It Will Find You – Master Event System:

Goal: To create a system that could register all narrative and gameplay choices, and then trigger events accordingly.

Design Process:

One of the most important aspects of developing It Will Find You was to promote intra-diegetic immersion in the player, with the crux of this goal being formed around the reactive narrative system. By creating a narrative system that diegetically reacted to the players choices, without forcing dialogue options or immersion breaking UI interactions, the aim was to reduce the players awareness of playing the game, and make it feel more like they were a part of the game.

As systems development began, I wanted to create a solid foundation for It Will Find You's narrative systems that could be expanded on, over the course of building my out the game world, and that multiple scripts could reference with ease. This led to the creation of the Master Event System (MES), a script that was capable of recording player choices, events that had occurred, and then creating or starting sequential events.

The core of the MES was a simple bool list, which could be triggered by various scripts throughout the game when a choice was made, such as whether the car was crashed or not. The bool could then be referenced by other scripts when determining their behaviour allowing the narrative to react dynamically to the players choices and actions.

Figure 1 A dynamic event triggered by the MES

The MES could then prompt events that needed to occur next in the sequence, using a mixture of coroutines and external void commands to ensure everything ran concurrently.

A timer was created to work alongside the MES that would allow it to begin events based on how long the player had been in the game. This gave the narrative some autonomy, with the events not necessarily waiting for the player to have completed specific actions. Initially the timer began as the game loaded in, but as events like the monster spawning were linked to the system, it could lead to

issues like the creature spawning before the player even reached the house. To fix this, the script was modified to only begin once the player had entered the building, allowing more precise control.

As the game advanced, various systems were created to spawn their own events based on the state of the MES. One example of this is the police phone-call, which would only become available once the monster had been encountered, and specific criteria had been met. Several other event triggers operate in this manner, waiting for the MES to tell them they could begin or become active. This led to the perception of a more organically developing narrative that unfurls in tandem with the players actions, and the natural flow of time.