video game developed by Team17.

Section 2 - Narrative

Central Characters

Frank

Description: *Frank* is a relaxed and friendly man that works at the back of the tape store called *Rewind*. A chubby man with long fluffy hair and wears various band t-shirts, jeans, and a denim jacket. He's young, around 20 years old, and still lives close to where he grew up. He used to visit this store when he was younger, back then it used to be an ice cream parlor, then a record store, now it's a tape store. He loves *The Evil Dead* and *David Bowie*. He learned how to work with audio and video tapes when he was young and now does this for a living after graduating high school.

Objectives: Fix tapes.

Role: Protagonist.

Functions: Player Character.

Todd

Description: In his late 30s, he used to work at this place back when it was a record store and now manages it. *Todd* is a mostly nonchalant person that *should* be locking up after being the last to leave but lets Frank work late and leaves the keys with him.

Objectives: Manage the store and instruct Frank on tasks.

Role: Support Character.

Functions: Tutorial and Proctor.

Customers

Description: Various customers that need their orders fulfilled, whether they drop them off in person or via mail. All sorts of interesting and quirky characters, but some randomly generated ones.

Objectives: Get their orders fulfilled correctly.

Role: Side Characters.

Functions: Missions.

RED

Description: Red is an enigma. He threatens the main character and forces him to get the tapes done correctly. He is some sort of serial murderer.

Objectives: Get his tapes back correctly.

Roles: Antagonist.

Functions: Plot Mover.

Detective Sasha Simmons

Description: Tough detective that is pursuing RED. She starts to become trouble for Frank if he does not collect evidence. He starts to become implicated in the crime if he lies.

Story/Gameplay Progression:

- Frank gets hired at the store and has his first day at his desk. (Beginning tutorial)
 - Player learns how to use 4 functions: Taking an order, audio tape splicing, audio tape re-casing, and order delivery.
- 1 full day passes without incident. Frank meets interesting customers.
- Player learns a new function: Audio tape re-recording and copying. Frank must spend the day using those new functions and he must work late tonight.
- Frank gets his first package from Red.
- Frank fulfills the order but is then prompted to make a copy. This is where we let the player know that their decisions matter.
- Red continues to send in orders, sometimes telling Frank what time the order will arrive so Frank must wait after hours to make sure he receives and fulfills the order quickly.
- The orders are getting more and more concerning and illegal.
- Player learns new functions: Video tape color adjustment and re-casing, audio transcriptions, and tape dusting.
- Red finds out if Frank made any copies. If he did, he would get more threatening. If he didn't, the cops would start to get involved.
- Detective Sasha Simmons visits the store. Asks if he received any strange packages.
- The next night, RED threatens Frank's family.

Possible Character Dependent Outcomes:

- Frank: apprehended, absolved, killed.
- RED: apprehended, escapes, killed.
- Detective Sasha Simmons: survives, killed.
- Todd: survives, killed.

Section 3 - Gameplay

Core Gameplay Loop (layers 1, 2, and 3)

- Layer 1: Describes the day itself.
- Layer 2: Gameplay loop that is repeated within a given day.
- Layer 3: Dependent on Layer 2 and pushes the narrative forward.

Start Day (Layer 1)

The day begins at the store. First orders start to arrive.

Get Order (Layer 2)

The player must select an order from the order menu (the tray of envelopes to the right side of the frame).

Complete Tape Order Requirements (Layer 2)

The player must go through the necessary steps in order to complete the customer's request. This includes things that have to do with fixing the tape itself (splicing, copying, transcribing, etc.)

Collect Evidence (Layer 3)

If the customer is RED, the player must collect and store evidence.

Complete Order Fulfillment and Delivery Requirements (Layer 2)

The player must go through the necessary steps in order to deliver the tape to the correct location (making sure addresses match and the order is dispatched).

Complete the Day (Layer 1)

The player ends the day and advances the story further.

Gameplay Mechanics

Audio Tape Splicing / Rearranging

You can rearrange the audio in a tape by cutting the tape with a razor, rearranging its position, and taping it together.

Audio Tape Re-Recording / Copying

You can place a blank tape and the old tape into a recorder. Click record as it transfers the data to a fresh tape. Usually done after splicing.

Audio Tape Transcription

You can play the audio tape and click on the computer which will allow you to access a terminal. There, you can type down what is being said in the tape to the best of your abilities. You package this with the tape when you send it.

Audio Tape Adjusting

You can adjust background, midground, and foreground audio levels. You can also remove distortions before rerecording.

Audio Tape Re-Casing

You may move the audio from an older case to a fresh case by unscrewing the lid, removing the tapes, and placing them in a fresh tape you can get from a drawer.

Audio Tape Dusting

You may grab an air can and dust/clean the audio tape case.

Video Tape Color Adjustment

You can adjust the RGB values, brightness, and contrast of a video tape.

Packaging

You have to package the tape in its final form and deliver it with whatever extra things they asked for (like a transcription for example) and you must get the address correct.

Calling to Confirm

If no address is provided you have a phone, you can pick up and call the number provided to get an address.

Achievement Tapes (OPTIONAL)

After passing a certain threshold or milestone you get achievement video tapes that you can play on a screen. They have nice box art and are placed on the desk in a cubby.

Upgrades

The functions get replaced in the gameplay loop, but the player can still access the old mechanics. The upgrades are faster but less accurate.

Auto-Splicer

Upgrade that allows you to digitally splice and rearrange the tape and rerecord it. Basically, replaces the splicing, rearranging, and copying into a singular machine.

Tape Cleaner

Upgrade that replaces the dusting mechanic with a machine that cleans the tape automatically.

Label Printer

Automatically packages and labels the order.

Feedback Systems & UI

Rewind will feature primarily diegetic UI elements. The time will be displayed on a clock sitting at the desk and the light coming in through the store windows. The screens of the machines will flash red on failures and flash green on successes.

Layout Design

All the machines can be accessed on the desk, the camera does not move elsewhere.

Layout example:



Section 4 - Art & Technical

Rewind aims to be playable on PC, tablet, and portable console (steam deck and Nintendo switch). It aims to be built in Unity with a first-person fixed camera with moderate graphical fidelity. Systems will need to be developed to randomize mission requirements and manage events that the player will encounter during the campaign.

Technical

Graphical Fidelity

Moderate graphical fidelity will be required to have the game run on a variety of systems and system strengths and to reduce production costs. Some stylizations can produce something visually appealing without being graphically expensive.

Examples:



1: *Killer Frequency* (2023) by Team17



2: *The Stanley Parable* (2011) by Galactic Cafe

Systems List

- Fixed camera with item focus.
- Day/Night Cycle.
- Toggleable Lights.
- Tape splicing.
- Tape audio rearranging.
- Tape audio adjustments.
- Tape dusting.
- Tape copying.
- Tape re-casing.
- Unscrewing and opening tape.
- Computer terminal and printer.
- Phone that can call customer numbers.
- Customer order.
- Customer order randomization.
- Success feedback.
- Failure feedback.
- Upgrade menu.
- Event manager to continue the story.
- Narrative pathways.
- Order delivery.

Visual Art

Color Palette Choices



3D Concept Art For Layout and Lighting

