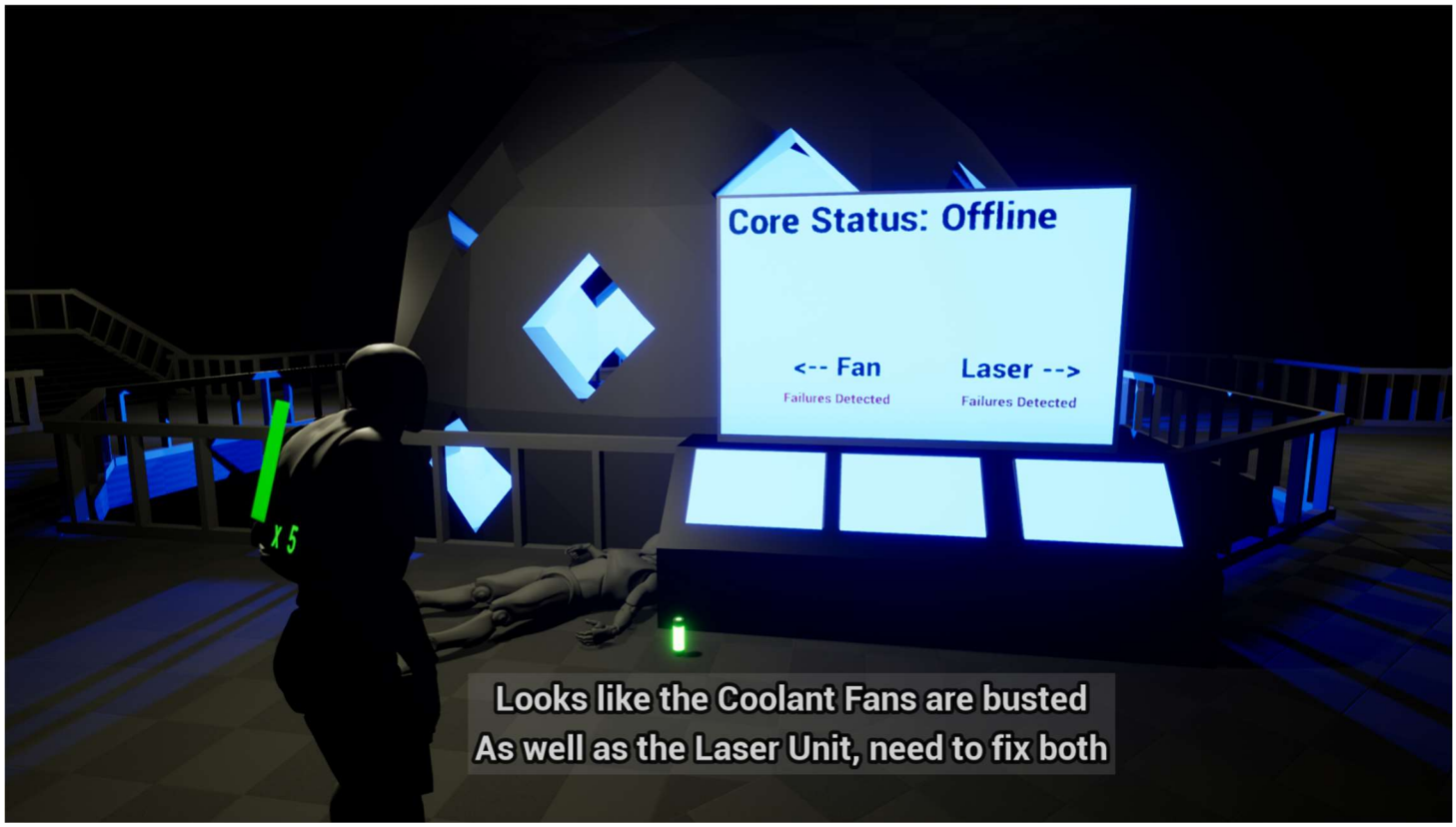


“Power Up”

LEVEL DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Sean Herron | July 2018

NARRATIVE OUTLINE

This would be a level set in the Dead Space universe. Developers recently spoke about their vision and ideas for Dead Space 4, about how they wanted to have the Player explore abandoned ships and stations in a universe savaged by the necromorph infection with a bigger focus on survival.

In this level the main character Isaac has crashed his ship into a research station in deep space. The station is floating aimlessly in space and has been taken over by the necromorph infection.

Isaac wants to radio one of the few survivors left that he knows for rescue, but before the radio can be activated, the crashed ship must feed from the research station's power source, which is initially offline. This is Isaac's main objective.

Isaac will have to make a detour through the Station's Living Quarters due to the main lift's malfunctioning. The low power of the station stops them from going all the way down to the station's power source in Engineering.

Once arriving at Engineering, Isaac will analyze the issues with the Power Core and using his Engineering skills fix them in order to bring the main power back online.

Upon completing the objective, Isaac needs to return to the Bridge where radio contact is made. During radio contact, the necromorphs are attracted by the activity and attack Isaac and the radio. Isaac must defend his position until he is rescued.

While exploring the research station Isaac can collect useful supplies to arm himself with more equipment, or to bolster the defences in the Bridge. This could include the following:

- *New weapons, health and ammo for Isaac.*
- *Barricades for blocking vents and slowing down enemies.*
- *Changing door access to funnel enemies down more specific routes.*
- *Placing turrets to fire upon approaching enemies.*

This level uses Isaacs's engineering skills to help keep him safe until help arrives and allows him to build and improve upon a base area of operations.

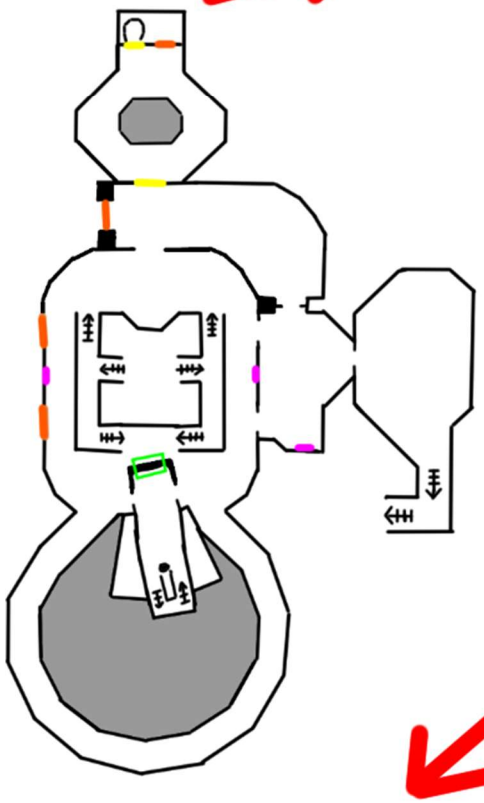
For this document, I also prototyped Dead Space in UE4 so that I could test and build all of my layouts in-game. This means I have a fully playable version of this level that can be downloaded and played here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/4dmbddouoi11aob/DeadSpaceTest_SeanHerron.zip?dl=0

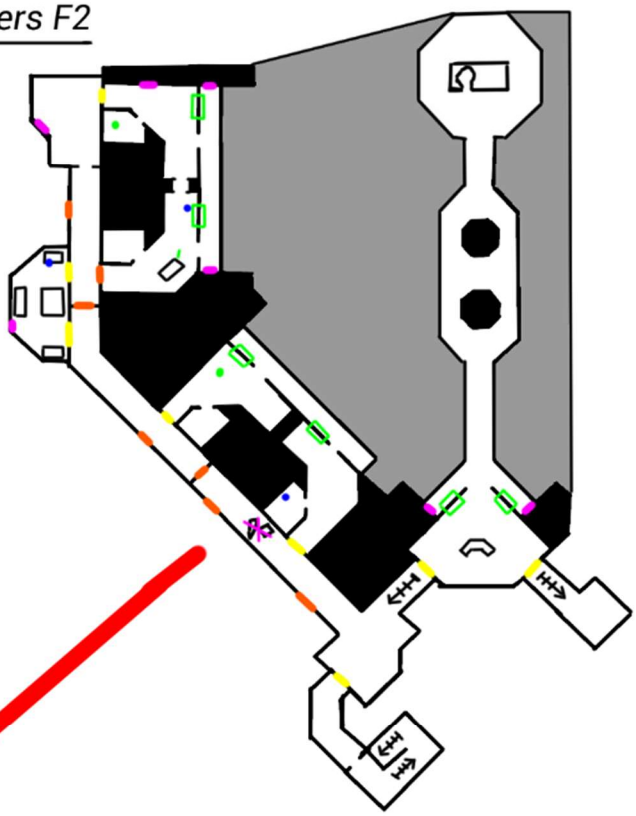
Making this fully playable version of this level allowed me to do more deeper level design decisions more clearly and effectively and the blockouts helped get a clear layout for maps.

Level Plan - Maps

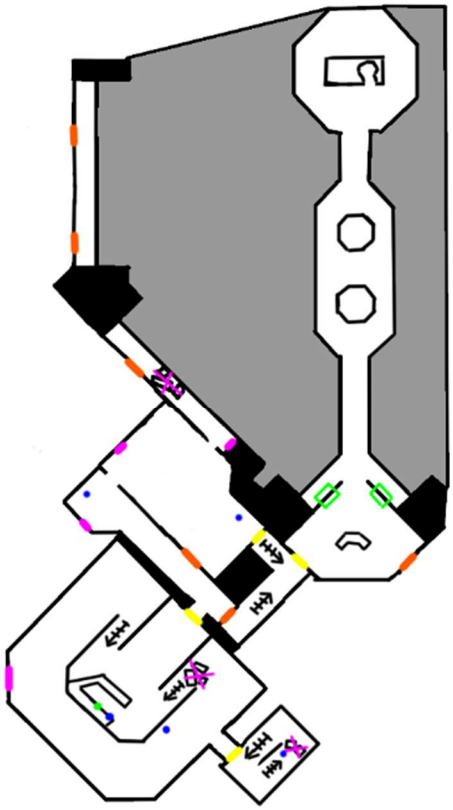
Bridge F1



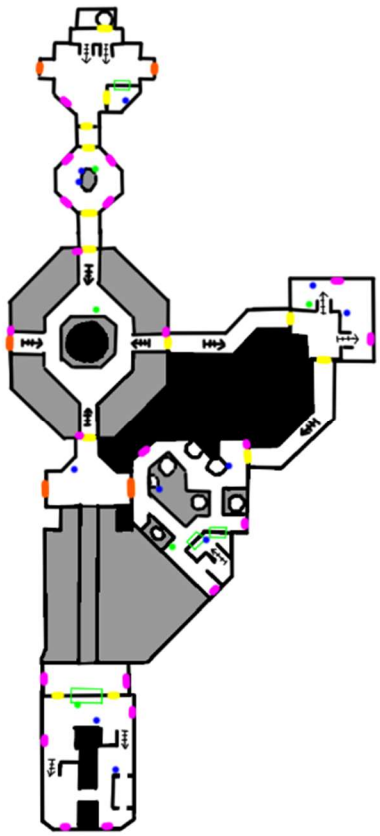
Living Quarters F2



Living Quarters F1

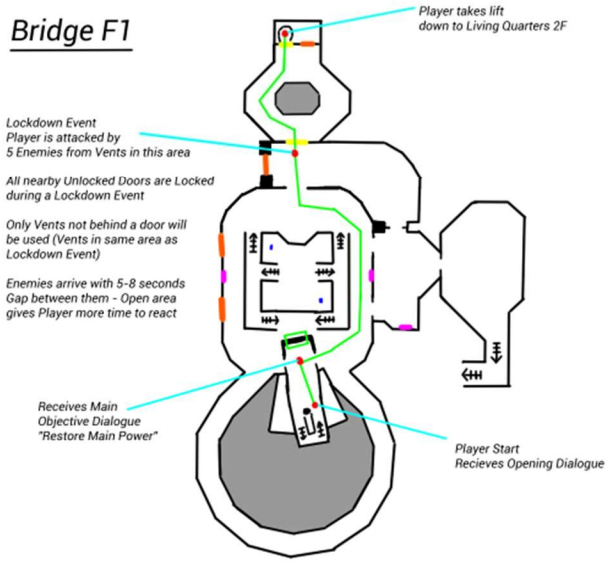


Engineering



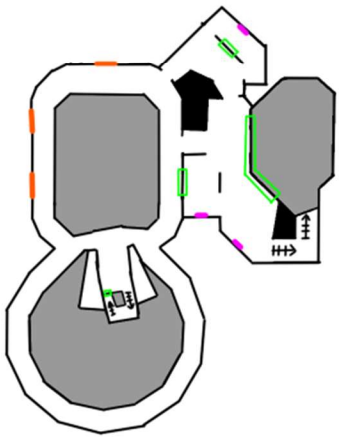
Map Layouts - The Bridge

Bridge F1

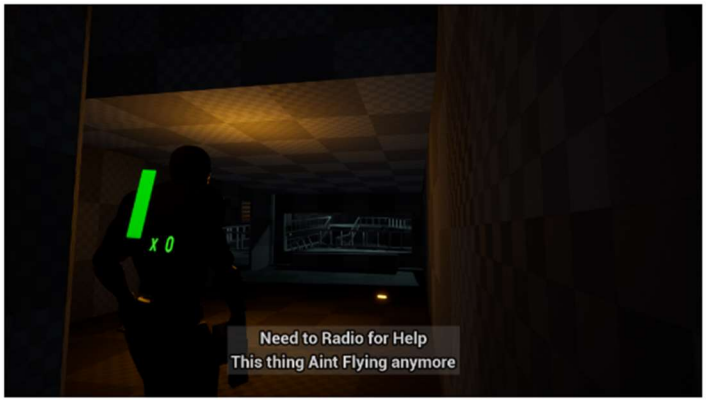


- Vent
- Event
- Player Path
- Locked Door
- Unlocked Door
- Ammo Pickup
- Health Pickup
- Obstruction
- Stairs
- Open Impassable Area (e.g. a Chasm)
- Note Link
- Window/Ledge

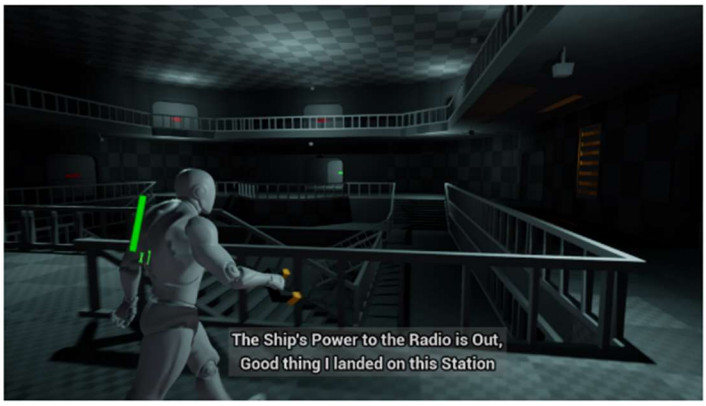
Bridge F2



StoryBoard - The Bridge



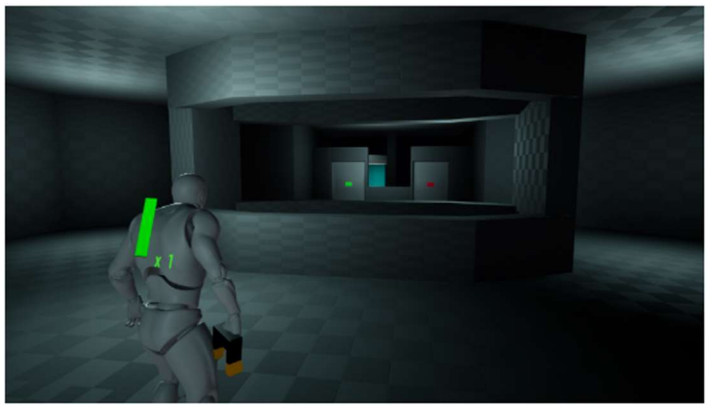
Opening View: Player Leaves Crashed Ship - Light guides Player Outside as well as Items on Floor that they can pick up.



Player is briefed that they must restore the Station's main Power in order to use their radio for help. Area opens up and Player is given some time to explore before finding a way out.



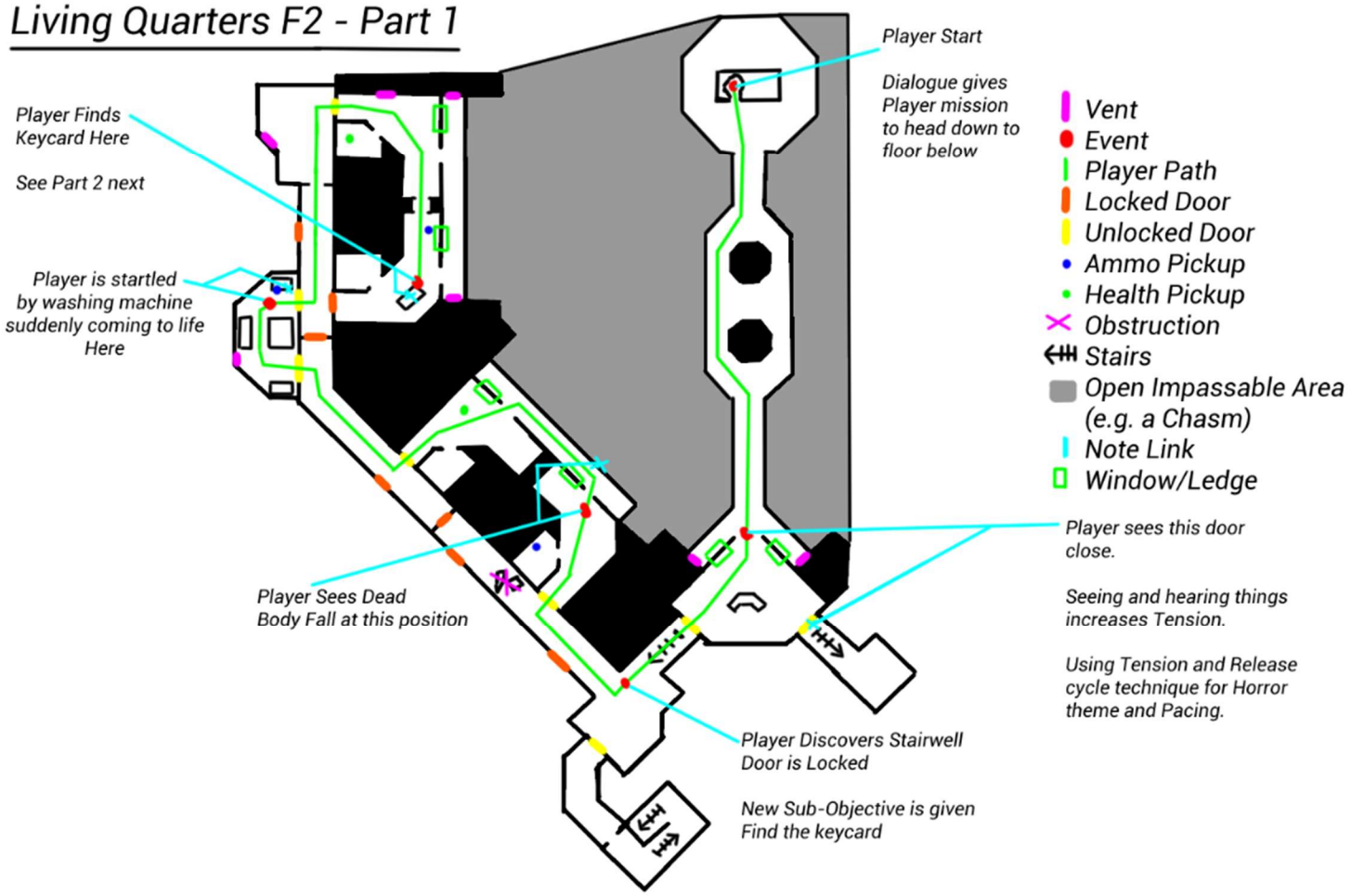
Player is stopped from leaving because of a Lockdown Event, the lighting changes from cold Blue to Warning Orange and they must fight off enemies - the open space gives them a safer challenge.



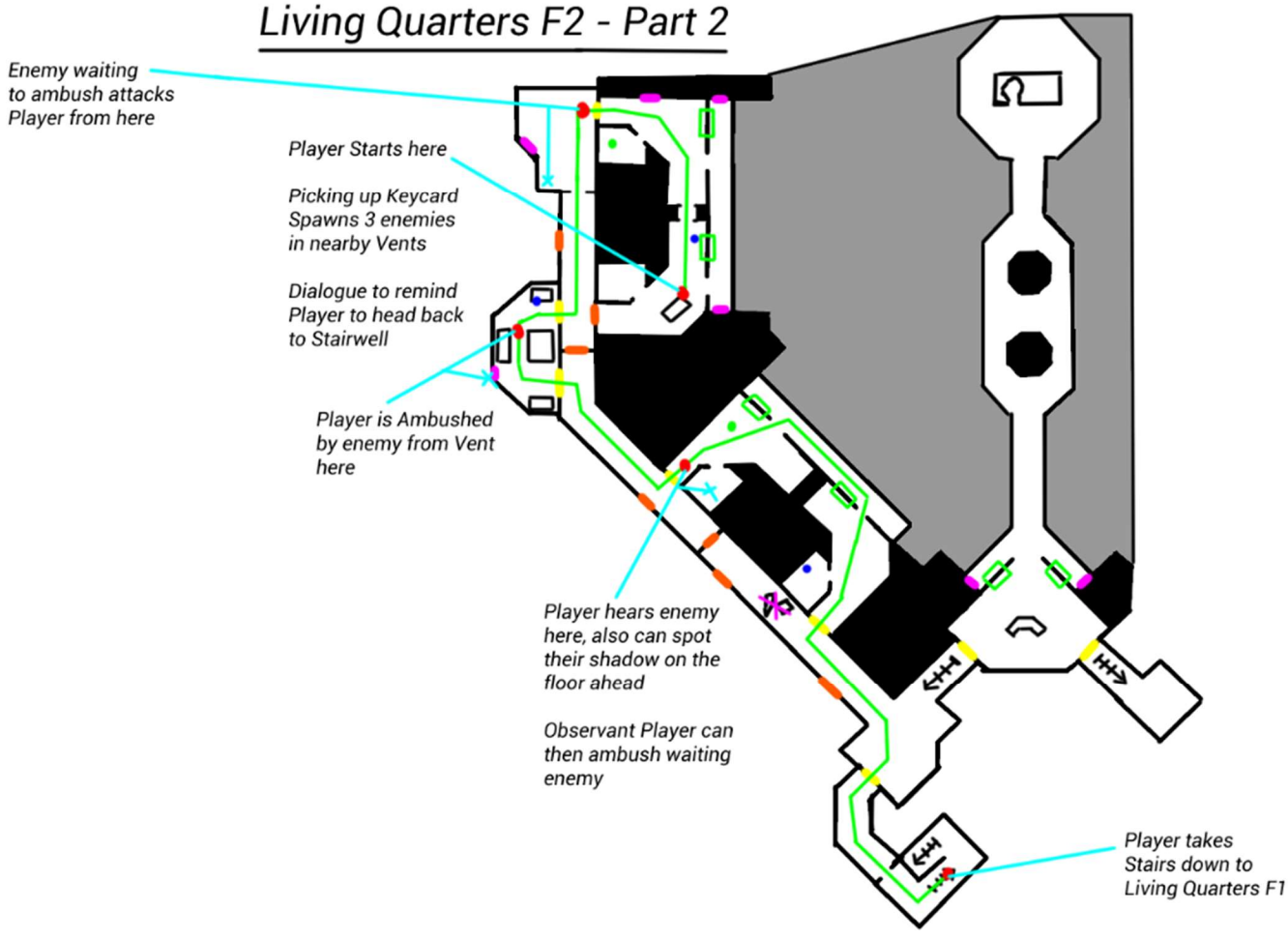
Player leaves the Bridge and heads for the Elevator Down.

Map Layouts - Living Quarters F2

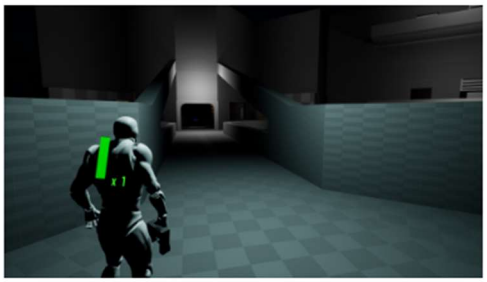
Living Quarters F2 - Part 1



Living Quarters F2 - Part 2



StoryBoard - Living Quarters 2F



Player arrives at Living quarters and heads inside Building Composition Helps guide player inside.



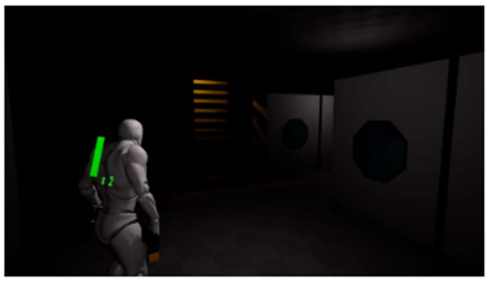
Player Sees Door on Left Close, there is also a dead body at Reception - building unease and tension.



Player Is told that they must find a keycard in order to get to the floor below.

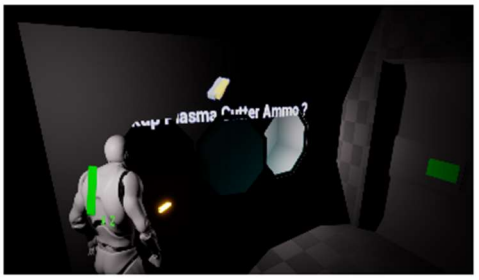


Player heads through rooms searching for key. Room composition attracts Player outside towards balcony, where they will see a body fall - more tension

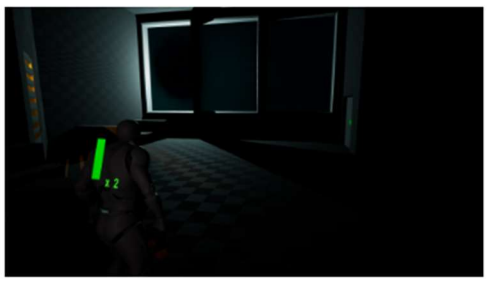


Player cuts through a laundromat during their search.

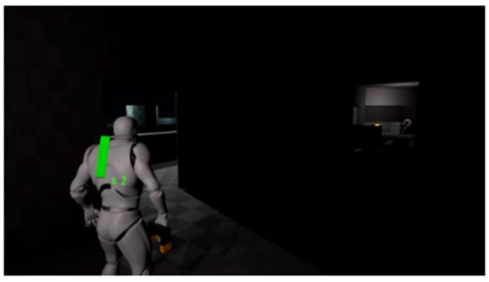
The laundromat is dark and forboding due to Vent light.



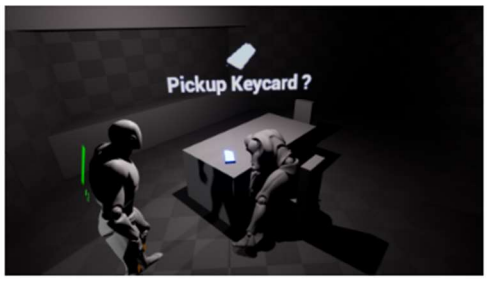
Player is startled by the washing machine suddenly coming to life, a roaring machine sound accompanies its harsh bright light



Player reaches end of Living Hall, Cold blue light change to signify this, with light drawng Player to the right room.



Another familiar balcony view draws Player's eye but this room has a new route through that they can take.



Player finds the Keycard, beside the slumped body of another victim - tension has built up for awhile now.



Tension Released, Enemies attack Player. Player must return to Stairwell now.



An Enemy lies in wait as Player heads back down the Living Hall.



Another enemy ambuses the player in the laundromat room.



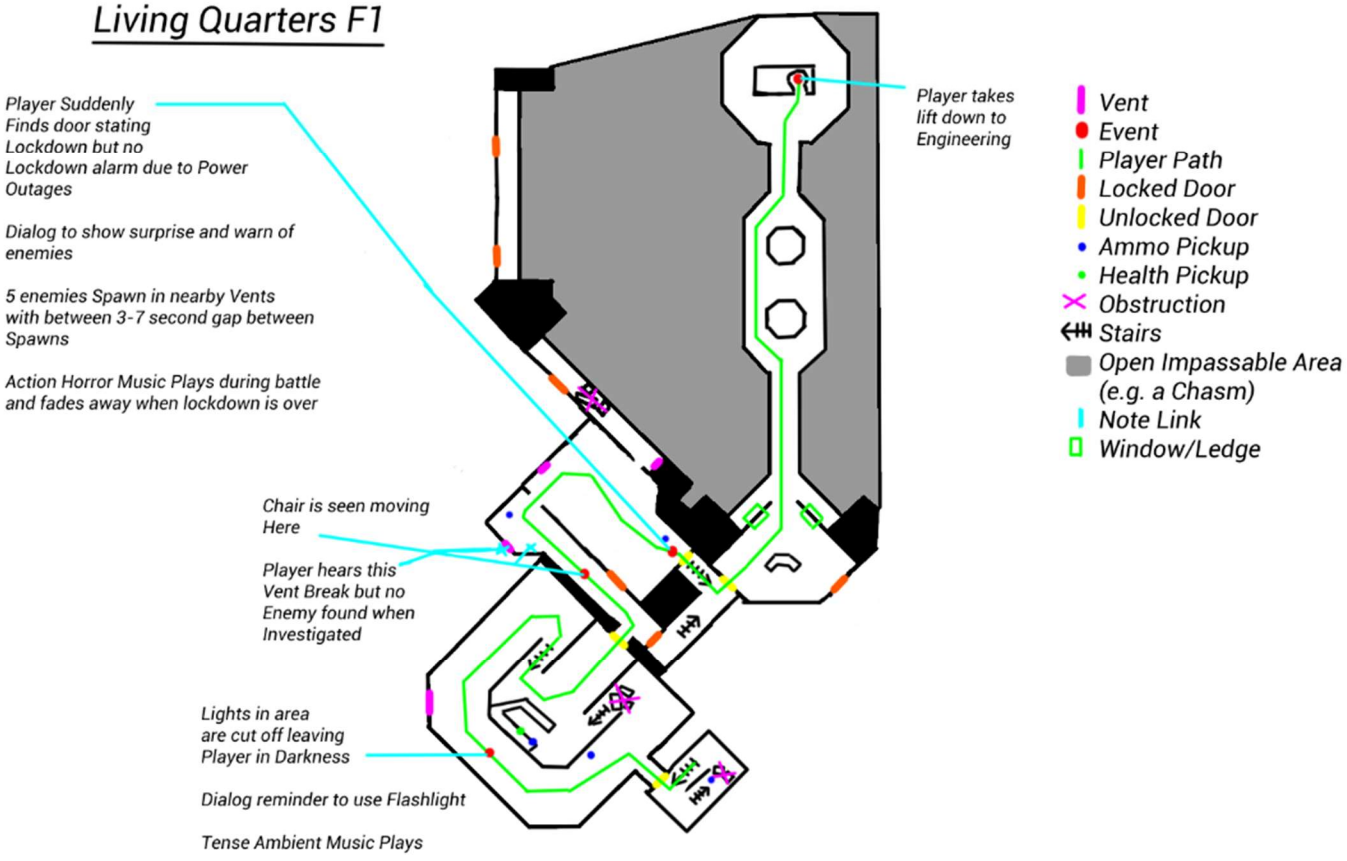
This enemy makes it's presence known via making a noise, as well as the shadow on the floor ahead. Observant Players can ambush it instead.



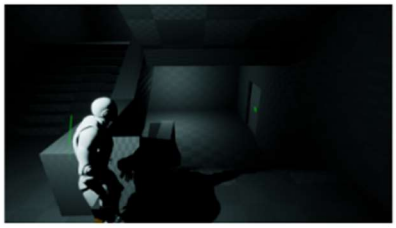
The Player reaches the Stairwell that is now unlocked thanks to their new Keycard.

Map Layouts - Living Quarters F1

Living Quarters F1



StoryBoard - Living Quarters F1



Player heads down the cold blue lit stairwell to 1F. Colour coding on doors means they should try the first green door they see by this point.



Player finds themself in a much larger room, some sort of bar/ resteraunt location with a warmer light colour.



All the lights suddenly go out here, Player must resort to using the flashlight to see, this slows them down as they are wary of enemies - tension build.



Player goes down a hall, only to see a chair move This adds more tension. Then they hear a Vent break.



Player investigates the sound cautiously but finds no enemy - tension becoming unbearable.

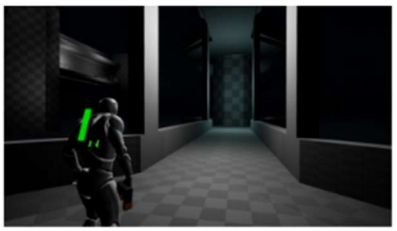


Player explores a new room in the dark, with only a few of these cabinets lighting the way.



As the Player approaches the exit, they suddenly find that the door is on lockdown, meaning enemies are coming.

Tension Released - close combat in this dark room occurs.

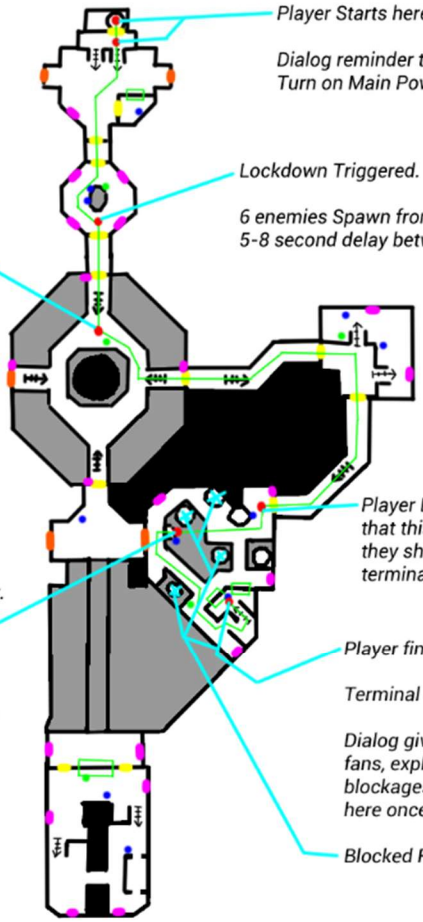


Player makes it back outside, space opening up and light making a welcoming appearance.

They head to the Elevator and Exit Living Quarters

Map Layouts - Engineering Parts 1 + 2

Engineering - Part 1



Player Starts here.

Dialog reminder to Turn on Main Power.

Lockdown Triggered.

6 enemies Spawn from Vents with 5-8 second delay between Spawns.

Player Reaches Core.

Core Diagnostic Machine Boots and lists 2 issues:

Fans and Laser are Offline.

Player Dialog to give player sub mission to go get both back online. Moody Ambient Tense Music now plays.

Player can go to these places in any order they choose.

For these Diagrams the Player chooses to go to Fans First.

Note - Any Vents on Diagram placed next to a door are Vents placed higher above Door.

Player Dialog - Reminds Player that this is the fan area and that they should be diagnosed by the terminal in this area.

Player uses small Lift here to reach Upper Level with Terminal.

Player finds Diagnostic terminal here.

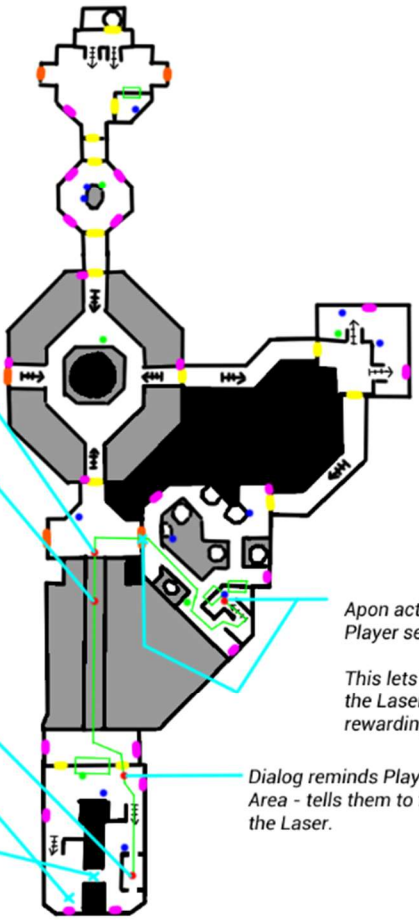
Terminal states that several fans are blocked.

Dialog gives Player sub mission to unblock the fans, explaining that they can shoot free the blockages. Dialog also reminds Player to return here once that is done to reactivate the Fans System.

Blocked Fans are Here.

- Vent
- Event
- Player Path
- Locked Door
- Unlocked Door
- Ammo Pickup
- Health Pickup
- Obstruction
- Stairs
- Open Impassable Area (e.g. a Chasm)
- Note Link
- Window/Ledge

Engineering - Part 2



Player Uses Lift to Cross Chasm.

While Player travels across Chasm, two enemies Spawn at Vents on other side.

Player can shoot them dead before they reach the other side if skilled enough.

Apon activating Laser Calibration mode to fix Laser - an Enemy appears here and rushes towards Player.

However the Laser beam Kills the Enemy here - this shows Player the Laser is Dangerous.

Lockdown is triggered while Laser Calibrates.

8 Enemies Spawn in Vents with a 5-12 second delay between Spawns.

Higher Enemy count encourages Player to use Laser Beam Against them.

Apon activating Fans System Player sees Door here unlock and Open.

This lets them use a Shortcut to reach the Laser Area. New Focusing music Plays, rewarding Player's progression.

Dialog reminds Player that this is the Laser Area - tells them to find the terminal to fix the Laser.

- Vent
- Event
- Player Path
- Locked Door
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- Health Pickup
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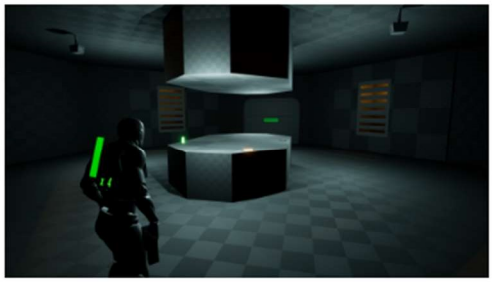
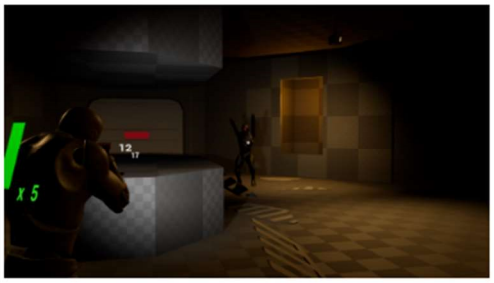
StoryBoard - Engineering Parts 1 + 2



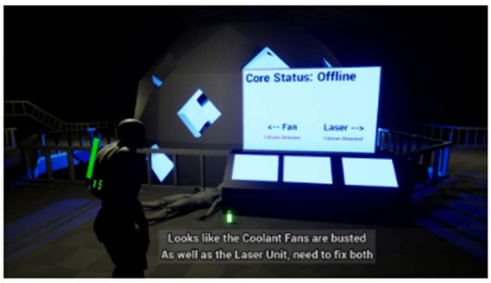
Player arrives at Engineering and heads towards Power Core - another abandoned reception greets them. Searching the Desk room here yeilds ammo, which can be seen from the window.



Player heads through this chamber room towards Power core, could be a decontamination room.



Player is Locked in this room before being able to exit attacked by enemies at close range, but can use the center unit of the room to keep enemies at bay.

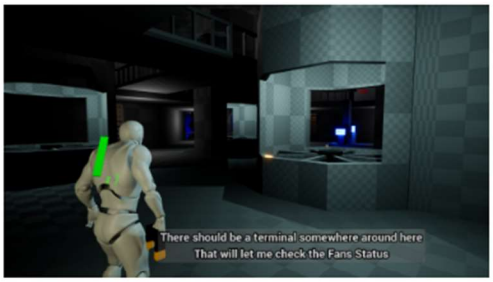


Player reaches the core, and finds out about two main issues, the fans and laser systems are not working.



Player can now choose which objective to tackle first.

For this storyboard the Player chooses the Fans route first.



Player reaches the fans area, and Dialog explains that they should search for the fans terminal.



Player finds the terminal and finds out out to fix the fans, they must find and shoot blockages in the stuck fans.



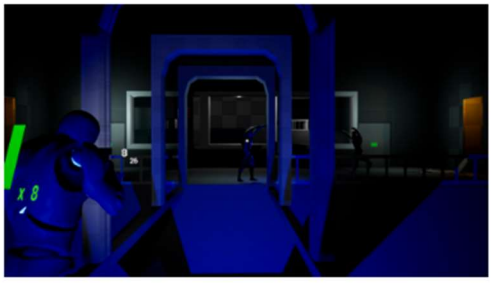
One of several blockages in this area, Players can spot malfunctioning fans because they are not moving.



Player returns to the terminal, fixing the fans - a new route opens up in front of their view that they can take.



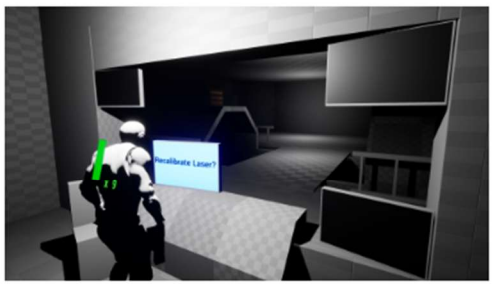
Player uses this Lift to cross the chasm to the Laser Area - this lift moves horizontally instead.



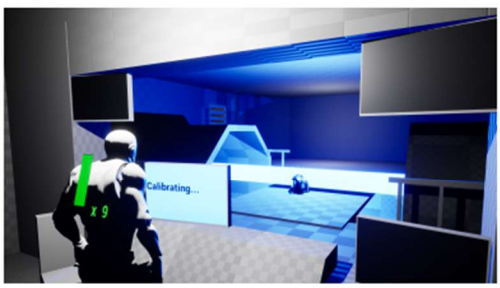
Enemies appear in the distance, a skillfull Player can shoot them before the lift reaches their side.



Player reaches the Laser Area, Dialog reminds them to find the Laser Terminal.



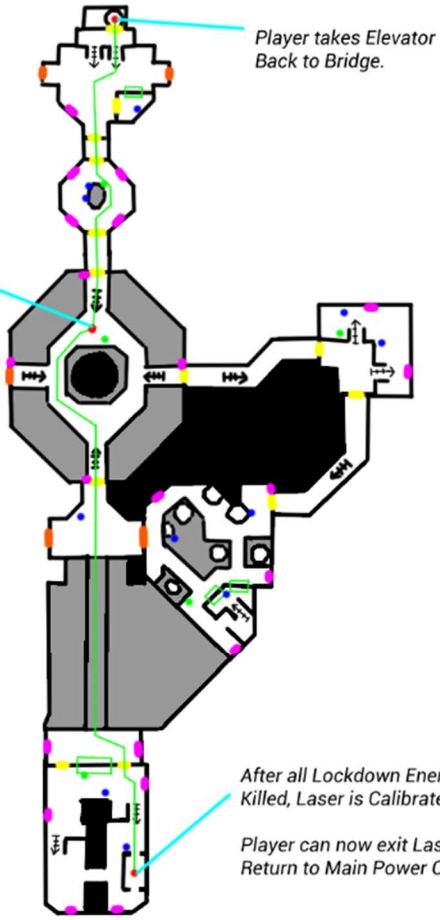
Player finds the terminal and activates it.



This viewpoint lets the Player see the laser come to life, then an enemy appears and heads towards the Player. The laser beam kills the enemy - teaching the player to respect its danger. Player now fights several enemies, using the laser's power to kill many

Map Layouts - Engineering Part 3

Engineering - Part 3



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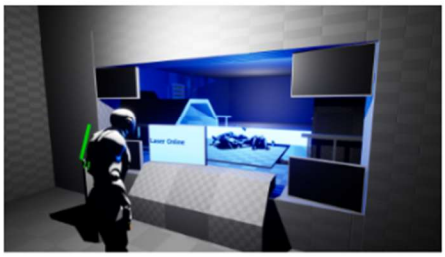
StoryBoard - Engineering Part 3



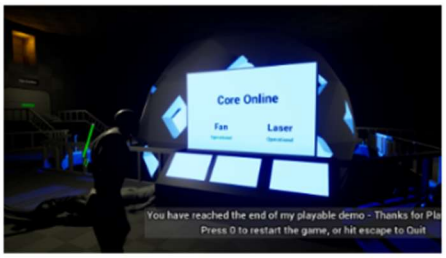
After defeating all the enemies, the Laser is now Online. The Player can now head back to the Main Power Core.



The Power Core confrims that the Player fixed both issues, and awaits their input before rebooting.



Enemies attack the player while the Core Reboots.



Once all Enemies are dead, the Core has finished rebooting. The Main Power is now online and the Player can now return to the Bridge.