

RAPTURE

# LEVEL DESIGN CHALLENGE



## MERCURY REPOSITORY

JACK BROOKBY



# SYNOPSIS

This additional level takes place in between Farmers Market and Arcadia Revisited. Jack, the player character, is tasked with bringing back ingredients to create the Lazarus Vector and revive fauna which will return oxygen to Rapture. As the final ingredients are combined an explosion is heard, blocking Jack from returning to Arcadia and instead he is directed towards Mercury's Repository.

As Jack enters the new area he is greeted by a corridor with a malfunctioning door. Posters are seen on the corridor walls advertising 'Safe and Secure Storage with Mercury Repository. Sponsored by Jet Postal.'

As Jack uses his plasmid to fix the door and moves into the space Atlas talks through the radio:



***'Ah this place, part warehouse, part storage facility, where us yaps get sent bare essentials and the likes of Andrew Ryan keep all their worldly possessions from those political systems they so duly hate. Hypocrites...the lot of them. Would you kindly find a way back to Arcadia so we can finish this, once and for all...'***

The corridor leads into a grand reception. It is clear the space was a victim of the uprising in 1959 as where once stood grand pillars, rubble now lies blocking one of the two significant doors in the area. The blocked entrance labeled 'Vaults' shows clear signs that something has tried to get inside. The other side of the room has a door labeled 'Packing Warehouse' which is partly open with another smaller door labeled 'Security' seemingly broken.

Jack explores the area and moves to the packing warehouse. The space has a high ceiling and is full of Jet Postal crates and other smaller items that make navigating it like a maze. While pushing forward Jack comes across a new type of splicer, the shadow splicer. Jack faces off against the shadow splicer and gets to the end of the room. Another splicer stands above on a walkway and taunts Jack before running into a door.

Atlas talks through the radio:

***'Looks like a dead end matey. See if you can find your way up there somehow.'***

When exploring the space Jack notices what looks like open and bigger than previously seen pneumo tubes dotted around the room. They don't seem to be currently functioning. Jack uses the cyclone trap on the inside of the tube which shoots out a gust of air. This gust moves around some of the containers within the room. Using this plasmid, Jack manages to move around enough items where he can scale to the walkway and progress.

Jack finds himself in the Vaults, the previously blocked section, the splicer is nowhere to be seen. Here he finds storage rooms for many of the people he has heard about on his journey. Jack explores the accessible vaults, learning more about the characters of Rapture while defeating more shadow splicers. Finally Jack finds a destroyed wall leading to a corridor that takes him back to Arcadia.



# STRUCTURE

Mercury's Repository is a long forgotten storage facility that was built near the beginning of Andrew Ryan's Rapture project. Even before the supposed utopia turned to dystopia much of the facility had not been seen for quite some time. The level deals with key themes familiar to the series: hypocrisy, inequality and ego as well as displaying distinct aspects of Bioshock: exploration, horror, grand spaces and environmental storytelling. Alongside this, the level aims to add some elements rarely seen in Rapture, mainly more navigational verticality and simple environmental puzzles.

Mercury's Repository is split up into 3 distinct areas:

## **Reception**

After the player has been in more confined and less lavish spaces in the farmers market, this area acts as a reminder to the player just how extravagant and grandiose Rapture can be, even for what is essentially a storage warehouse. This area has no enemies and gives space for the player to understand where they are and to establish an atmosphere of uneasiness in its quiet grand facade.

## **Packaging Warehouse**

Jet Postals main hub for postal deliveries throughout Rapture, the packaging warehouse features pneumo tubes dotted around with pneumo lines previously only seen in the burial at sea dlc. The level allows for verticality in level design with freedom to craft spaces of different sizes from varied props. This space is designed to facilitate environmental puzzles and new splicers that wait in the shadows and attack up close. The player should feel intimidated by the height of their surroundings and the potential for attacks from any direction.

## **The Vaults**

This location is where the more prominent characters of rapture store their items from their past lives. The point of this is to comment on the hypocrisy of residents in Rapture who have shunned capitalism and other ideologies but have held on to what they gained from that time. It's an area built around rabid materialism, objects the characters can't let go of because of their intrinsic or extrinsic value. This level also gives a chance for the player to learn more about the characters showing their past lives and things they perhaps want to hide. The spaces are noticeably smaller than the previous packing room with more tight corridors and corners supporting the still existent horror atmosphere found in the level. .



# NEW MECHANICS

## **New Mechanic - Cyclone Jump**

A new way of using the existing plasmid Cyclone Trap, a plasmid that till now has been used to launch splicers up in the air, can now be used on fans located in Mercury's Repository. Depending on the location of the fan, the player can move items blocking their way or launch themselves in the air to navigate over obstacles. This allows for interesting puzzle elements in different spaces.



## **New Splicer - Shadow Splicer**

A variation on the spider slicer, this new splicer is introduced in Mercury Repository. Whereas the spider splicer is quite erratic with its movement, the shadow splicer likes to hide and wait for its prey in the shadows on walls and ceilings. They do not have ranged attack and rely on the player being in melee range where they then pounce. Ghost-like in their appearance, Shadow Splicers can only take damage when coming into light where they then appear physical. Players need to lure them out of the shadows by getting close and activating their attack. Once a shadow splicer attacks they charge the player, like a thug-gish splicer, until the player dies or they do.



LEVEL LAYOUT

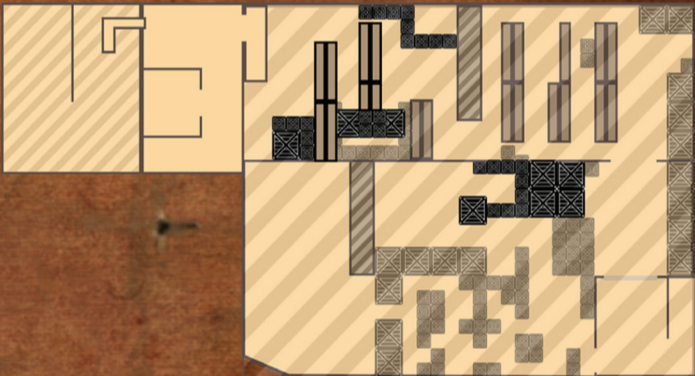
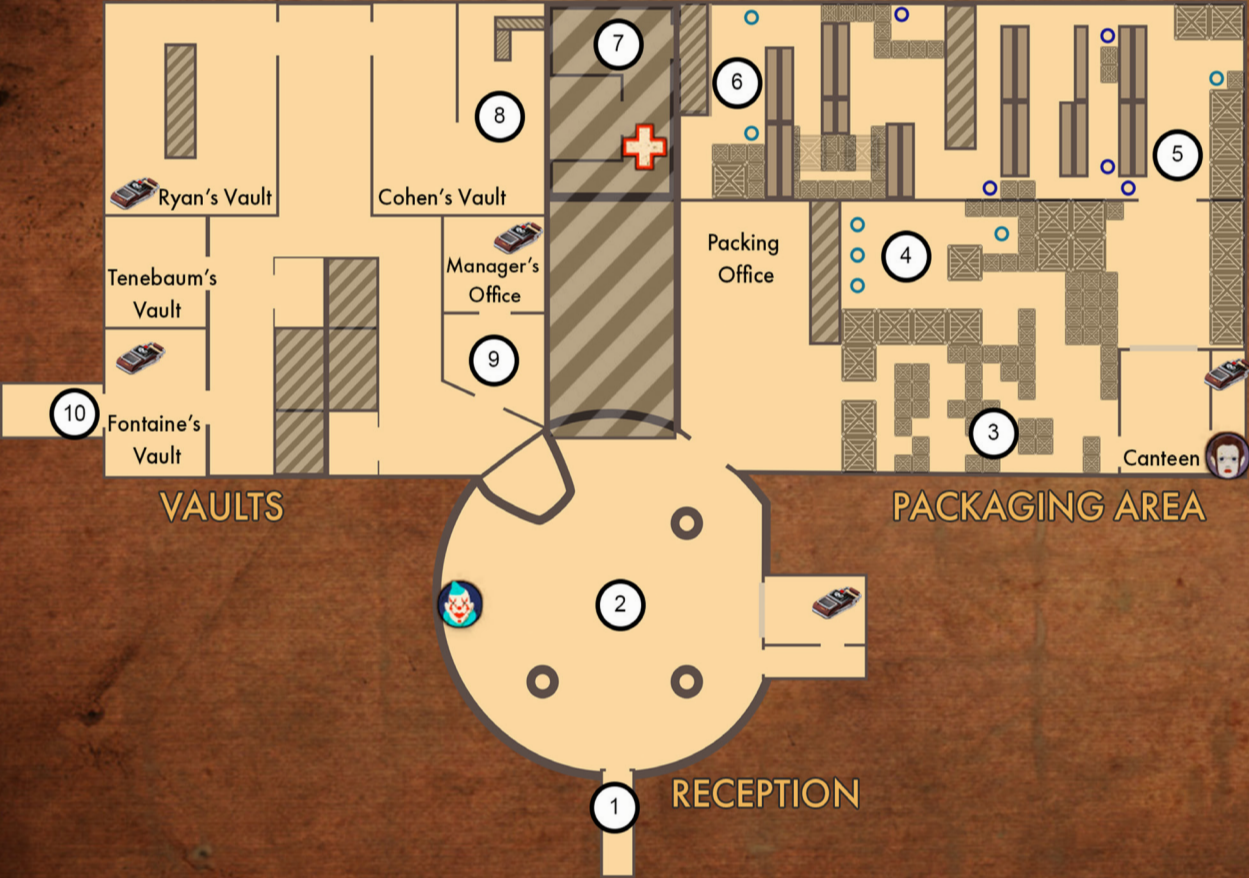
GOAL INFO

X

MERCURY'S REPOSITORY

SHOW HINT

Y



1ST FLOOR NAVIGATION



HEALTH STATION



GATHERER'S GARDEN



VENDING MACHINE



AUDIO BOOKS



VERTICAL PNEUMO TUBES



HORIZONTAL PNEUMO TUBES



# CORE GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

This includes only the critical path and skips any optional areas and encounters.

- 1 Jack progresses through the initial corridor leading into Mercury's Repository. Posters on the walls hint at the theming and function of the location. At the end of the corridor Jack fixes the door with his electric plasmid.
- 2 On the door opening Jack is greeted with a big open grand hall with a big statue in the centre of the room surrounded by pillars. One pillar has been destroyed and is blocking one of the doors within the room labeled vaults. As Jack progresses through the reception area, Atlas talks on the radio, describing the area and its past use. Jack proceeds through to the next open area.
- 3 Jack enters the packaging area, a room with high ceilings, and storage crates of varying sizes that create a maze for the player to navigate. Because of the structure of the room there is also a balance of light and dark areas. As Jack progresses through the atmospheric room he is gradually attacked by a group of shadow splicers that lie in wait for him and pounce. Jack must lure them into the light within the room to damage them and eventually kill them.
- 4 After defeating the shadow splicers Jack finds some big industrial sized pneumo tubes that are used to move big things around the packaging area. Dotted around this space are posters hinting at how you use the tubes, emphasizing the need for the cyclone trap plasmid. Jack works out he needs to use the ability to move the big box in the tube blocking his way and then proceeds to enter the tube and launch himself upwards too.
- 5 Once on top of some storage crates, Jack finds himself in the next area where he is faced with more shadow splicers and rows of shelving to navigate.
- 6 As he gets to the end of the area a splicer taunts him from a walkway above. Atlas tells Jack to find a way up there. As Jack explores the room he finds more pneumo tubes that allow him to climb vertically. He realizes he needs to push some boxes around the space using horizontal tubes to create a path to gain access to the walkway.
- 7 Once on the walkway Jack finds some offices and an open vent with splicer sounds coming through it.
- 8 Moving through the vent Jack suddenly falls down into Cohen's Vault where he fights off the splicer in a dimly lit room full of typical Cohen surprises.
- 9 Jack exits the vault and navigates to the manager's office where he can open the remaining vaults and explore freely, taking in additional stories from characters he has met on his journey.
- 10 When exploring Fontaines vault there seems to have been a secret rear entrance that has been exploded open. Jack uses this to escape the level.



## PUZZLE EXAMPLE - USING PNEUMO TUBES

An example of a medium complexity puzzle the pneumo tubes found within the level require the player to manipulate their environment to allow them to pass. This is rarely seen in Bioshock and also allows them to use an existing plasmid in a different way. The puzzle seen in the second packaging area requires players to use a vertical pneumo tube to scale up on top of the shelving. Once up there they navigate to an area where they can drop down and use a horizontal tube that pushes boxes nearer the walkway allowing them to then use another vertical tube to get on top.

## TOTAL DURATION OF CORE PATH 20 - 30 MINUTES

## ENEMY ENCOUNTERS

3 shadow splicers found in 1st packaging area

1 shadow splicer found in 2nd packaging area

1 spider splicer found in Cohens vault

2 thuggish splicers found in Fontaines vault.

