



A GAME WRITING AND DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO · FRANK PICCOLELLA

A city that answers back

Dark Deterrent is an original third-person psychological action game concept set in Cypress Creek, a fictional South Florida city destabilized by crime and neurotechnology. Drake Parkson, a Filipino-American community outreach worker, survives brainware sabotage and discovers that he can project detailed hallucinations into other minds.

The player fights, infiltrates, and speaks through three psychological vectors: Fear, Empathy, and Disorientation. Each changes the encounter and the city’s response. The dramatic question remains whether Drake can use mental power to protect people without becoming another system of control.

“A psychological action game where dialogue hits as hard as a counterpunch.”

The portfolio shows the idea moving through concept prose, pitch writing, encounter logic, triggered dialogue, a revised opening cutscene, and a developer-facing presentation. Concept art on the cover and cast page was generated for this portfolio; it is visual exploration, not shipped game art.

Creative spine

Player does	System responds	Story consequence
Patrol, read a threat, engage by combat, stealth, or dialogue	Fear pressures; Empathy reconstructs; Disorientation disrupts perception	Redemption, Domination, or Erasure changes reputation and future trust

Source: preliminary concept, pitch documents, boss encounter sheet, technical outline, and developer pitch deck.

How the project developed

01 Premise

The preliminary concept names Drake, his community work, the hallucination power, and a South Florida city. One passage calls the city New Haven; the later setting settles on Cypress Creek.

02 Pitch language

The initial and expanded pitch documents articulate the hybrid: physical combat alongside dialogue, fear, empathy, and disorientation. The expanded pitch briefly describes an unnamed Operative before the later deck restores Drake as the lead.

03 Encounter design

The technical outlines turn the three powers into a repeatable boss loop with state changes and three endings: Redemption, Domination, Erasure.

04 Triggered writing

The boss spreadsheet maps twenty entries to phase, power, NPC state, dialogue, effect, lore reveal, and next node. It makes the writing operational for a designer.

05 Opening sequence

An early cutscene export, a structured pass, v2 variants, and a FinalDraft file move Drake from the community center to his first uncontrolled hallucination, Nero's observation, and player control.

06 Developer pitch

The 22-slide deck integrates narrative, audience, game loop, setting, characters, art direction, and a playable boss prototype into a Full Sail developer pitch.

Sequence is inferred from filenames and content differences. The supplied files do not establish a reliable date for every internal revision.

The writing becomes a system

Skvire Dukal's encounter is designed as a conversation under pressure. The player can select a psychological vector while the boss changes state; repeated tactics lose force, and the final choice carries into reputation. The table below samples exact lines from the triggered dialogue sheet.

Node / power	NPC state	Dialogue and design effect
B003 · Fear	Irritated	Your men don't follow you. They survive you. Effect: Destabilize
B006 · Disorientation	Confused	You're standing in three places. None of them safe. Effect: Disorient
B009 · Empathy	Guarded	You weren't born like this. You were edited. Effect: Weaken
B014 · Disorientation	Fractured	You're not the boss fight. You're the warning. Effect: Disrupt
B015 · Empathy	Collapsed	You can stop. Or I can stop you. Effect: Decision
B016 · Empathy	Defeated	...I remember who I was. Effect: End
B017 · Fear	Terrified	Make it stop. Please— Effect: End
B018 · Disorientation	Lost	Where am I? Who—what— Effect: End

The three final states are not interchangeable endings. Empathy opens surrender, Fear breaks the boss, and Disorientation erases his sense of self. The deck frames these as distinct costs for the player and the city.

Source: Dark_Deterrent_Boss_Encounter_v2.xlsx, "Triggered Dialogue"; technical outlines; developer pitch slides 7-9.

Opening cutscene / the challenge

Selected from the supplied FinalDraft cutscene. Text is reproduced from its scene and dialogue elements; title-only and empty elements are omitted.

FADE IN:

EXT. CYPRESS CREEK – SOUTH FLORIDA – NIGHT

Rain coats the streets in neon reflections. Police sirens drift across the skyline. A late-night news report murmurs from a television in a shop window.

CAMERA – Slow aerial glide across the city toward a small COMMUNITY CENTER still lit this late at night.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Violence continues to rise across Cypress Creek tonight as authorities investigate possible ties to a group calling itself the East Coast Syndicate.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER – NIGHT

Drake PARKSON stacks folding chairs after a long community meeting. A poster reads: COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP – YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

TEENAGER

Drake... you said things were going to get better.

DRAKE

They will. It just takes people sticking together.

Suddenly – screams outside.

CAMERA – Handheld movement as Drake steps to the window and looks out.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER – CONTINUOUS

Three GANG MEMBERS shove a SHOP OWNER against a car.

GANG LEADER

Protection money. Last chance.

SHOP OWNER

I already paid you!

Drake pushes the door open and walks outside.

GANG MEMBER #2

And who the hell are you supposed to be?

Opening cutscene / first projection

For a moment nothing happens. Then the world bends.

CAMERA – Quick flashes. Sirens stretch into eerie echoes. Phantom flames flicker across the street as shadows crawl along the pavement.

GANG MEMBER #1

What is this?!

GANG LEADER

Get out of my head!

DRAKE

I... didn't–

The hallucination deepens. The gang members panic and run.

SHOP OWNER

What did you do to them?

DRAKE

I wish I knew.

A BLACK SUV rolls slowly past.

Inside sits NERO ALVAREZ watching Drake through dark glass.

NERO

So the experiment survived.

He studies a tablet filled with brainwave data.

NERO

Interesting.

The SUV disappears into traffic.

Drake looks out over the city skyline. Police lights flash somewhere in the distance.

DRAKE

If they're using the mind against this city... maybe that's how we fight back.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP – NIGHT

A silhouette stands above Cypress Creek. Drake pulls up his hood as a mask begins to form in shadow.

TITLE CARD: DARK DETERRENT

A police radio crackles.

POLICE RADIO (V.O.)

All units respond. Gang activity reported at the Cypress Dockyards.

MISSION LOCATION: CYPRESS DOCKYARDS

CUT TO BLACK.

PLAYER CONTROL BEGINS – OBJECTIVE: Investigate gang activity at the dockyards.

The people inside the mechanic



Drake Parkson

Community advocate turned vigilante. His three powers make him the story's moral pressure point.

Domingo "Dee" Palacio

Filipino-American mentor and former occult retrieval agent. He warns Drake about power becoming identity.

Maya Santos

Investigative journalist who protects witnesses and tests whether Drake can act without rewriting people.

Skvire Dukal

Syndicate boss and dialogue-combat prototype. His mental state changes through the player's choices.

Visual concepts follow the developer deck's character briefs. Skvire's clothing and facial design are exploratory because the source gives a gameplay role more than a fixed appearance.

Design direction and next proof

Visual direction

Cypress Creek combines rain-soaked tourist streets, industrial ports, immigrant neighborhoods, surveillance, and a broadcast tower. The deck assigns cyan, red, green, and magenta to the city's neon and psychological states. Interface distortion and reactive sound make the player feel what their chosen power does.

Playable proof

A compact vertical slice could join three authored moments: Drake's first uncontrolled projection at the community center, one investigation led by Maya, and a Skvire encounter with readable states and three different resolutions. That would test whether dialogue can stay legible during action and whether the resulting reputation feels earned.

Source notes

- Dark Deterrent.docx — preliminary concept and named protagonist.
- Dark_Deterrent_Pitch_Document.docx and Expanded.docx — audience, story, and gameplay framing.
- Dark_Deterrent_Technical_Outline.docx and FINAL.docx — repeatable encounter loop and three outcomes.
- Dark_Deterrent_Boss_Encounter_v2.xlsx — twenty triggered dialogue entries.
- Opening cutscene FDX variants — structured revisions and FinalDraft sequence.
- Dark_Deterrent_Developer_Pitch_Deck.pptx — Full Sail developer pitch and character briefs.

Development document and concept art are presented as a writing portfolio. No playable build, production budget, or market result is claimed.