

# Game Design Document

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## 1. Narrative Synopsis

The year is 2082, in the newly created country of the UPM (that is, The United Provinces of Mexicandamerica), laughter has been outlawed due to the previous dictator's demise after suffering a hysterical fit due to an unassuming subordinate's mistake of misspelling duty as 'dudy' on a peace treaty between the UPM and Scandanasia.

The political reform comes soon after the late dictator's son assumed the reins of power. Comedians, entertainers and pranksters alike are quickly rounded up and sent to one of many newly created 'Chuckle Rehabilitation Centres'.

You are one such entertainer, descended from a long line of jokesters. Lucky enough to have survived the cruel mistreatment of your family and colleagues by the state, one night you go to the store to buy some ingredients for your grandma's traditional hooty hot pot.

However, tonight maybe you should've stayed home...

## 2. Key Themes & Gameplay

Hold Your Honk is a prison escape stealth game with some RPG dialogue elements, set in a dystopian near future within the modern era. The main idea is that the player must reach the end of the level. Gameplay revolves around the 'laugh metre' mechanic, which once full, the player loses.

If the scope allows, the player will be able to select between multiple characters with unique personalities and dialogue options - however they act the same mechanically.

Name Ideas:

- Silent Laugh / Silent Chuckle / Silent Comedy
- Silence of the Clowns
- Laughman
- Outlaugh / Operation: Outlaugh
- Hold your honk!
- Buffoon Detention
- Comic Correction
- Insane Clown Odyssey
- Mark of the Clown
- Laughpoint
- Metal Gear Circus
- Don't Clown
- Clown Slaughter
- Cut Up Convict
- Sneaking Slapstick
- Pseudobulbar Affect
- Coulrophobia
- Punchline Blues
- Wisecrack Withdrawal

## 3. Movement & Actions

### **Movement**

There are four forms of movement:

- **Walking** - This is the basic method of navigation, allowing the player to move around unimpeded.
- **Running** - By holding a key/button, the player is able to run increasing their speed by x1.5, but doing so gradually increases the laugh metre. This can be for different reasons depending on the character, i.e. for the clown (Keith) it's because his shoes make funny sounds when he runs. The player needs to figure out whether the increased speed is worth the damage they receive for doing so.
- **Jumping** - By pressing a key/button, the player is able to jump, reaching a short distance into the air before falling to the ground. This can be used to get on top of objects or climb up short ledges.
- **Crouching** - By holding a key/button, the player is able to crouch. They can move while crouched but movement speed is decreased by x0.5. Crouching prevents the player from triggering pressure sensitive items on the floor, such as whoopie cushions and banana peels. If the player remains still while crouching, they are also harder to spot and can hide behind certain objects.
- **Climbing** - By going up to a ladder or staircase and pressing the interaction key, the player can climb/walk up and down the ladder/staircase to reach new areas.

## Actions

There are four different actions:

- **Interact** - This is the most basic action. By going up to objects or persons of interest and pressing the interaction key/button, the player is able to perform context sensitive actions depending on the situation.

Examples:

- NPC - Talk
  - Ladder/Stairs - Climb
  - Container/Storage/Box - Search
  - Environmental Object - Inspect
  - Item - Pickup
- **Honk** - By pressing a key/button, the player can 'honk', using a character specific object to make a loud sound. This distracts guards and attracts them to the location the player honked. Doing so increases the laugh metre by a set amount.
  - **Item** - By pressing a key/button, the player can use an item that they have picked up. Different items have different effects, and can be positive, or negative. You can only hold one item at a time.
  - **Don't Laugh** - By holding a key/button, the player can hold their breath and try not to laugh. This causes the player to take less laugh damage from all sources. The player cannot move while trying not to laugh, and they can't use other actions or crouch either.

The default keys/buttons that are assigned to each movement and action are covered in the next section, Input Methods.

## 4. Input Methods

There will be 2 main input methods, keyboard and controller.

The default control schemes will be outlined below:

### **Keyboard (Scheme 1):**

Walk Left		A
Walk Right		D
Run		Left Shift
Jump		Space / W
Crouch		S
Interact		Down Arrow
Honk		Up Arrow
Item		Left Arrow
Don't Laugh		Right Arrow

### **Keyboard (Scheme 2):**

Walk Left		Left Arrow
Walk Right		Right Arrow
Run		Left Shift
Jump		Space / Up Arrow
Crouch		Down Arrow
Interact		S
Honk		R
Item		D
Don't Laugh		A

### **Xbox Controller:**

Walking		Left Control Stick / D-Pad
Run		X
Jump		A
Crouch		Left Control Stick Down / D-Pad Down / LT
Interact		RB
Honk		RT
Item		Y
Don't Laugh		B

### **PlayStation Controller:**

Walking		Left Control Stick / D-Pad
Run		Square
Jump		X
Crouch		Left Control Stick Down / D-Pad Down / L2
Interact		R1
Honk		R2
Item		Triangle
Don't Laugh		Circle

## 5. Characters

There will be one character to begin with, but if time allows, two other characters can be added with different personalities and dialogue options. These characters are outlined below.

- **Bobbie O'Kelly**

- **Former Occupation:** Professional Clown
- **Current Occupation:** Parking Lot Attendant
- **Age:** 37
- **Voice:** Honks
- **Personality:**

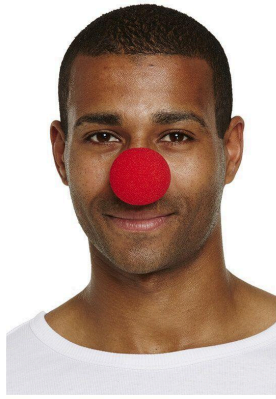
Bobbie is an ex-clown with a cheery view of life. She never really wants to cause trouble or draw too much attention to herself. While

she misses her old job, she's happy with her lot in life and approaches others with a friendly, well-meaning attitude. Her trouble arises from years of working as a children's entertainer, which has left her prone to laughing fits, which is dangerous in the current political climate. Understanding this, Bobbie's approach is to self-medicate with state-approved joy suppression pills, and giggling to herself in the privacy of her own home.

- **Bad Ending:** After the severity of her problem is made clear to the guards, Bobbie is sent to a specialised facility, and forced to get mandatory counselling with regular doses of joy suppression pills. After 4 months she has been successfully rehabilitated, and now works as a mortgage underwriter.
- **Good Ending:** Crowding themselves into her father's LEA (Laughter Enabling Automobile), Bobbie and her family escape the country under an assumed name disguised as an office drone, now enjoying life once again as an entertainer in Scandanasia.
- **Clothing:**
  - *Standard:* Rainbow afro, caucasian, red clown nose, clean shaven with a split yellow/red clown jumpsuit, red clown shoes.



- *Prison:* Same hair as standard, caucasian, red clown nose, clean shaven with orange prison overalls, same shoes as standard.



- *Bad Ending:* Grey afro, caucasian, black clown nose, clean shaven with a grey business suit, black clown shoes.



- *Good Ending:* Same as standard.
- **Notes:** Main character, everything will be done with this character, and other characters are just extras.

- **Keith Greene**

- **Former Occupation:** Stage Mime
- **Current Occupation:** Commis Chef
- **Age:** 25
- **Voice:** None, mute.
- **Personality:**

Keith is a deeply troubled man, who has struggled with depression for the majority of his life, rendering them mute. Figuring he needed a distraction from his gloom, Keith's brother implored him to join the family business, in which they eventually acquiesced. Seeing the elation on their patrons faces brought out a joyous side to Keith, and for a time he was happy. However, with the introduction of new state laws came the closure of the business. Now, not only does he struggle to make ends meet, but his depression has quickly returned.

- **Bad Ending:** After rehabilitation, Keith returns to life with a prescription for antidepressants. Soon he's promoted to chef de partie at the restaurant he works at, and eventually sous chef. While his financial woes are over and his depression has abated, he feels a deep sense of saudade.
- **Good Ending:** With his escape from confinement, a newfound confidence blossomed in Keith, allowing him to gain new perspective, and new purpose. Gathering close family and their one single friend, Keith starts an underground movement to directly oppose the status quo.
- **Clothing:**
  - *Standard:* No hat, black short straight hair, black and white shirt with black suspenders, black trousers with black and white dress shoes.



- *Prison:* Same hair as standard, white shirt with black and white striped prison overalls, same shoes as standard.



- *Bad Ending*: White chef outfit, with mime mime makeup.



- *Good Ending*: Black bowler hat, white face makeup and black mime makeup, white bowtie, black suit, with thin vertical black and white pinstripe shirt, same trousers as standard and same shoes as standard.
- **Notes**: Never talks, all dialogue options are context actions.

- **Paul Sunderland**

- **Former Occupation**: Secret (**Secretary of State**)
- **Current Occupation**: None, Inmate
- **Age**: 51
- **Voice**: Gruff grunts. Try to imagine an old horse that turned into a man.
- **Personality**:

Paul is a no-nonsense, blunt and straightforward man with many secrets, such as being able to bribe him easily with sugar cubes as they are his favourite treat. Few people know about Paul's past and he prefers to keep it that way. While he is looked after surprisingly well,

he has plenty of pet peeves, such as the way the tone-deaf guard attempts to whistle 'Astroboat' by Micky Fromage, or how Taco Tuesday is actually on a Friday. But in maximum security confinement, no-one can hear you complain Paul.

- **Bad Ending:** Tired of Paul's antics and complaints, the guards decide to renovate Paul's containment with sound-proofing, so that they no longer had to listen to him whine. Given that Paul could no longer hear the guards whistling or well, anything, while having access to the same luxuries, the guards had inadvertently given him exactly what he wanted - peace and quiet. With that, life went on as normal inside the facility.
- **Good Ending:** Since it was a Friday, none of the external officers or marksmen saw Paul as he casually strolled past the multiple rings of security into freedom. Noticing this, Paul immediately walks around the building towards the public entrance to make a formal complaint about the lax security measures. As it happens, the current dictator of the UPM was visiting the facility that day to appreciate the warden's new office chair, with his closest entourage. Not noticing this, Paul accidentally manages to trip up one of his wait staff, resulting in the Secretary of War being covered in orange Hilltop Spray, consequently, the dictator almost immediately suffers a fit of hysteria and dies on the spot. "Must be a genetic predisposition" the warden mumbles. With none of the dictator's cabinet willing to deal with a country on the verge of rebellion, Paul is compelled by those present to take up the mantle of Prime Secretary as leader of the UPM. His opening speech was one of the shortest in history, and went as follows: "I really did not want this."
- **Clothing:**
  - *Prison:* Horse mask, maroon velvet smoking jacket, no trousers, white boxer shorts, dark grey socks with black sock garters and black oxford shoes.



- *Bad Ending*: Same as standard.
- *Good Ending*: Same as standard, but with black silk dinner trousers.



- **Notes:** Locked until you beat the game with every other available character. Doesn't have a street or courthouse level, just a prison level which is longer. Highest difficulty character. Backstory is hidden within dialogue and interactions with NPCs and the environment. Was the one responsible for causing the previous dictator to laugh himself to death.

## 6. Levels

There will be 3 levels in the game, one of which will be a short tutorial level to explain the mechanics of the game.

- Street
  - This is the tutorial level, covering basic movement mechanics and actions. It should be about 3 minutes long.
  - Buildings are divided into residential blocks, there is graffiti, it's raining and it's nighttime.

The level starts with the player character talking to themselves, unsure if they should wear their former uniform when out. It isn't illegal and it puts them at ease. Once outside the game teaches the player how to walk and run. Soon the player reaches some wooden debris and the game teaches the player how to jump to get over it. The player then comes across the police who are blocking the way. The game teaches the player how to interact by talking to the police to ask what's going on. The police ask the player to move along as there's been a traffic accident. They point out a path to get around, which opens it up.

The accident turns out to be a van that lost control on the wet road and crashed into the side of one of the apartments. The van belonged to the state (identifiable seal on the side), and was carrying illegal contraband whoopie cushions to be destroyed. Once you reach the back of the van, there are whoopie cushions everywhere, the game teaches the player how to crouch and walk to not set them off.

Soon the player comes across another van, lodged upside down, after hitting a tree with more whoopie cushions everywhere. They are somehow on top of the flipped van, in the tree, and some even stuck to nearby windows. There are also many police officers and first responders handling the scene. They are walking around, stepping on and driving over the cushions, filling the air with fart noises. Nobody is laughing. The combination of the serious scene and the humorous sounds cause the player's laugh metre to start rising.

Time pauses and this is when the game teaches the player that the metre must not fill or they will be in trouble and will lose.

The game also teaches the player how to 'not laugh' by holding their breath to not be as affected by humorous events that occur.

Time then resumes and whether the player tries to not laugh or not, the result is the same and the player character points out that it is futile, as it's just too funny. The player character bursts out laughing once the metre fully fills and is quickly arrested and knocked out.

- Courthouse

- This serves as a short level, to allow the player to get comfortable with the mechanics without guidance, and to cover any missed topics. It should be less difficult and about 5 minutes long.
- The courthouse is very sterile and clinical, with every room looking the same, minus the corridors. The walls are white plaster, the floor is dirty blue carpet and the ceilings are those cheap false ones.

The level starts with the player waking up, handcuffed to a chair in a random room. They have no idea where they are and come to the conclusion that there must be a misunderstanding, and decides to find someone in charge.

The player character then notices a key, conveniently left on the filing cabinet next to them. The game then teaches the player how to interact with items, and use them, allowing the player to grab the key and use it to unlock themselves from the handcuffs.

Moving outside of the room into the corridor, the player notices the same police officer that arrested and knocked them out guarding the way further down the corridor. The player character surmises that attempting to reason with this officer is likely unwise. The game then explains how the stealth mechanics work, and one way to distract guards is to use the honk action, but that may make them laugh.

The player can use this to move past the guard.

Past that, further down the corridor is another officer with a different uniform. The game explains that some more vigilant officers won't be distracted by honks, and that the only way past them is to use an item, sneak past them, or to try and talk their way past. The game also points out that the player can also talk their way out of situations if they are caught, but this only works so many times. The player can then decide to sneak past the guard or talk to them to move past.

The following few corridors give the player freedom to approach obstacles how they wish without input. There are some items, ways to sneak past guards, some of which are stationary, and some of which patrol.

After reaching the end, they come across a large set of doors and surmise someone in charge must be behind those, and enter.

As it turns out, the building the player is in is the district court, and the room they just entered is a courtroom with a trial in session.

The trial of the player character in fact, and the trial started without the player because the officers couldn't find them, but now that they are present they can begin in earnest.

It lasts about 3 minutes - despite pleas from the player character, they are shut down immediately as laughter is a grave offence, doubly so for wearing such a distasteful outfit while doing it. They are sentenced to 6 months in a chuckle rehabilitation centre for their crimes, with a possibility of a reduced sentence if they can demonstrate they have been fully rehabilitated with no joy to speak of.

- Prison
  - This serves as the main level, where the player must avoid guards and get to the end. This level should be about 5 minutes long and make use of every mechanic, with many items being made use of.
  - The prison is dark, oppressive and dystopian. Looking outside the window is a grim sight, of a field full of dead grass, and a firepit, with officers destroying humorous contraband.

This level is open to interpretation from a design perspective. The player starts in their cell and can escape using a vent or something.

Once the player reaches the end, a unique ending will play depending on the character being played.

## 7. Items

There are many different items which can be found and used, depending on the situation. These items can be found in containers and boxes, gotten from guards and other inmates, or just found lying around.

Items can be inspected by the player to find out what they do, and give a little flavour text.

- Key - This can be used to open certain doors, or vents, for different methods of egress. A key can be used on any door or vent, they are non-specific.
  - Bobbie - "This is one of the keys the guards will carry on them. I bet I can use it to open one of the doors or vents if I wanted to. Unfortunately I heard there were budget cuts, so it's shoddy and I think it'll break once I use it, but luckily for me it works on any lock! Bad design if you ask me."
  - Keith - [Keith makes the outline of a door and performs an unlocking motion with the key.]
  - Paul - "It's a key. What do you want from me?"
- Joy Suppression Pill - For the next 30 seconds, the player takes no damage from sources of laughter, but they are unable to run or honk. When used on Paul it does nothing.
  - Bobbie - "I hate these things, make me feel dead inside honestly. I suppose they help with my condition so I don't laugh but I don't want to rely on them."
  - Keith - [Keith makes a swallowing motion and then pulls a sad face.]
  - Paul - "I see these all the time and I swear it's some bullshit placebo the state came up with cause they do nothing for me."
- Doughnut - This can be used when talking to a guard to prevent the penalty of talking to them too much. Basically if talking to the guards more than three times causes you to get caught out, this nullifies one of the attempts. They're rare.

- Bobbie - “Ahhhhh yes, the sugary doughy weakness of any state pig. Every officer I’ve ever met loves these things. I’m sure if I offered it to a guard while talking to them they might turn a blind eye to my antics.”
  - Keith - [Keith marches to look like a guard, before holding the doughnut and staring at it with a drool. They think you get the point.]
  - Paul - “The fat uniformed bastards that patrol around the place love ‘em. I don’t see the appeal. Ew.”
- Extremely Boring Magazine - Acts as health recovery by lowering the laugh metre by 25%, taking 3 seconds to apply.
    - Magazine examples:
      - Tiny Equine Chat
        - Bobbie - “THE talk of pony lovers everywhere.”
        - Keith - [Keith recoils and remembers a childhood incident involving a miniature pony, before dropping the magazine with a stern expression.]
        - Paul - “One of my favourite magazines!”
      - Spreadsheet Enthusiast
        - Bobbie - “Oh BOY, look at those workbooks and sexy formulas!”
        - Keith - [Keith’s eyes follow a few sentences before glossing over and clocking out. Soon she regains her composure and discards the magazine.]
        - Paul - “I would read this during breaks at my old job. My PA would always have one on hand.”
      - Beige Weekly
        - Bobbie - “Aah yes, Beige Weekly. Tell me the difference between eggshell white and scotch mist.”
        - Keith - [Keith stares at the magazine, with a similar expression as watching paint dry.]
        - Paul - “I used to have a subscription to this. Brilliant home decor tips, let me tell you!”
  - Oxring Dictionary - Fully recovers your health by lowering the laugh metre by 50%, taking 5 seconds to apply.
    - Bobbie - “I wonder how many words have 3 syllables.”

## 8. Dialogue

When talking to a guard, you can choose between different responses that can result in different effects. Below is a list of all these responses and their corresponding effects.

- Guard: "Hey! What are you doing outside of your cell!"
  - Bobbie
    - Funny: "I thought it would be funny to put a pin on the warden's chair, I'm just coming back from his office!"
      - Guard: "Oh no, Gary was in the clinic for 2 weeks last time!"

(Guard runs off screen, removing them as an obstacle)  
(25% laugh damage)
    - Neutral: "I needed the bathroom, but then I got distracted by the oppressive surroundings."
      - Guard: "There's a toilet in your cell. Get back there."

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)
    - Sad: "I just felt a panic attack coming on as I have filed my tax return since being here. I wish there was someone to explain tax codes to me."
      - Guard: "Oh well luckily for you I have a degree in accounting. All you do is..." [You spend 2 hours talking about good financial practices.]

(25% laugh recovery.)  
(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)  
(Timer increases by 1 minute.)
  - Keith
  - Paul
- Guard: "Out for a stroll?"
  - Bobbie
    - Funny: "Just practising my material, hey how's this sound - I hear prisoners in jail get drunk a lot, no wonder, they hang around bars 24/7."
      - Guard: "That...isn't funny." [The guard snickers, before a laughter suppression squad appears and takes him away.]

(Guard is taken off screen, removing them as an obstacle)  
(25% laugh damage)
    - Neutral: "Just needed to stretch my legs. Cardio and what not!"
      - Guard: "I suppose. Just don't be long."

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)
    - Serious: "Do you ever wonder if we're in a simulation that serves as a comedic allegory to the cruel and tyrannical nature of dictators and the misery they bring upon those they rule over?"

Guard: [Pauses] "No."

(40% laugh recovery.)

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)

(Timer increases by 30 seconds.)

- Keith
- Paul
- Guard: "What are you doing here, it's not rec time yet!"
  - Bobbie
    - Funny: "Well, what are YOU doing out here hm? I posted a memo for you to clean the bathrooms an hour ago!"
      - Guard: "Wait what? I need to make a phone call..."

(Guard is distracted for 30 seconds.)  
(10% laugh damage)
    - Neutral: "My cell neighbour told me there were free snacks being given out for new inmates."
      - Guard: "What, Geoffrey? He's off his rocker, he is. I gave him snacks an hour ago."

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)
    - Serious: "I felt that the bleak depressing reality that is my cell could use more drab decor."
      - Guard: "Well, not the first time I've heard that from an inmate! Here take this, it might help take your mind off things!"

(Get an extremely boring magazine.)  
(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)
  - Keith
  - Paul
- Guard: "I'm tired of seeing your face [PC name]."
  - Bobbie
    - Funny: "What, this one?" [Bobbie pulls a grimace and smiles with a grin.]
      - Guard: "Disgusting. Take this for your foul expression and buzz off."

(Gain joy suppression pill)  
(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)  
(15% laugh damage)
    - Neutral: "Well I'm tired of seeing yours Frank, but we can't all have what we want!"

- Guard: [The guard grumbles and looks at themselves self-consciously.]

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)

- Serious: "I'm sorry my existence brings you so much pain and suffering."
  - Guard: "Wait no, I didn't mean it like that..."

(20% laugh recovery.)

(Guard is distracted for 3 seconds.)

(Player can't move for 5 seconds.)

- Keith
- Paul

- Guard: "Hey there bud! How's it going, ey?"

- Bobbie

- Funny: "Oh a Canadian! I love Canadians! You're always saying 'ey!'"
  - Guard: "What? I don't say ey, ey?"

(Steal key while guard is distracted)

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)

(30% laugh damage)

- Neutral: "Is it lunchtime yet, I haven't eaten for 11 minutes."

- Guard: "Oh that's a real shame bud but not yet - I feel ya on that one, got a poutine in the staff fridge with my name on it!"

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)

- Serious: "Alright, what's happening with you?"

- Guard: "Well, don't get me started on this one, ey! First my wife is a real piece of work - she left me for a rigger in a lifted truck and now I'm left with the mongrel children and I ain't got a loonie to my name! I swear one of them thinks he's a dog sometimes. And then not only that the doctor told me..."

(15% laugh recovery.)

(Guard is distracted for 5 seconds.)

(Timer increases by 2 minutes.)

- Keith
- Paul