

GAME PITCH · SURVIVAL HORROR · MANAGEMENT · PSYCHOLOGICAL

IRON WINTER

*“The catastrophe arrived slowly. The world
froze. And then the cold taught the dead to
behave.”*

A frozen world. A moving train. A hidden identity.

Find the immune — before they find you.



PC · FIRST PERSON · UNREAL ENGINE 5 · SOLO DEVELOPER

ironwinter.nyxtails.com
Nyxtails Studio · Istanbul

What is IRONWINTER?

IRONWINTER is a first-person survival horror and management game set on a train that never stops, in a frozen world. The world froze slowly; then the cold broke the minds of the living, and some of those broken minds began to learn.

You are one of the last secret agents of the State; to anyone watching, just an ordinary train captain. Your mission: find and deliver at least 10 people with natural immunity within 100 days. You take passengers aboard in a hurry at stations, no questions asked. The real work starts at night: working out, one by one, who is human and who isn't.

The horror is not in the monsters; it is in never being sure. Someone sleeping a few rooms away may not be human, and you will never fully know.

100

DAYS

10

IMMUNE TO FIND

6

PASSENGER ROOMS

10–20

STATIONS (EA)

01

Investigation

Watch and question them through the night. Decide who to trust, knowing you can never be sure.

02

Survival

Coal, ammo and a failing boiler. Stop moving and you die.

03

Raids

Frozen stations: the infected are the entry fee, the real prize is behind locked doors.

04

Management

Your train is home, lab and prison. Keep it running, keep it quiet.

Three nested loops. One decides everything.

MAIN LOOP — THE HEART

Night loop

- Night falls
- Observe the corridor
- Question a passenger
- Radio crackles (maybe true)
- Form suspicion
- Trust, hand over, or burn
- Morning: what changed?

The journey keeps you alive, the stations feed you, but the nights decide everything.

MID LOOP

Journey loop

- Choose a destination
- Burn coal (2× coal = ½ time)
- Cross the frozen world
- Manage the train
- Sleep — events trigger
- Arrive at a station

You choose the route, but the map doesn't wait: avalanches bury lines, the State quarantines regions.

SIDE LOOP

Station loop

- Enter the station
- Clear the infected
- Pick locks, loot chests
- Collect ammo and supplies
- Take survivors — no time to ask
- Deal with the State
- Depart

Quick, violent, profitable. The infected aren't the main resource, they're the entry fee.

Weighting: nights first. The main gameplay happens inside the train. Raids are the side dish and trading stays secondary. Every system is designed around that order.

All you have is your night journal.

Two wake windows

Each night grants two wake windows. Observation and interrogation happen only in these windows, only on the train. Attention is a resource: you can't watch every door. The radio crackles between windows, and some of what it says is true. In the morning something has changed: a blast, a disappearance, an attack. Or nothing at all, which is its own kind of dread.

Immunity test: expensive, slow, unreliable

The test costs resources (ammo, medicine, coal), takes a full night, is limited in uses, and carries a false-positive / false-negative margin. The result never says "immune"; it reads "probably immune." Certainty doesn't exist in this game.

No stat screens

Passengers carry at most one or two tags (Mechanic, Doctor, Farmer), not star ratings. Tags give small economic benefits and never solve the investigation. What matters: what they said, where they stood, whether they slept.

FROM THE NIGHT JOURNAL

ELENA

Doctor

VERIFIED HUMAN

"I don't like the dark."

Didn't sleep on night 3. Normal trauma... right?

MARCUS

Mechanic

SUSPICIOUS

"I've been everywhere."

Found in the corridor at 3AM on night 5. Didn't want to explain.

???

UNKNOWN

You haven't asked the right questions yet.

Do they ever actually sleep?

Strange behavior does not always mean monster.

INTERROGATION STAGES — ADVANCED BY STORY EVENTS, NOT THE DAY COUNTER

●	●	●	●	●
Calm	Suspicion	Physical	Cross-examination	The Impostor
Game start	First strange event / radio warning	First wagon blast	The State declares martial law	Late game
<i>"Where were you?"</i>	<i>"Why aren't you sleeping?"</i>	<i>"Show me your eyes."</i>	<i>Catch contradictions</i>	<i>Old methods stop working</i>

Home, lab, prison. All in three wagons.

TRAIN LAYOUT



An old engine, closing rails

The boiler wears down with every trip, and neglect ends the game. Closed lines fill in from behind: without a snow plow upgrade, some stations are gone forever. Double the coal and the trip takes half the time, but coal is money too.

Attacks from inside

The evolved ones strike from within. A wagon can blow. Strange sounds, a door left open, a smell that wasn’t there yesterday: listen for the small signs.

FOUR STATION TYPES

State Station

Hand over suspects, collect rewards and intelligence, buy and sell passengers.

Ruin Station

Doors sealed, full of the infected. Open it, clear it, loot it. The best chests hide here.

Market / Shelter

Trade, rumors, survivors. Where you find passengers, and where you get found.

Story Station

Opens and closes with the narrative. Some appear once and never again.

THE INFECTED = ENTRY FEE

	EARLY GAME	LATE GAME
Small	1–3	10–15
Medium	5–8	15–25
Large	10–15	25–40

Placeholder values, tuned in playtests. Raids must never outweigh the nights.

Every passenger is an asset and a risk.

PASSENGERS

You take them in a hurry

There is no interrogating on the platform; people are taken aboard without questions. Questioning happens at night, on the train. Each passenger is three things at once: labor for the train, an asset for your economy, and a potential immune or a potential threat.

Five ways to leave the train

They die on the job. They're handed to the State. They give the wrong answer at night. They die in a blast. Or they turn, and come for you.

ECONOMY

Ammo = Money

Every fight is a spending decision

The currency is bullets. Melee is risky but free; shooting is safe but expensive. "Is this zombie worth two bullets, or a scar?" Supply: zombie drops, State rewards, agent supply drops, locked chests.

Locks

The best loot is always locked. Buy lockpicks, find them, or craft them in the workshop with a mechanic aboard.

THE STATE

Hand over

Deliver suspects as test subjects. Payment: bullets, coal, spare parts, and intelligence that narrows the search for the immune. Deliver the wrong people, and you carry it.

Demands and martial law

Quotas grow as the story advances, regions are quarantined, the radio is censored. Eventually the State starts questioning you.

Nobody to hand over?

Arrive at a checkpoint with nothing to hand over, and the State collects its due another way.

Why "just kill everyone" never works. Information comes from the passengers. The immune are among them; a bullet can erase the mission's objective. An empty train at a State checkpoint puts you on the hand-over list.

Is this person really human?

The horror is uncertainty

The train felt like home at first. Now it feels like a box, with something inside it that is wearing a human face. Your biggest enemy is not trusting even your own observations.

THE QUESTIONS IN THE PLAYER’S HEAD

- *Why was their door open at 3AM?*
- *Did I just kill an innocent person?*
- *Strange behavior, or just trauma?*
- *What if the person I trust most isn’t human?*
- *Is this message really from another agent?*
- *Did they blink?*

The radio: you’re not alone

Five to ten agents were sent down the lines. The radio keeps count by going silent. Every clue is one of five things: true, partial, wrong, fake or a trap. Code words, writing style, broadcast hour and voice quality hint at reliability, but those can be imitated too.

THE INFECTION — IT LEARNED TO WEAR A FACE

Primal	Mindless, loud, predictable.
Learner	Hides, opens doors, waits.
Mimic	Moves like a human. Can board the train.
Infiltrator	Talks, pretends to sleep, copies routines.
Saboteur	Plans. Blows up wagons from inside.

As they evolve, detection signs decay. The eye test that worked on day 10 is worthless on day 60. There is always a clue; it is just never clean.

RADIO — AGENT K-07 • EARLY GAME

“Eyes. Look at the eyes. That’s where you’ll know.”

BROADCAST — SOURCE UNVERIFIED • LATE GAME

“All clear on my line. Come in. Come in.”

The Iron Winter: staying still is death.

The frozen world

The apocalypse did not come in a single night. As temperatures fell, the cities went silent one by one and the seas turned to ice from their shores inward. But the cold was not the true catastrophe; the transformation that came with it was. These are not risen dead: the cold broke the minds of the living, and some of them began to learn. Humanity learned one truth: staying still is death. The State kept the continental railway alive; trains became homes, farms, laboratories and workshops. The stations became the frozen tombs of the old world.

Who you are

To anyone watching, you're an ordinary train captain: hauling goods, picking up passengers, surviving like everyone else. In reality you're a covert agent of the State, trained as a scientist in the Center's laboratories, one of only 5–10 agents left in the field. Your identity can never be revealed. The agent count shrinks as the game goes on; you hear it on the radio, one silence at a time.

The mission: 10 immune, 100 days

The Center's directive is precise: somewhere along these lines live people with natural immunity, the last hope of the vaccine program. The train has only six rooms, so the goal is cumulative: you deliver the immune in batches at State stations, and each delivery raises the counter.

FOUR ENDINGS

Patient Zero

Good ending. Deliver the 10 immune and the vaccine program begins. The tone shifts with how many you delivered: full triumph or a thin, costly hope.

Death

The cold, the hunger, or the wrong human. If you die, the mission dies with you. There is no second agent.

The Explosion

The boiler wears down. Wagon blasts cost you wagons and people; the boiler blast costs you the game.

Day 100

The clock runs out and the radio goes silent. The Center closes the line. You survive, but the world doesn't.

Unreal Engine 5. One developer. Scope kept small on purpose.

WHY THIS SCOPE WORKS

The game lives in one corridor

The main gameplay lives inside one train: three wagons, six rooms, one corridor. Design and atmosphere carry the game, not heavy system code.

Levels are handmade

10 base stations, ~5 handmade copy variants of each: about 50 levels. No procedural generation code; every variant can be tested by hand. The game loads a random variant per visit.

Fun first, then everything else

Only the night loop is prototyped first: 5–6 passengers, a few nights. If it's fun, everything else stacks on top. If it isn't, no other system will save the game.

EARLY ACCESS — IN

- The train (3 wagons, 6 rooms) and night cycle
- Staged interrogation and immunity test
- Zombie evolution and wagon blasts
- Radio intelligence with fake clues
- Station raids, locks, loot
- State stations: hand-over, rewards, demands
- Ammo economy, four endings
- Snow plow and closing rails
- 10–20 stations, 100-day story

OUT FOR NOW

- Illegal goods and police inspections
- Deep stat systems
- Agent caches at stations
- Loop Mode (endless mode after the story)

TOOLS

Unreal Engine 5

First person, solo developer, PC. All design, code and level work done in one pair of hands.

I've shipped before.

Backrooms Manager — Together

STEAM • EARLY ACCESS • NYXTAILS STUDIO

A co-op survival logistics game for up to six players. Trapped in the yellow corridors of the Backrooms, you work off a 49-day contract for a company called Z.O.L. Every bullet, every death and every damaged cargo is deducted from the team's balance; if the balance is negative at the audit every three days, your exit rights are revoked.

- Procedurally generated corridors, multiplayer play
- An economy where money becomes pressure
- Live on Steam as an Early Access title

Village of the Mirror

NYXTAILS STUDIO

An earlier horror project from the same developer, one of the games where I practiced atmosphere, pacing and single-player horror design before Iron Winter.

- Independent, solo-developer production
- Focused on horror atmosphere

The common thread: in both games, resources turn into pressure: balance and debt in Backrooms, ammo, coal and time in Iron Winter. Iron Winter takes that idea out of multiplayer chaos and into a quiet, single-player paranoia.

What \$1,000 buys.

The development time is my own; the money goes only to things I have to buy from outside. Every line is tied to something that directly affects how the game looks and sounds.



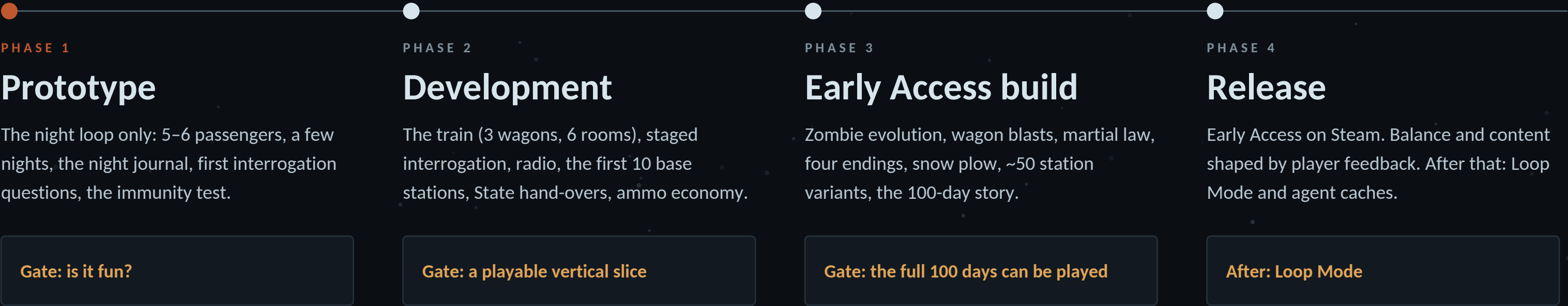
WHY NOW

The design document (v2) is done and the scope is locked. What's missing is the sound and look of the prototype: making the night loop convincing enough to show to someone else.

This budget is enough to ship the prototype and a first trailer, not the whole game. I'm keeping it small on purpose: the fun test comes first, and a bigger ask can be discussed after it.

\$1,000

Prototype → development → release.



Each phase ends with a gate, not a calendar date. If a gate isn't passed, nothing gets spent on the next phase.

Stop moving and you die.