

Love Heist

Prompt

Heist

Website

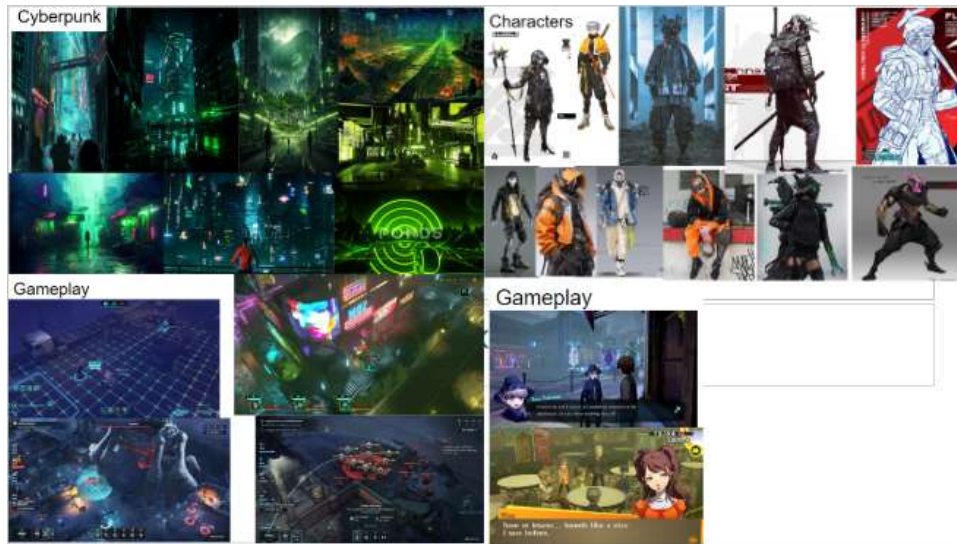
<https://2302074.wixsite.com/cyberpunkheist>

Premise

3D Isometric cyberpunk styled turn based strategy game with visual novel elements for the PC.

Development

When starting conceptualisation, we fairly quickly agreed that we wanted to have a cyberpunk setting with the themes of a group of underdogs slighting the government. We took inspiration from classic heist films such as the *Oceans Eleven* in terms of a large and diverse cast. I threw out the idea that all the members of our crew be in love with each other as a joke, but it became a core part of our game as a way to justify what the characters were doing, as well as give us lots of opportunity for character development.



I created a moodboard for the general atmosphere of the game, as well as for how gameplay should look.

The Xcom games were my main source of inspiration when it came to gameplay for the turn based segments. I also pitched two different versions for the visual novel sections – a 3D style where you can walk around and interact with the environment, or a 2D style where you simply click through and select text options. Ultimately the 3D style was chosen for our game.

Story

In Earth's far future, society has made vast technological advancements that opened up a new era for human kind; the era of cyber-enhancements. These enhancements were used to build up the world into an ecumenopolis, controlled entirely by several conglomerates. Everything is controlled by the conglomerates; who gets what enhancements, jobs, living space, and even human rights is subject to the ruling corporation of an area of Earth.

The City is where Cyberpunk Heist takes place, ruled over by The Corporation; only the upper echelons of society are allowed to live freely in the upper levels. They experience all the benefits such an advanced society has to offer, all at the expense of the rest of the population who are subject to extreme oppression whilst they are confined to the lowest levels. However, just because the residents of the higher levels experience luxury - does not mean they are free from the grasp of The Corporation. At birth, every resident of The City is installed with a 'core' at the top of their spine. This is used to dampen their emotions and keep them compliant to The Corporation.

Many different cyber-enhancements are available to be installed, mostly issued by The Corporation to increase efficiency in certain jobs; exoskeletons for manual laborer's, cybernetic eyes for security workers, mechanical hands for craftsmen. Many of these are installed for a steep price in The Cities underbelly, done in shady backwater operating rooms with death tolls. As well as permanent physical enhancements, a way was discovered to give back someone's full feelings of their emotions for a short time - a temporary 'booster' was created to counteract the dampening affect the 'core' had on a person's emotions. These boosters more often than not ended with disastrous affects on a person's psyche and physicality, yet the temptation of having their emotions be their own again is ever tempting to those with little reason to live.

In the present day, The Corporation has just announced to the city that they have developed a series of 'chips' that can be inserted into a persons 'core' to counter the dampening effects of a certain emotion. The player character sets out on a mission to steal one of these chips: the Love chip.

The game starts with the player leading one of the characters through a building, along the way they meet the other characters until they reach their destination. It is here that they find out an early batch of Love Chip's are set to be auctioned off in an auction house in the upper levels.

They must then carry out two missions to gather the means to enter the auction house, get past the security protocols and find a way to enter the vault. All whilst unravelling the individual stories of each of the characters.

During the final heist, if the player does not successfully complete the prerequisites to get a true ending - they will receive an ending where the crew are all captured by The Corporation.

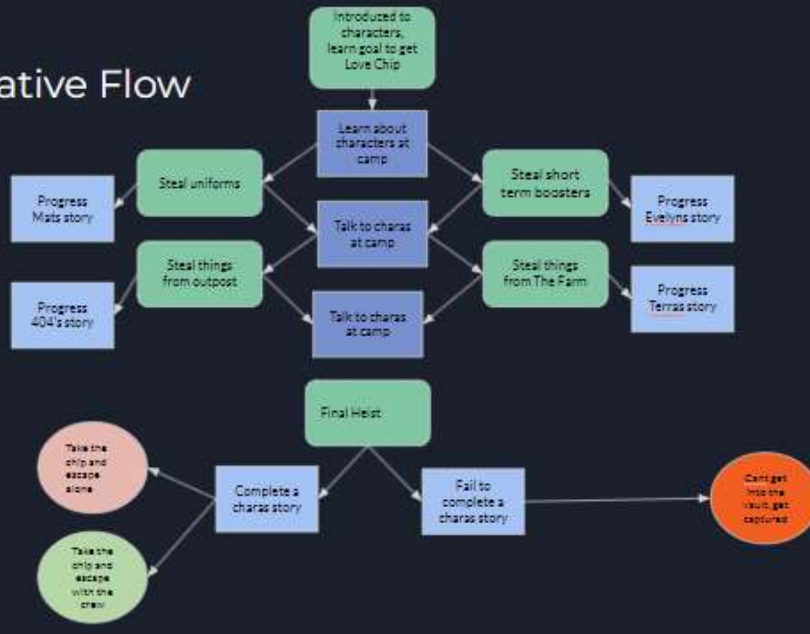
If the player does complete the prerequisites, once inside the vault they will be presented with two options:

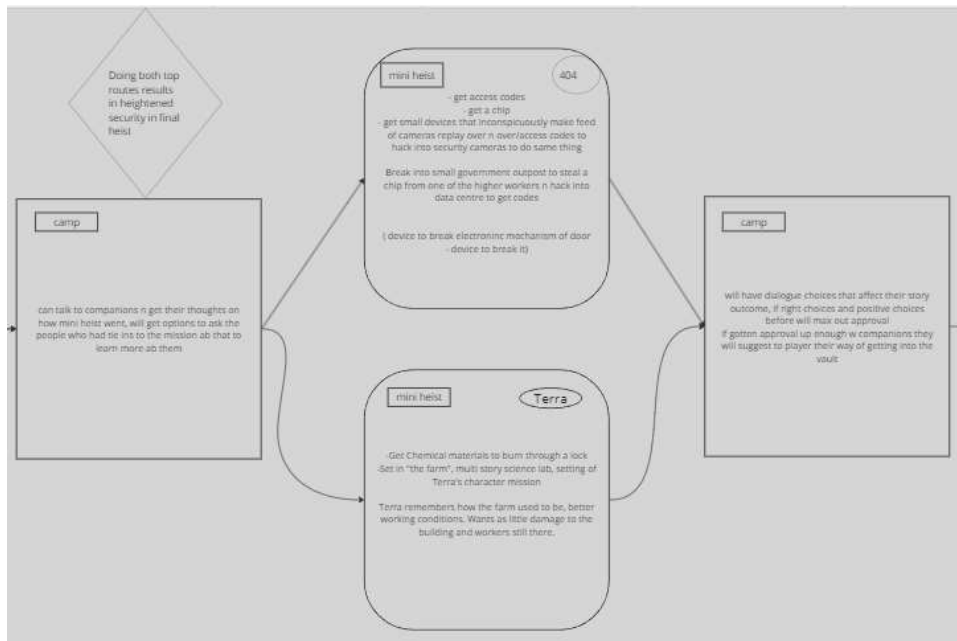
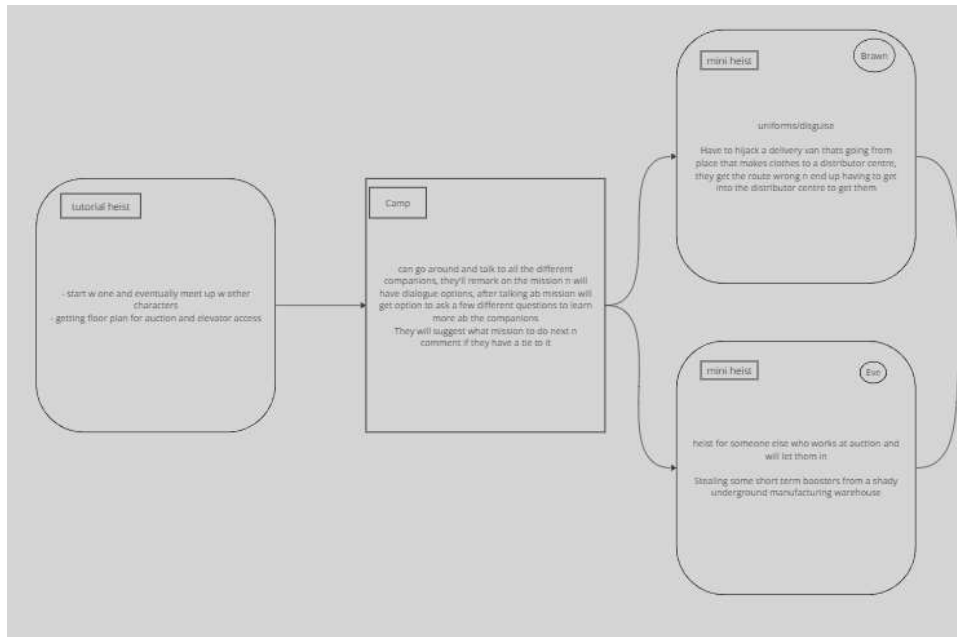
Option 1 being that they keep the chips for themselves and escape, leaving their crew behind. This will lead to the Bad Ending of the game.

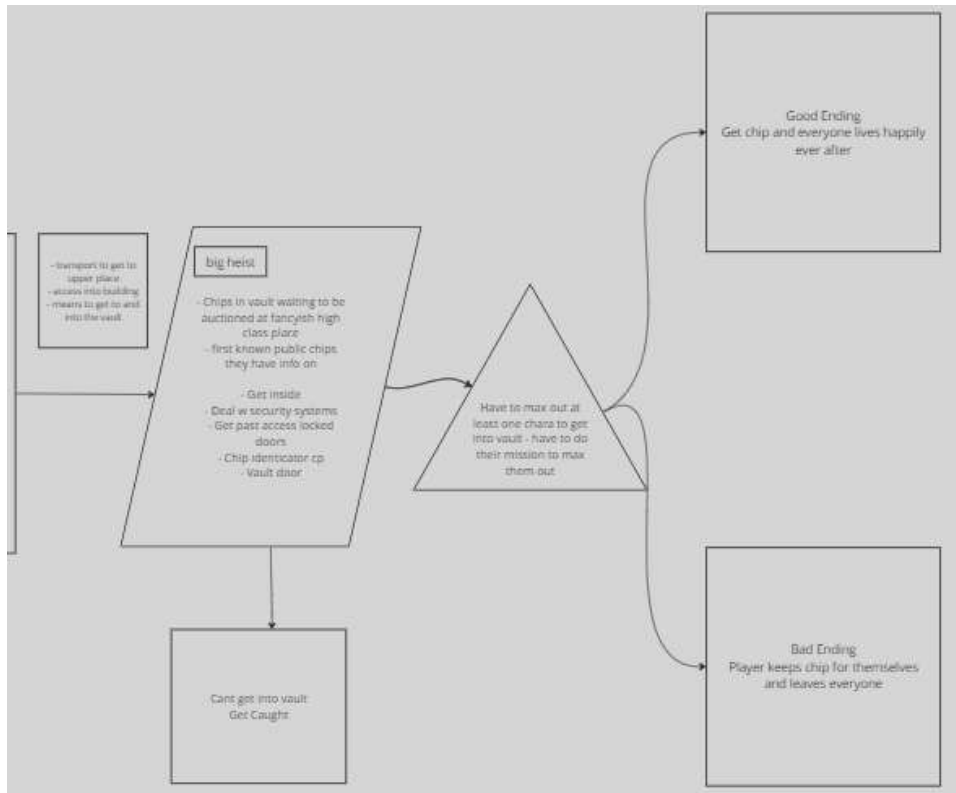
Option 2 is the choice to escape with the crew, with the chips which leads to the Good Ending.

Flowcharts:

Narrative Flow







Gameplay

The Missions

The game features four missions where the player has to direct their group through a variety of environments full of enemies and other dangers.

The Camp

After each mission, the player can then go around the camp and talk with each character in the game, and then choose what mission they want to do next out of two options (aside from the first and final).



Characters

Each group member was tasked with designing at least 1 character.

(I only wrote for the player character and 404)



The character I designed was called 404.

404 is a common type of outcast found within the underbelly of The City, one with no memories of their past. He hardly remembers how long he's been like this, not when he can't even remember what he had to eat the day before. All he knows is that his memories were taken from him, and his vengeance to get them back is something he will not forget.

During the tutorial of the game, 404 is one of the earlier characters the player meets. He is found hiding around a corner, listening in on the conversation of two guards just ahead. He recites the information he learns to the player immediately and recommends the team use stealth to get past the guards instead of attacking them - introducing the stealth mechanics to the player.

When the player opens a conversation in camp with 404 there are two ways he will start; if the player killed a minimal amount of guards during the tutorial he will comments on how he's glad the player took his advice, if the player killed a lot of guards he will instead comment on how sore he feels from such combat.

The player will be able to ask him for his opinion on what heist they should do next, he says he doesn't mind for either but notes how he doesn't trust Evelyn and would therefore feel safer doing option A.

Two more dialogue options will be available. The player will be able to ask him what he was doing before the player found him prior to the events of the game - to which he will respond he doesn't remember. The other question the player can ask is what food he likes to eat, and if he even eats food at all - to which after a pause he will respond by saying he likes peach smoothies.

Regardless of which mini-heist the player chooses to do, 404 will make little remarks to himself that he doesn't remember what they're here for. He will be noticeably more quiet and confused when other characters interact with him, acting like he hasn't seen them before at times.

404 will be more reserved when talking to the player at the next camp, he will comment on how he's not feeling so good.

When asked for his opinion on what heist they should do next, he strongly urges the player to do 2-A - yet gets a bit sheepish at his sudden outburst and gets quiet again.

The player can ask 404 if he's feeling alright, to which he will admit he is feeling a little bit forgetful. The player can also ask what's inside his pouches, to which he'll joke back and say it's a secret.

During the mission for 2-A, the target will beg for mercy when they see 404. 404 will want to interrogate the target, the player can choose to accept or deny. If the player accepts, 404 will force information out of the target - discovering that 404 used to work as an off-the-record 'bully' for The Corporation, the target in question being one of the people 404 had been ordered to beat and blackmail into silence. 404 then goes quiet for the rest of the mission.

404 will begin the interaction at the third camp by saying how the player probably wants to know why he's so forgetful, he explains how he has amnesia and thinks there's something wrong with his core. He adamantly says how he doesn't remember his past and had no idea he worked for The Corporation and doesn't know how to feel about it now, but he definitely doesn't want to go back - he just wants his memories back.

The player will have the option to then try and convince him that his past doesn't matter anymore and he should instead focus on the future, with the option to suggest he get a new memory chip so he can make new memories and fix his forgetfulness - at the cost of never being able to recover his past memories. Or the player can offer to help him get his memories back. He will respond to this by saying he'll think about it, he'll thank the player for their help and suggest his way to enter the vault.



404 is an amnesiac, he oftentimes forgets the prior days events and will become agitated if his forgetfulness is called out. While generally a man of few words at the start of the game, if the player talks to him often and gets high approval he will open up and show how he is a witty and empathetic individual who was forced to close up in order to protect himself. If the player gets low approval/forces him onto his bad route then his obsessive nature over getting back his memories takes over.

Standing at 5'8, 404 is a smaller man who wears a mask to obscure his face. Underneath 404's mask is a face that is a mess of cybernetic parts and metal fused into flesh, the rest of his body below his neck is entirely organic. 404 wears a cropped cloak that he ties closed during missions and leaves open when at camp, under his cloak he wears a harness across his chest that has two pouches secured to it. The harness extends down to his lower body where it holds another pouch each secured to his knees. Whilst the harness appears as fluorescent during camp scenes, the glow disappears for a more stealthy appearance during mission gameplay.

In order to achieve 404's Good Ending, the player must max out their approval with both 404 and Terra, as well as complete his side story.

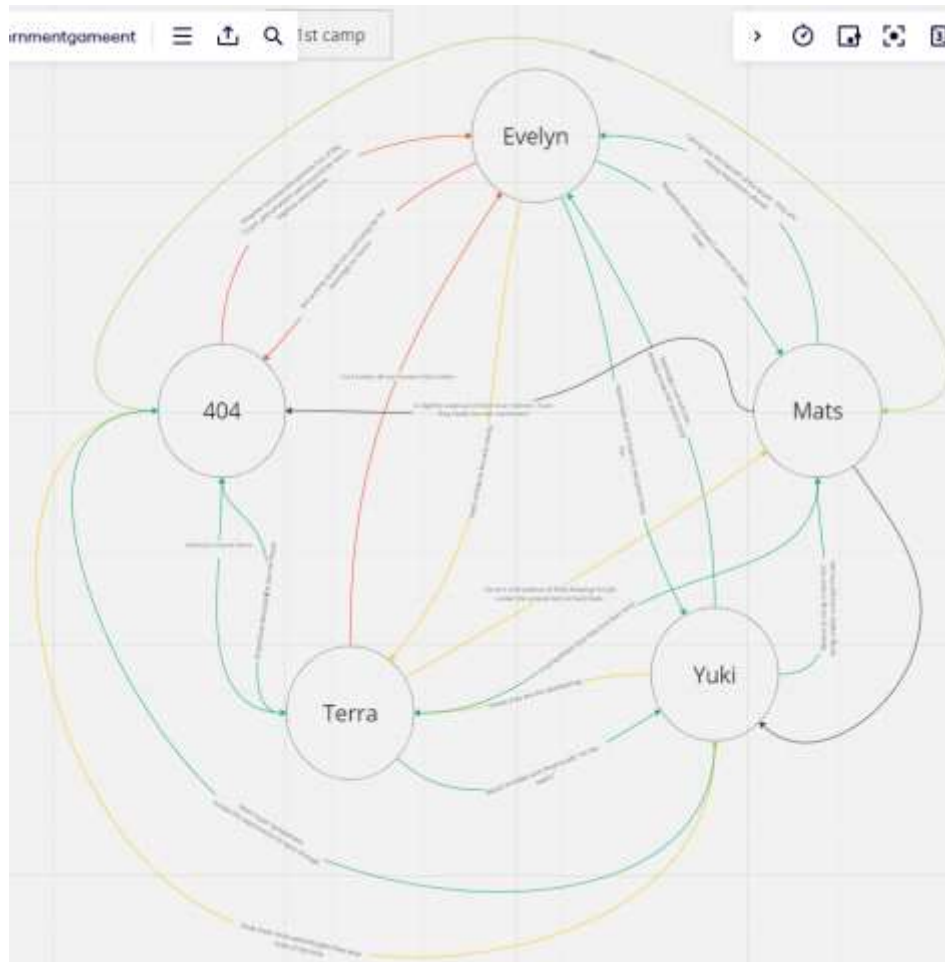
In the good ending, after the big heist, 404 will tell the player that they've decided to move on. They will confess their feelings to the player and say that they want to make new memories instead.

For the bad endings: 1- All conditions not met: 404 will have left a note to the player saying how he has gone to raze The Corporation to get his memories back, it will be implied that he tried to steal the chip before he left, but was unsuccessful.

2- Only high approval: 404 will ask the player to join him on a quest to find out what happened to him and try and get his memories back.

All the character have different dynamics with each other that change and shift throughout the story depending on the choices the player character makes.

(Group worked to create)



Evelynn

At the start of the game, 404 is extremely distrustful of Evelyn - he will comment on how she gives him a bad feeling and how the player shouldn't trust someone who worked for the corporation. This sentiment will carry on to the second camp if the player chooses to do Mission 1-A, however he will comment on how he is surprised she's helped them this much. If the player does Mission 1-B; during the second camp 404 will speak more empathetically to Evelyn and about Evelyn to the player, however he will express how he will still be read if she shows any sign of being a rat.

If the player goes down 404's bad route by camp 3, 404 will express how he is going to get information from her after they've done the final heist. Whilst he doesn't explicitly say what he will do to her, it is implied that he will kill her. If the player goes down 404's good route but Evelyn's bad route, 404 will express remorse for treating her like a rat from the start. If the player goes down 404 and Evelyn's good route, 404 will express great admiration for Evelyn's ability to change, and credits her for giving him the strength to do the same.

Terra

404 empathises with Terra from the start of the game. He feels like they can both relate due to how they have both lost something to The Corporation. These feelings only grow stronger by second camp, into a sense of admiration for how strong Terra is when faced with such hardships.

If the player goes down 404's bad route by camp 3, 404 will comment how he hopes Terra will seek revenge for what has been done to her life, no matter how destructive it will be. If the player goes down 404's good route but Terra's bad route - he will refuse to comment, instead displaying a look of sadness on his face monitor.

Feedback

After the presentation we were given the feedback that how the camp and gameplay sections affected each other should be fleshed out.

In each camp the player will have the option to interact with each of the characters. Each character will have their own story that can be completed, through the heist sections. Each heist will have multiple opportunities to progress a character's story which will then be carried on to the camp where it will be continued.