

ECHO OF CRASH

Game Overview

A peaceful family drive is interrupted by three sudden accidents. Avoid the impact with a timed response, or enter the frozen moment as a spirit. Explore the vehicles, uncover the evidence and bring people back before time runs out. Every rescue costs precious seconds. Every discovery changes how you read the scene. Your choices shape the family's mood and the rest of the journey, all the way home.

YIBO WANG / GAME, LEVEL & NARRATIVE DESIGN

Personal project · Unreal Engine 5.8.2 · Windows
3 connected encounters / 7 clues / 10 rescues / 4 emotional outcomes

PLAY FREE / hajimi9914.itch.io/echo-of-crash

▷ GAMEPLAY VIDEO

Watch on YouTube / 1:54

One clock. Two kinds of responsibility.

The loop rewards both preventing harm and responding to it. Failed QTEs open investigation; successful QTEs keep the journey moving.

01

Find the truth

Recover the complete clue set, inspect objects and choose a supported explanation. Evidence earns up to 400 points; correct deduction adds 100.

02

Bring people back

Every rescue takes a three-second hold plus a 5 / 8 / 12-second cost. Rescues earn up to 500 points. Spending time on one person narrows the remaining search budget.

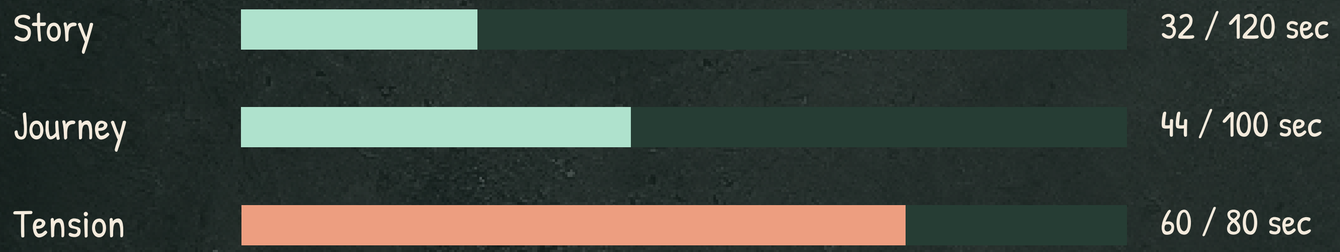
03

Control the pressure

Story / Journey / Tension provide 120 / 100 / 80 seconds. All clues remain available. Journal inspection pauses time; directional help costs 50 points.

3 seconds to commit + preset rescue cost → *Less time left to search.*

What four rescues cost before any travel or search





Wheel = driving / mint arc = timing / SPACE = steer or brake.

Design intent: make priorities matter without punishing safe driving. Avoiding an accident earns the full 1,000 points and a Spirit gain; skipped rescue opportunities are not failures.

Repeat the loop. Change the problem.

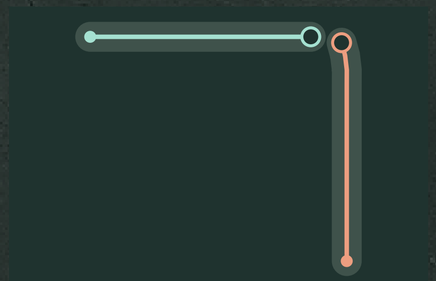
An authored road connects the three encounters. Each changes visibility, vehicle mass and the relationship between the clues.

same journey / changing spatial pressure



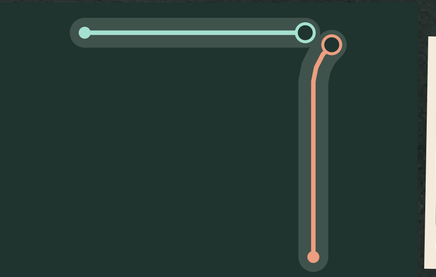


Contact plan





Contact plan





Contact plan

01 / Read a direct threat

Head-on sedan; compact two-clue search. A bottle explains impairment and a wedding photograph adds personal context. Three people to rescue.

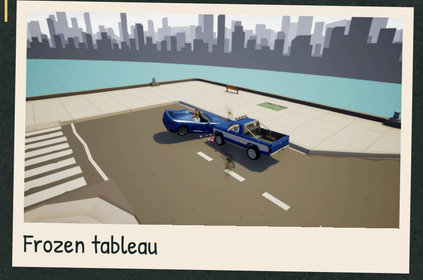


Frozen tableau

2 clues
3 rescues

02 / Question the first impression

Crossing sports car; right-front side contact. Two weapons contradict an affectionate pose. Four people increase the cost of rescuing everyone.



Frozen tableau

2 clues
4 rescues

03 / Respect the constraint

A truck turns through a narrow road. Braking replaces swerving. Three cabin clues tell a causal story of distraction; three people remain at risk.



Frozen tableau

3 clues
3 rescues

Recorded approach paths, drawn as editable design diagrams: mint pickup / coral opponent. Right-hand driving, continuous travel and consistent crash locations anchor the fantasy.

Design the truck encounter around stopping.

A heavy vehicle and a narrow turning space change the answer to danger. The player must stop before the truck's crossing path, not slide through it.

Read the collision as a space to explore



01 / Impact geometry

Spatial contract

The pickup uses the original eastbound approach in the right lane. The truck's approach, contact point and later investigation tableau describe the same event.

Readable consequence

Truck level; pickup lifted. The difference in mass explains the silhouette. The player's own cabin remains the starting reference for the spirit's exploration.

Same event, three views

The approach, impact and cabin evidence must describe one coherent accident.



02 / Close reading



03 / Scene relationship

Evidence chain

The voucher faces the driver's eyes; two burgers and spilled cola occupy the cabin. The supported explanation is distraction from reading, not a generic mechanical failure.

Design revision: restore the authored route and move the entire accident setup together, so driving, impact and evidence placement agree.

An object should change the reading.



01 / Notice

Contradiction

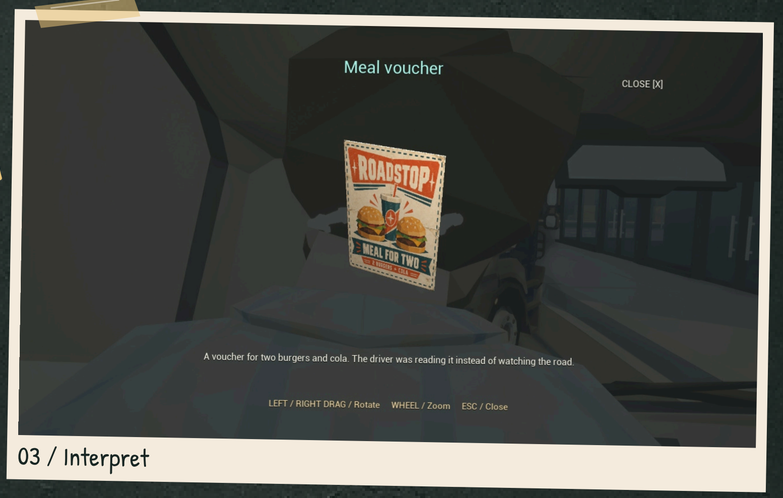
The second case hides a stone and knife within a seemingly affectionate seated pose. Moving through the scene reveals what a first glance misses.

Causality

The final case anchors the voucher to the driver's hand and eyeline. Food and frozen liquid turn disconnected props into a sequence of attention and consequence.



02 / Connect



03 / Interpret

Reflection

Collected objects remain inspectable with rotation, zoom and concise descriptions. Complete evidence supports a deduction; incomplete evidence leaves an unresolved case.

Narrative principle: understanding a person's circumstances is distinct from excusing an action. The rescue system includes the responsible drivers as well as the family.

Guide attention without doing the search.

The supernatural guide first explains the situation, then reacts to proximity and inactivity. The player retains the work of noticing.



A / Context

Orient

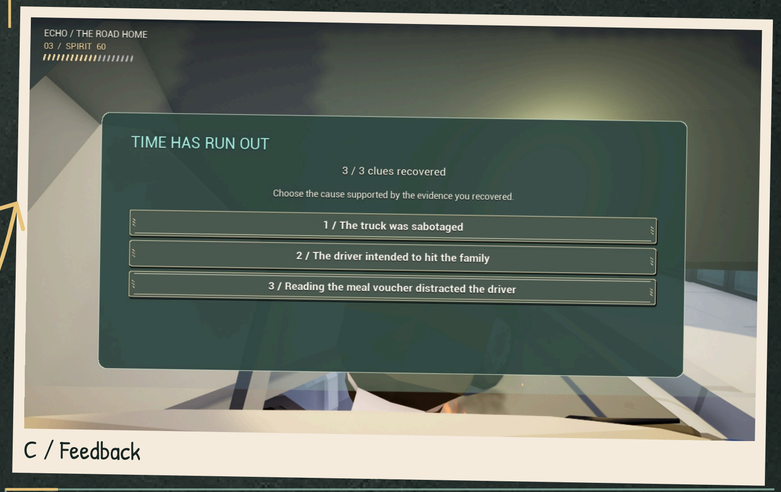
Delay the first awakening line until emergence is readable. Lock movement and the clock during the initial conversation, then release both together.

Invite

Fog bounds the otherworld. Proximity observations and close-reach prompts encourage looking inside the cars; distant labels do not reveal every answer.



B / Experience



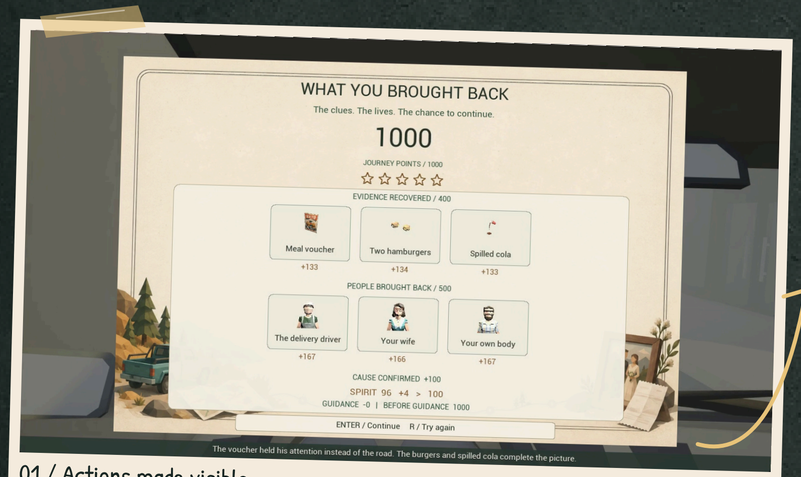
C / Feedback

Assist

Indirect idle hints precede optional paid direction. Clear rescue charging, distinct sound cues and a journal help players understand progress without crowding the view.

Comfort iteration: shared 20%–400% mouse sensitivity, responsive look, measured text layout and a reserved dialogue area. UI supports the investigation rather than competing with it.

Let the ending remember the journey.



01 / Actions made visible

Make actions legible

Evidence and rescue cards arrive in sequence before the score and stars. The player can see what contributed, what was missed and how help affected the total.

Resolve the world

A grounded aftermath replaces the frozen impact. Supported deduction and rescuing the responsible person permit police intervention; reaction follows the departure.



02 / Resolve the case



03 / Carry the feeling onward

Carry emotion forward

Spirit persists between chapters. Zero ends the trip at home; low, middle and high ranges change the couple's arrival. Safe avoidance also supports a happy outcome.

System intent: evidence, care and prevention remain valuable. The player is not required to cause all three accidents to earn the most positive journey.

Make the design survive play.

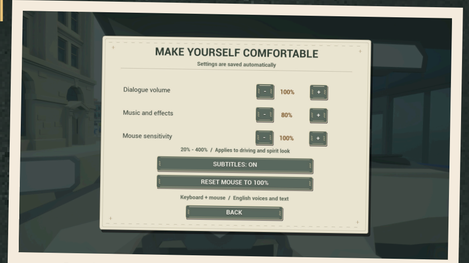
The project grew from a short QTE and frozen-scene prototype into a connected, playable journey. Revision focused on the moments where the intended experience broke down.



A playable answer to the original design question.



Observe → revise → replay



Comfort is part of design.

Feedback → revision

Disjointed travel → continuous authored roads.
Over-explicit search → close reach and layered hints.
Implausible police arrival → grounded aftermath.
Slow camera control → adjustable raw mouse look.

Evidence and limits

Creator-led playtests, rendered scene/UI review and automated checks informed iteration. The latest input hotfix was checked at 30 / 60 / 120 FPS caps. Next: observe first-time players and tune hint timing and rescue pressure.

Play / ownership

Free Windows build: hajimi9914.itch.io/echo-of-crash
Design and development: Yibo Wang. Licensed/project assets and Mixamo clips; AI-assisted illustration and synthetic voices; procedural and CC0 sound.

>> PLAY THE GAME

This is the concise design case study. The companion detailed edition expands all three encounters, balance rules, guidance, narrative, interaction and sound design.