

Brian J. Audette

Deus Ex - Engalus : Mission Document

1.00 - Introduction

Allow me to start by saying that the following mission is not perfect. I demand nothing but perfection from myself but sometimes due to circumstances this isn't possible. As far as I can see however the few problems that still exist in this mission stem mainly from the fact that I was new to the Deus Ex engine and wasn't aware of the boundaries.

This mission is based off of the first section of the second act of my first script for Engalus which I was developing for Crytek Studios (www.crytek.de). I chose this for my mission for a few reasons. One was that I wanted to do a primarily non-action mission where exploration and back and forth movement between areas was required. Another was that this section of the game had a good beginning middle and end for a mission. There was also a bar scene in the script that I wanted to try and translate in game.

1.01 - Style

You'll probably notice a tilt toward circular rooms in this mission, this is by design. One of the things the Engalus project was lacking before I took over as Lead Designer was a coherent structure for the world. In revamping the story I made sure to elaborate on every aspect of the game world, especially the alien race the Lahorans (represented by Asian characters in the mission). Lahoran society is based on a philosophy I called Spherical Reality, whereby they believe that life is like a sphere. Upon death one gets the chance to be reincarnated closer to the center of the sphere, the center being something like Nirvana. Lahorans are very cut and dry people, they get to the point quickly and express function through form. Their architecture was meant to reflect all this by providing a lot of circular shapes, visible structural elements such as supports and such, and containing rooms that accentuate a central element. The design of the areas in the mission is sort of a hybrid of Human and Lahoran style. In designing areas I like to think about the psychology behind the space, I find it helps especially in more imaginary works.

Now lets get to the mission.

2.00 - Intro

I didn't have time to create a proper intro especially with so much exposition needed. I opted for this simple dialog instead. I'd like to go back and do something similar except have cutaways to flashback scenes during the dialog.

3.00 - Apartment Map

The Apartment Map is broken into 3 sections, 2 identical apartment complexes and the VIP area which is the players goal. This map is probably the least complicated game play wise and despite the final VIP area goal there are only a handful of rooms that the player can break into if they wish to find various items. A mysterious bug that may be related to the level of detail in the overall map cropped up at the last minute here and prevented me from adding more quests to the area by refusing to initiate certain conversations.

I think the VIP area will be my last attempt at prefab architecture. I found it fascinating that I could loft a 2D shape in so many ways in the Unreal engine (as I had done previously in 3DSMax) and I

wanted to use this to create prefab hallways and such as seen in the VIP area. I think it works to a certain degree but building an area from scratch ends up with better results I think, especially because you can change your mind halfway through doing something and totally alter how things look. The Apartment area is my least favorite, it just didn't turn out the way I planned. It looked very nice as a floor plan on paper but in building it, it just didn't end up with the same feeling of connectivity that the Spaceport and Promenade have. If I had time I would have gone back and redone the entire area, maybe keeping some of the VIP apartment designs.

There's a special treat in Suite 202 of the VIP area. Last summer I was made aware of a rather funny promo for Volition's Summoner and Red Faction games which featured a Dungeon's and Dragons audio skit by the improv group The Dead Alewives. I have a copy of the "Summoner Geeks" movie on my computer and it still makes me laugh. What I did in Suite 202 was to create my own version by making a conversation file with the Dead Alewives audio and using Deus Ex characters. So, if you get into Suite 202 you can see Gunter Herrman, Paul Denton, Alex Jacobson, and a UNATCO Trooper playing some D&D.

4.00 -The Promenade Map

This is the central hub for the mission and the first area I built. I started it as I start most maps, as something I like to call a connectivity model. Essentially I create the basic form of the map first and then connect all the rooms allowing me to walk through the entire map. I came to work this way while I was doing Engalus, I found it helped our texture artists to create work designed more specifically for our spaces if they could see them and walk around in them. Also doing this allows me to place objects and characters if I wish and actually test game play very soon. I can usually complete a connectivity model in a day or so.

The Promenade was one of those areas that looked a bit disappointing at first but evolved into something I am proud of. I'm not much of a technical sketch artist so when I design a map I usually do a floor plan and sometimes a cutaway view. With the promenade I knew I wanted the dual tiered design with the unifying central area that could be seen from the upper tiers. At first it all looked rather dull until I started adding the textures and support architecture, then it really came alive for me.

A word about the elevators. I worked a long time trying to get them just right and while they function perfectly now thanks in no small part to the Carone Elevator mod, there is a graphical glitch that seems to show up at random where when an elevator stops part or all of it becomes invisible due to BSP cuts. I chalked this up to my design being too much for the engine and kept them with the flaw so at least you could see how they were meant to work. Another odd fact about the elevators is that I couldn't get them to light correctly. It seemed that they would only be lit if they were first called on the floor where they were set to raytrace. I attempted to circumvent this problem by writing a script to automatically call the elevators to their raytracing floor on start but this didn't work. Apparently in order for the elevator to be lit it had to be called on the floor it was raytraced at and be in the player's PVS at the same time. I finally got around this by creating textures for the elevator that look like it is lit when actually the textures don't receive light calculations at all.

The damage done to the Communications Center was originally supposed to happen while the player was going through the mission. The problem I had to get around was how to trigger the event properly. With an area as open as the Promenade it proved to be too little effect for too much work at the time. In Engalus what I would have liked to do (as with many other instances as this) is to cut away to a non-interactive scene within the level so that the player could trigger this event from a number of locations and still see it perfectly. I wanted to show the terrorist group The Blade running from an explosion on the West wing of the Promenade where the Comm Center was but as I said I didn't do it. I also figured it might be leading the player too much to show The Blade running from the scene and in the direction of the maintenance duct. The Blade solution to

the mission was meant to be the more difficult in the beginning and easier in the end so giving clues on how to find them was not desirable. Still, to tie it all together I left the key to the maintenance area hidden in the bombed Comm Center room for the player to find.

The duct system was a last minute addition to the Promenade area. Originally The Blade were going to hide in a larger area in a portion of the station that was unused. I wanted the player to have to go into this area, find The Blade and then help them reset their security grid against the JSI. I scrapped this idea and added the small duct system instead which eventually grew one day to include the Greasel area and allowed me to add the Greasel side quest which I will discuss later.

The random announcements were one of the last things I added and I think it gives the promenade an extra layer of life and the station as a whole more character. I was playing around with my audio program while recording voice files when I made a nice announcement sounding effect so I decided to use it. There's one announcement in particular you should pay close attention to, you'll know it when you hear it.

5.00 - Spaceport/Trade Outpost

From the Promenade you can gain access to the Spaceport area. Initially this was going to be much different, much more confined but I realized as I was beginning the area that I really wanted to see the docks and perhaps have incoming ships (which I didn't get to but would like to add at some point). I drew out a quick cutaway sketch of the main Spaceport and Trade Outpost area and went to work creating a full 3D area rather than just a series of rooms cut out positive space. I'm very happy with the way this came out and I would have liked to have done the other areas in the same style so I could really connect them as a space station. This is the kind of area that only the Unreal engine can do though. I would have never gotten away with this in a Quake engine.

Where I feel the Promenade meets most of its potential I feel this area still has more to go. I want to add ships moving in and out of the docks and flying around. I would like to add passengers getting on and off but in some ways this goes against the story and I deemed it unnecessary to be done at this time for the mission to succeed. I'll probably go back and try it just to the experience however.

The Outpost Bar is an integral part of the mission and would have been integral to the whole Engalus game as it houses Lorna Seril, the player's neutral friend aboard the station and is a place where the denizens of deep space can hang out between cargo runs and such. One of the reasons I chose to convert this section of Engalus into a Deus Ex mission was because of the scene where the JSI enter the bar and the player needs to get out. I originally wanted to start the whole mission with this scene as it does in the Engalus script (although that is a different bar) but game play wise it didn't work out and I created my good, bad, or sneaky choice intro with the officer at the Apartments instead. Another drawback to doing the bar scene was once again the inability to cut away in the middle of play. One of the things I wanted to prove with Engalus was that if you cut away at the right moments in game play and did it with enough skill that you could actually add to the player's experience rather than subtracting from it. I think the dry way in which the bar scene ends up coming off sort of proves my point as it would have been much more dramatic if I could have set some tension up with cut scenes. Doing that would have really made the player feel like they are part of a dramatic, cinematic experience.

6.00 - The Interrogation Map

The only reason the Interrogation room exists as a separate map was that I was having trouble with player start actors. Since you can't trigger a teleport, only a mapExit, I needed the Officers who brings you in for interrogation to use that mapExit. At the same time the Interrogation officer

needed to trigger a map exit to get you into the cell. Both were on the same map so I tried a trick where the interrogation player start would be disabled by a script after you were interrogated and then the cell start would become active. I tried it every way I could think but it never worked out so finally I decide just to make the Interrogation room a separate map.

Just incase your wondering, the Interrogation officer does sound like Odo from Deep Space Nine on purpose. I'm a big DS9 fan and I had to throw a voice or 2 in there. Teh'Lon on the Promenade maps is supposed to sound like Worf and one of the vendors has a little bit of a Captain Sisko thing going on. Sorry, I don't do Major Kira.

7.00 - The Missions

The first thing that happens when the mission begins is that an officer comes to the door looking to take you in for questioning. I wanted to get the player to begin choosing a style of play right off the bat in this mission and that's what the officer functions as. I also wanted it to be a gut reaction sort of a choice. The Officer doesn't give the player much time to deliberate therefore making the initial choice more real as it will tend to be the players knee jerk reaction to the situation. There are 3 ways to get by this area. One is to talk to him and choose to go along quietly, this will lead to the Interrogation map. The second is to talk to him and choose not to go along quietly, this sets a flag that will make all officers for the remainder of the mission hostile as well as revealing reinforcement officers on each map. The third option is to try and get by the officer without him noticing you. This is possible by hiding in the apartment bathroom and waiting for the officer to enter the room and then slipping past. Avoiding the interrogation however means that the player will have to steer clear of most future officers or else be given the choice of interrogation or fighting again.

If the player ends up going to the Interrogation map he enters into a conversation puzzle where he gets to choose right away if he wants to play along or be a bad ass and fight his way out. If the player successfully navigates the conversation he goes free, if not he goes to jail. Breaking out of jail is kind of a moral choice because you can either shell over all of your money to the bum with the multitool or you can beat him over the head with a baton and steal it from his corpse. I like those little moral choices because they kind of enforce roleplaying and thus immersion in the game world. If the player escapes from the cell he'll be a wanted man without any weapons. This is perhaps the hardest way to play the mission. I've hidden lots of guns and ammo around and its possible to break into the security armory and get your stuff back but initially your pretty much naked when you escape.

Once you escape you get pretty much into the guts of the mission. The Primary goal is given in the intro and checking on that reveals that you need to get into Agent Gallagher's Quarter's at the VIP area. Checking this out reveals the area is blocked off and the real mission begins as you need to find a way inside. I wanted to include a forceful entry option where the player could kind of fight his way in but the area just wasn't right for it and it would have been too easy an end to get to. In the end I settled on 3 main ways to get into the VIP area, each one with a different level of difficulty and reward.

Gorn's mission is probably the easiest to find because it is on the Promenade and there is an informant on the Promenade who will mention him if you've checked out the elevator already. Gorn's mission is also the most unsavory from a moral standpoint and in the end you still have to fight your way through most of the VIP area.

Lorna's mission is not too difficult to find but if you don't know that you should be looking for her (which unless you are me or someone else from the Engalus team, you shouldn't) you might not think of it right away. There is an informant on the Promenade who will lead you to the Trade Outpost for clues however and thus to Lorna. Lorna's mission is rather simple if you do it the easy way. In the end Lorna gets you deeper inside the VIP area and all you have to do is get to the

next floor up and past the guards of course.

Teh'Lon's mission is the most elusive and probably involves the most leg work. The only clues you get to Teh'Lon's whereabouts is the supposed "terrorist attack" on the Comm Center on the Promenade. If the player feels brave enough to go into the hazardous section that was bombed he can get a key to the maintenance ducts and find Teh'Lon and The Blade hiding out. Teh'Lon sends the player on a daring night time mission to deactivate Promenade security which has its difficulties. Completing the mission gets you the best reward of all however as The Blade implants a device in your coat that makes you seem like an Ally to the JSI and thus you can walk right into the VIP area without incident.

Allow me to go into more detail on the various missions :

6.01 - Gorn's Mission

The most readily available way to get into the VIP area is through Gorn, a character at the Chon'La Canteen on the Promenade's East Wing. As long as the player is aware that the VIP area is locked down Gorn will offer his services...for a price. Gorn's a shifty character and if the player doesn't mind doing some dirty work he's a good guy to call on. Gorn's first task for the player is to get some Zyme from one of the vendors on the promenade. This is easier said than done however as Gorn isn't sure which vendor it is. 2 of the vendors have no idea who Gorn is or what your talking about and leave you alone. One of them gives the player the choice to leave him alone about the subject or rough him up which results in an alarm being immediately thrown. The final vendor, the one who has the Zyme tries to get the player to look in his safe which is rigged with an alarm. If the player goes to the safe he can get the zyme but will have to deal with the authorities. If he chooses not to go to the safe or goes back to the vendor before opening the safe, he can get the zyme from the vendor through safer means and bring it back to Gorn.

Gorn's second mission was originally supposed to be to escort someone from the Spaceport to the Chon'La Canteen but it didn't fit well with the actual maps so I cut it and added a mission to go and sell the Zyme instead. There were originally 5 Zyme Buyers but due to an untraceable bug somewhere in the Apartment map the conversations that play are a bit picky and I got rid of the buyer in that area who was a dud anyway. There are 2 buyers on the promenade and 2 on the Spaceport. The player gets half of what they sell the Zyme for so if they want money they need to find the high buyer at the Spaceport...but not the really high one who is a cop in disguise and sends the player to jail. The mission sort of asks the player to be greedy and if they are too greedy they get caught. Its a common sense thing really, the high buyer is obviously a NARC. If the player doesn't care about the money however, the low buyer is right inside the Chon'La Canteen.

Once the player goes back to Gorn after selling the Zyme he is told that his key is in a storage area at the Trade Outpost but some deterrent of some kind has been released in the area that the player will have to deal with. The deterrent in question is 2 greasels and once the player gets past them they can find the key.

With the key in hand the player can go to the VIP area but in order to get into Agent Gallagher's quarters they'll need to get the code. The code for Gallagher's Quarters are in a storage closet in the VIP area. The player can either hack in or follow a lead they find in the area to a body in the morgue at the JSI HQ on the Promenade that has a datacube with the storage door code on it.

6.02 - Lorna's Mission

The next method of completing the mission is to talk to Lorna at the Outpost Bar. It is initially more dangerous because when you get to the bar Lorna tells you to wait for her in back but when

you do a couple of JSI Enforcers show up to ruin your day. Lorna waits for you in the second level cargo storage area while you escape them either by killing them, slipping past them, or finding the secret exit behind the restroom mirror. Once you meet Lorna in the cargo area she explains that she needs to get rid of the Officers to get her customers (unsavory types who don't like cops) back in. The player can do this by visiting a Sergeant Gray on the Promenade or by other means which involves killing all the Officers in the bar. Once the objective is done Lorna will open a nearby crate and ship the player to the VIP area. They still have to get past the guards in the area but they start off in the storage closet with Gallagher's Quarter's door code.

6.03 - Teh'Lon's Mission

The final method of getting into the VIP area is to find Teh'Lon and The Blade, the Lahoran terrorist group aboard the station. They are hiding in the duct system on the Promenade so the player will have to locate a key. There is one in the bombed room of the Comm Center on the Promenade and one is given to you by a maintenance worker at the Spaceport. Once the player finds Teh'Lon he is told that he needs to reset all the security systems on the Promenade for them but he must do it under cover of darkness. I originally wanted the transition to night to be taken care of by script but due to its inability to deactivate player starts I scrapped the idea and probably gained some more time for myself rather than having to try and debug that unwieldy script which probably wouldn't have worked correctly anyway. Once it is night time the player has to go around to all the security consoles, log in with correct codes and use the special options to reset the security system. I encountered an infuriating and puzzling bug in the Promenade night map where the JSI HQ and Chon'La Canteen cameras don't recognize you as a threat even though they are set to do so. I couldn't figure that one out at all. Once the player has reset all the security he will be notified by his goal being completed and he can return to Teh'Lon in order to get back to the day map. I also created night maps for the Spaceport and Apartments but there is very little to do there except pick up some items. When the player gets back to day time Teh'Lon will explain that they have altered his coat so that he emits a positive IFF frequency thus making him appear as an ally to the JSI. The player gets a key and can enter the VIP area without worrying about getting killed.

6.04 - Gallagher's Quarters

Once the player gets into Gallagher's Quarters the mission ends. Originally the player would get to read some notes Gallagher left explaining what was going on then get a message from the station's leader and our Uber Villian Derek Lin, ending this mission. Due to the untraceable bug in the Apartment map however the conversation never played (except when I didn't need it to) and in order to end the mission I had to put a trigger right at the door.

Finally, there's a couple of side quests I designed as well for this mission.

6.05 - Complaint Side Quest

The first begins once you find out the VIP elevator is blocked by the JSI Enforcers at the apartment complex. The JSI Enforcer Guard tells the player he can lodge a complaint at JSI HQ on the Promenade. If the player goes to speak with the desk clerk there he will be told to seek Officer Pierson at the Outpost Bar. An Officer at the bar tells the player to go to the Promenade where he can see the nebula to find Pierson. An Officer viewing the nebula on the lower level of the Promenade tells you Pierson should be at the HQ and going there find Pierson and an Augmentation Upgrade Canister. Originally there was a third Officer to talk to at the Apartment complex but the mysterious bug forced me to get rid of that. This little quest just kind of evolved out of your standard RPG Fed-Ex quest. I thought it was interesting to subtly suggest that the player lodge a complaint and then actually be able to carry through with it.

6.06 - Greasel Side Quest

The second side quest deals with clearing the Greasels out of the Promenade ducts. After the explosion at the Lahoran labs (earlier in the story) some Greasels escaped and are nesting in the ducts. Finding a maintenance worker in the lower area of the Spaceport will get you this quest although you can kill the Greasels before finding him and still get the reward. He will give the player a key to the ducts and send them on their way. When the Greasels are all killed the player is notified that there are no more Greasels alive and he can go claim his reward (an augmentation upgrade canister) from the worker. I like this quest because it involves a little bit of action and besides the reward there are some goodies in the ducts.

7.00 - Conclusion

And so that's it for this mission. I was worried about it at first, having never made a Deus Ex mission or worked with a scripting language so close before although I was familiar with Object Oriented Languages. The first time I sat down to play the mission I had a good time. The spaces always felt too small to me while I was making them but when you add all these quests and things to do even the smallest space can provide hours of entertainment and I think I've done that. I made a mission that can be played several times in several different ways. I would have liked to add more things such as background conversations between NPC and other things which I mentioned above but one man working alone can only do so much.

While I'm sure a month and a half isn't an extremely long time for such a mission to be completed in, I am positive that had I been working in an office with a team it would have gone much faster. There are a lot of great things about working with a team. First of all, if you come across a problem with something you've got a lot of people to ask to try and get it resolved and probably even the person who designed the system where the problem originates. When working in a team you can usually find out your limitations without easier. While I was at Turbine designing a quest for Asheron's Call in my spare time I was always consulting with the AC1 team members to see what they thought about what I was doing and finding out what I could and couldn't do and what was a good idea to do and what wasn't and so on. I find working in a team also to be very inspiring. Its easy for me to sit at home working on a level and be totally stuck for ideas. It happens even in an office environment, but whenever it happened at Turbine all I had to do was check out what others were doing and become instantly inspired. I've always found games to be inspiring and being in an office with so many people doing so much great work just makes you want to do more great work. Finally being in a team helps me accommodate for my weaknesses. Being able to show somebody something and have them say "you know you might want to add a more vertical element to the area" and receiving constructive criticism in that manner is something I look for. Coming from an art school Film program I am used to constructive criticism of the highest degree and I find that my best work is that which has been heavily scrutinized by myself and others. Video games are a team endeavor and although I am proud of this mission and other solo works I know that my best experiences and accomplishments come from being a part of a team and its something I look forward to again.

7.01 - A Note About Diversity

I wanted to create some other small maps to show different styles but I just didn't get around to it. I wasted most of my summer and I have to move back with my parents in a couple of weeks and it was just time to put this portfolio to rest. I hope the diversity in my overall portfolio shows that I am capable of many things and this goes for level design as well. While I have been focusing on Sci-Fi structures for a while now I am fully capable of fantasy and real world environments. Real world stuff is especially easy to create as it draws from sources that are readily available to you. I hope that the detail in this mission proves that I am a level designer who is capable of many things and that despite not having organic and real world maps to show, that this level presents a level of commitment and quality that I bring to a team with me and that I never back down from a

challenge whether it be creating a space station or a hobbit hole.

8.00 - Mission Credits

Mission and Level Design

by

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Original Story and Concept

by

Brian J. Audette and Team Engalus

Original Textures

by

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and
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Not-So-Original Textures

from

Star Trek : Deep Space Nine - The Fallen

by

Collective Studios

Female Voiceover

by

Jillian Lombardi

Male Voiceover

by

Brian J. Audette

Dungeons and Dragons Sequence Audio

by

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