

Game Developers Conference®

February 28 - March 4, 2011
Moscone Center, San Francisco

www.GDConf.com

The logo for the Game Developers Conference (GDC) features the letters "GDC" in a large, bold, white font with a yellow and blue outline. To the right of the letters is a small, colorful cube icon with a white symbol on its face.

GDC



Keep it together

Encouraging cooperative behavior during co-op play

Who I am

Patrick Redding

Game director
Ubisoft Toronto



Untitled Splinter Cell

Splinter Cell: Conviction

Far Cry 2

Far Cry: Evolution

Far Cry: Instincts

001

Player cooperation

Photo by stillthedudeabides - <http://flic.kr/p/HmcxK>

Sunday, March 6, 2011

Player cooperation

(as opposed to
systemic cooperation)

Photo by stillthedudeabides - <http://flic.kr/p/HmcxK>



[Home](#) » [Blogs](#) » [JZW's blog](#)

Tahrir: The Game

Submitted by [JZW](#) on Fri, 02/11/2011 - 23:58.

I've been watchnig Al Jazeera and BBC live reports on Egypt for two weeks now. Have you? You should have.

I don't recall ever seeing a game about modern non-violent revolutions. I find it fairly amazing, considering the impact they have had in recent history.

Revolutions like the Egyptian one have been occurring all over the world for more than twenty years now. My own country had one when I was eight. It wasn't perfect, but there's no doubt that 1989 changed Europe for the better. Now Middle East is having their chance. Even if the Egyptian army never lets go of the power they have now, you can't make a few million people forget the kind of experience they've just had.

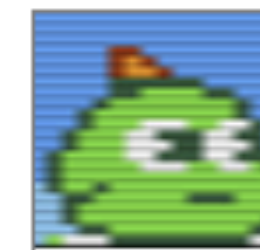
More importantly, it's a huge, untapped source of compelling gameplay. Modern non-violent revolutions are very dramatic, very to the point, have excellent pacing, and are a perfect example of assymetric struggle. You can interpret them as the state versus the people, or dictatorship versus the republic. But their most important aspect is the struggle between centralised technologies of the industrial age and distributed technologies of the information



Your ad here, right
\$0.02

ONE FROM THE ARC

MR. GIMMICK



Instead
posting
imitatio
old-sch
platform
how's 'bout I give yo

*[playthisthing.com/
tahrir-game](http://playthisthing.com/tahrir-game)*



‘A Force More Powerful’ (2009)

York Zimmerman



Photo by Al Jazeera English - <http://flic.kr/p/9fwThP>



Photo by Steve Rhodes - <http://flic.kr/p/9e3WU6>

Sunday, March 6, 2011

A photograph of an indoor rock climbing scene. A person is climbing a grey rock wall with various colored holds (yellow, red, green, blue, purple). They are wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, black shorts, and blue and black sneakers. A belayer, seen from the back, is standing on the ground wearing a light blue t-shirt with a red silhouette logo. The climbing rope is red and blue. The background is a textured rock wall.

Negotiated actions reinforce
social interaction


Photo by Cameron Cassan - <http://flic.kr/p/8Tbi9i>



Players become invested in the
success of collaborative partners

Photo by vtbrak - <http://flic.kr/p/8RX4ui>




The background is a dark, pixelated game environment, likely from a survival or exploration game. It features a complex of stone or concrete structures, including a large, multi-story building with a glowing orange light on its upper floor. There are various smaller structures, some with blue roofs, and a network of paths or roads. A white crosshair is centered in the lower-middle part of the image. The overall atmosphere is dark and mysterious.

Players respond to collective agency
at work in the game space

An aerial night photograph of a city, likely New York City, showing a grid of streets and illuminated buildings. A large white plus sign is centered on the image, marking a specific location in the city. The text "shared intentionality" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

shared intentionality

A low-angle, upward-looking shot of a soldier in full tactical gear, including a helmet and a vest with pouches. The soldier is positioned on the right side of the frame, reaching upwards. The background is a dark, cloudy sky. A red laser pointer beam is visible in the upper left, and two bright green night vision lights are visible near the soldier's head. The overall mood is dramatic and intense.

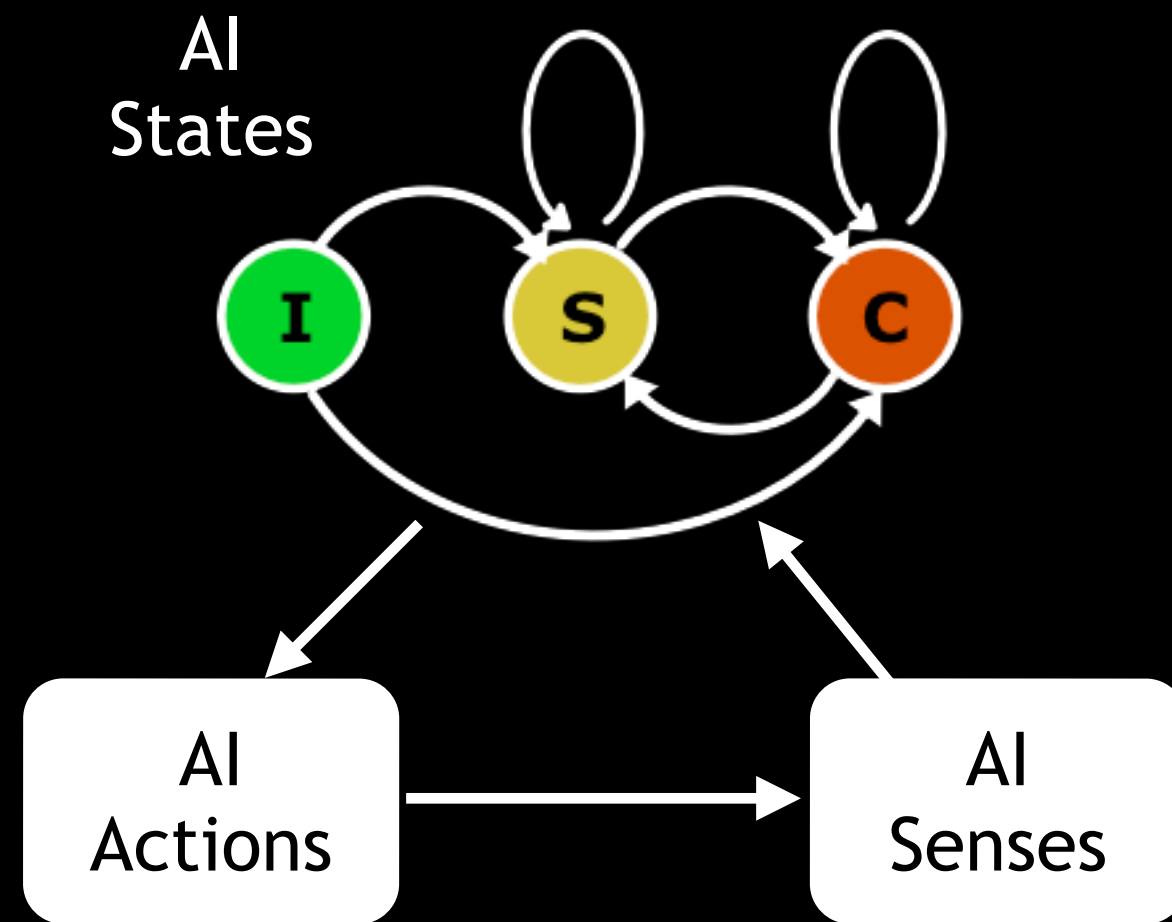
Why do players
cooperate?

Players will work together
to optimize system output

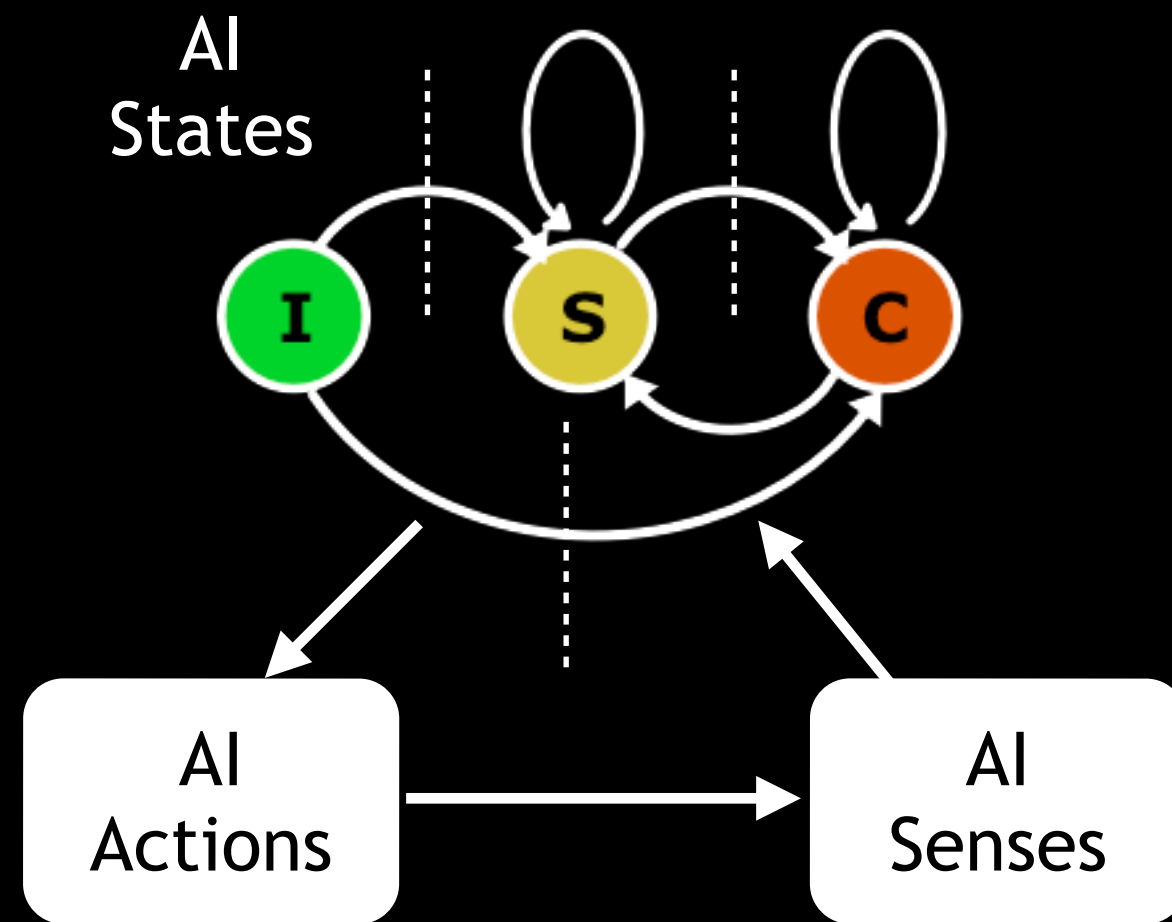
Detection model

Two-player stealth
is fragile

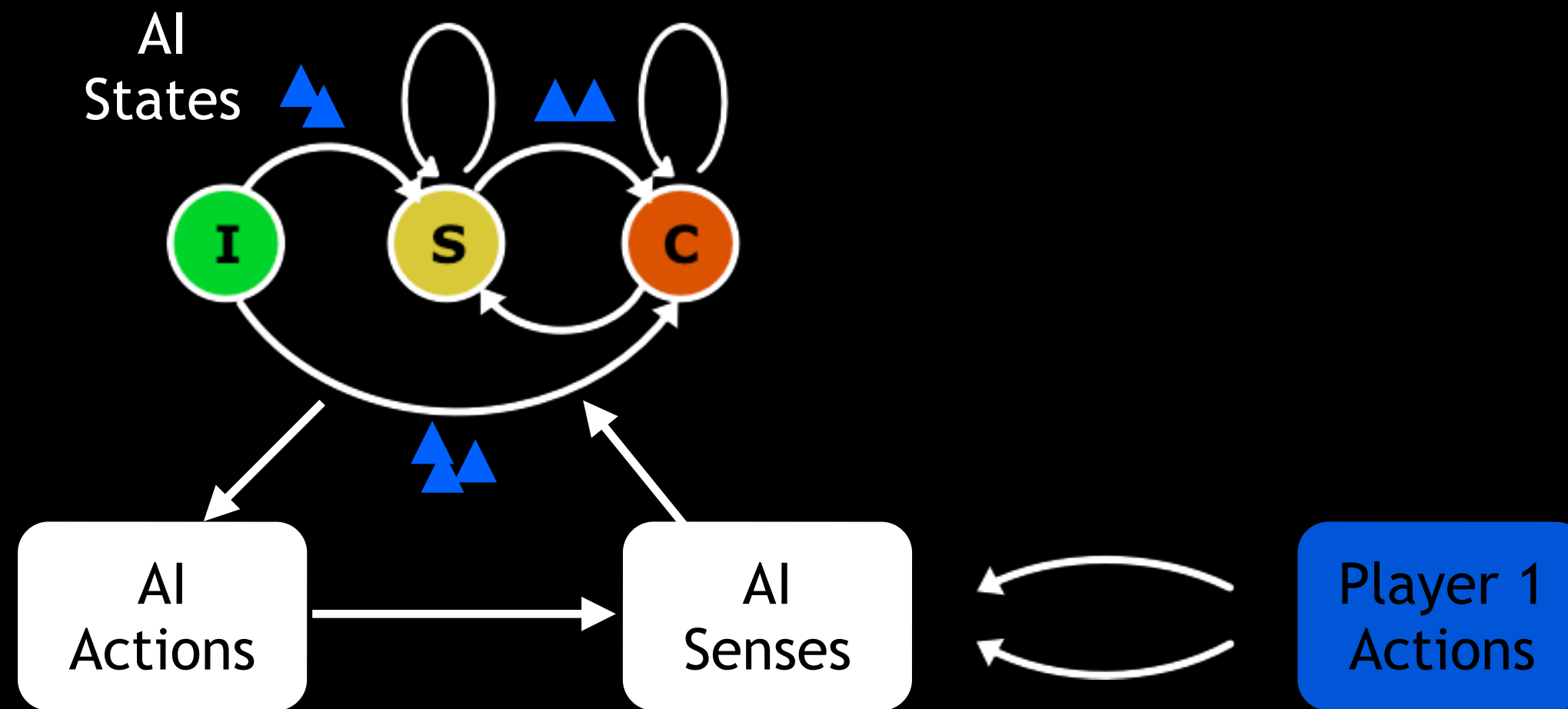
Detection model



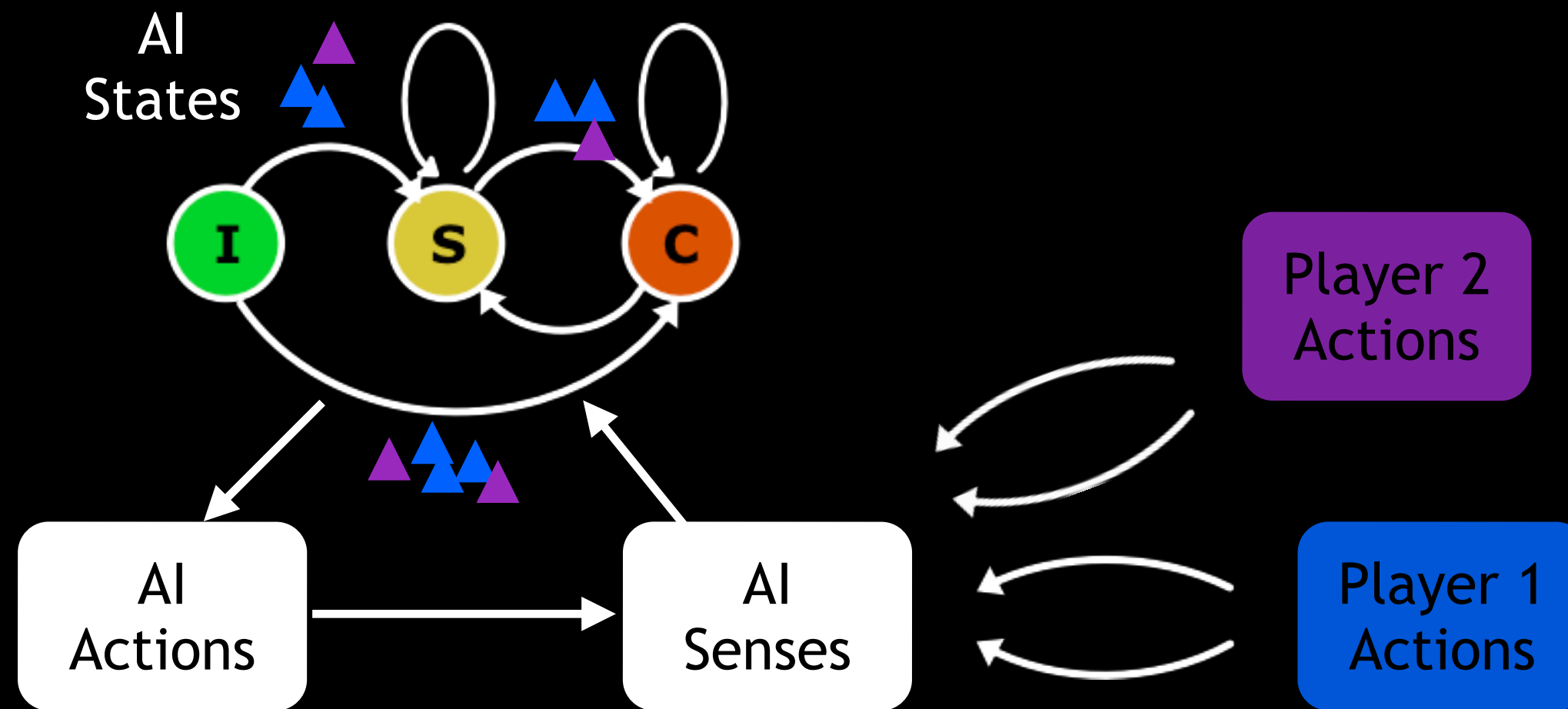
Detection model



Detection model



Detection model

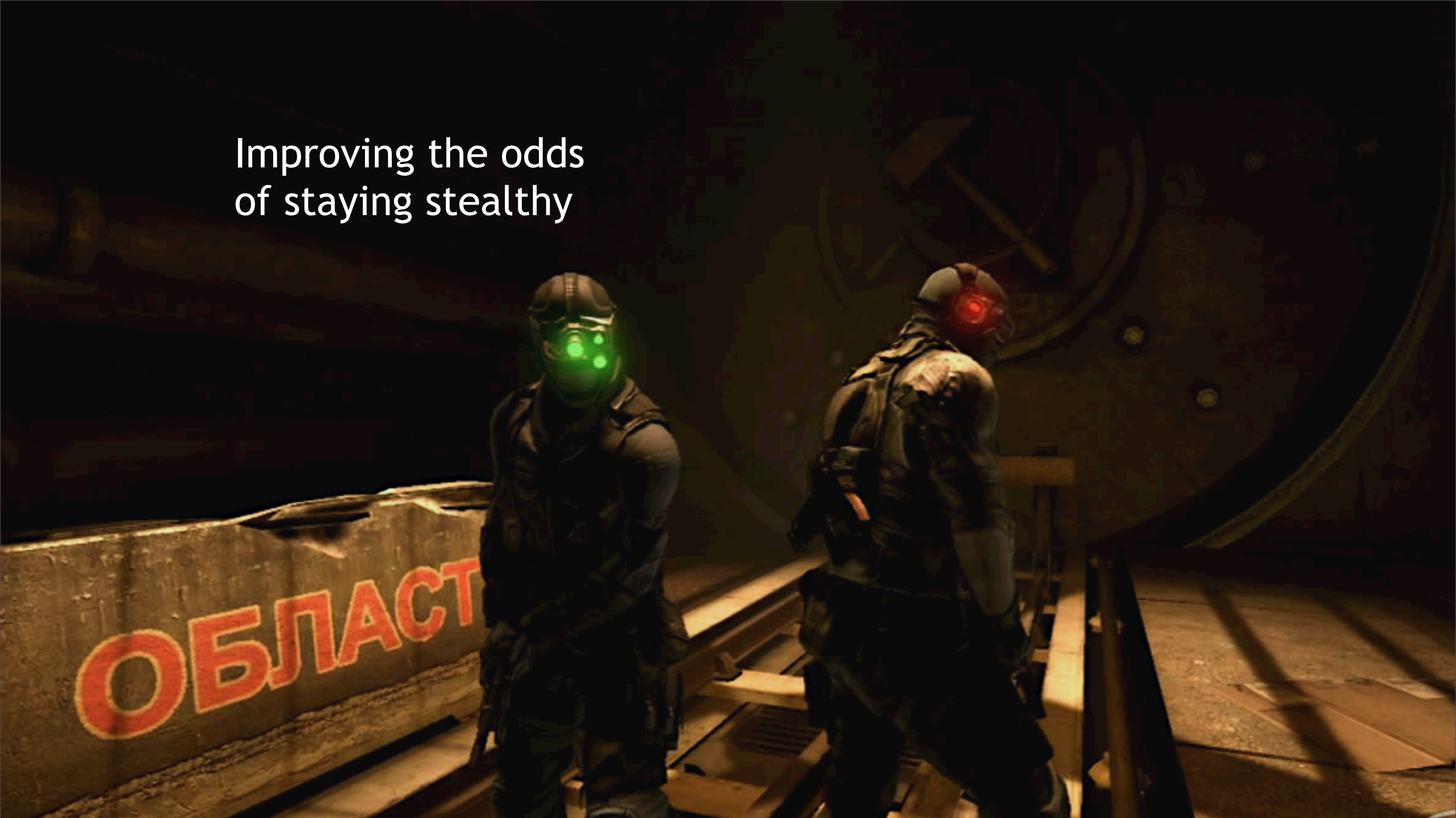


Detection model



2x the players \neq 2x the chances for detection

Improving the odds
of staying stealthy



Shared intentionality promotes
individual **self-expression**

Self-expression

High-level

Develop strategies

Self-expression

High-level

Develop strategies

Mid-level

Create plans

Self-expression

High-level Develop strategies

Mid-level Create plans

Low-level Make risky choices

Self-expression

High-level	Develop strategies
Mid-level	Create plans
Low-level	Make risky choices
Mastery	Explore optional paths

Self-expression

Players derive satisfaction from
meaningful cooperation

Meaningful in the sense that it is

Serious, important or useful to the
player's success in the game

Meaningful in the sense that it is

Serious, important or useful to the
player's success in the game

But *also*

Has a recognizable function in the
logic of the game systems

Formal design tools

Formal design tools

Looking for tools that
are genre-agnostic

Formal design tools

Looking for tools that
are genre-agnostic

Looking for tools that
are systemic

Cooperative dynamics

Enabling cooperation
through the game
dynamics

“dynamics”

Dynamics in the MDA sense:

The run-time behavior of the mechanics acting on player inputs and each other's outputs over time.

(2004, Hunicke, Leblanc and Zubek, 8kindsoffun.com)

“dynamics”

Dynamics are what deliver the
final game experience:

Cooperation, meaningful
or otherwise

“dynamics”

Gating/tethering

Exotic challenges

Punitive systems

Buffing systems

Asymmetric abilities

Combined actions

Survival/attrition

“dynamics”

Gating/tethering

Exotic challenges

Punitive systems

Buffing systems

Asymmetric abilities

Combined actions

Survival/attrition

Prescriptive



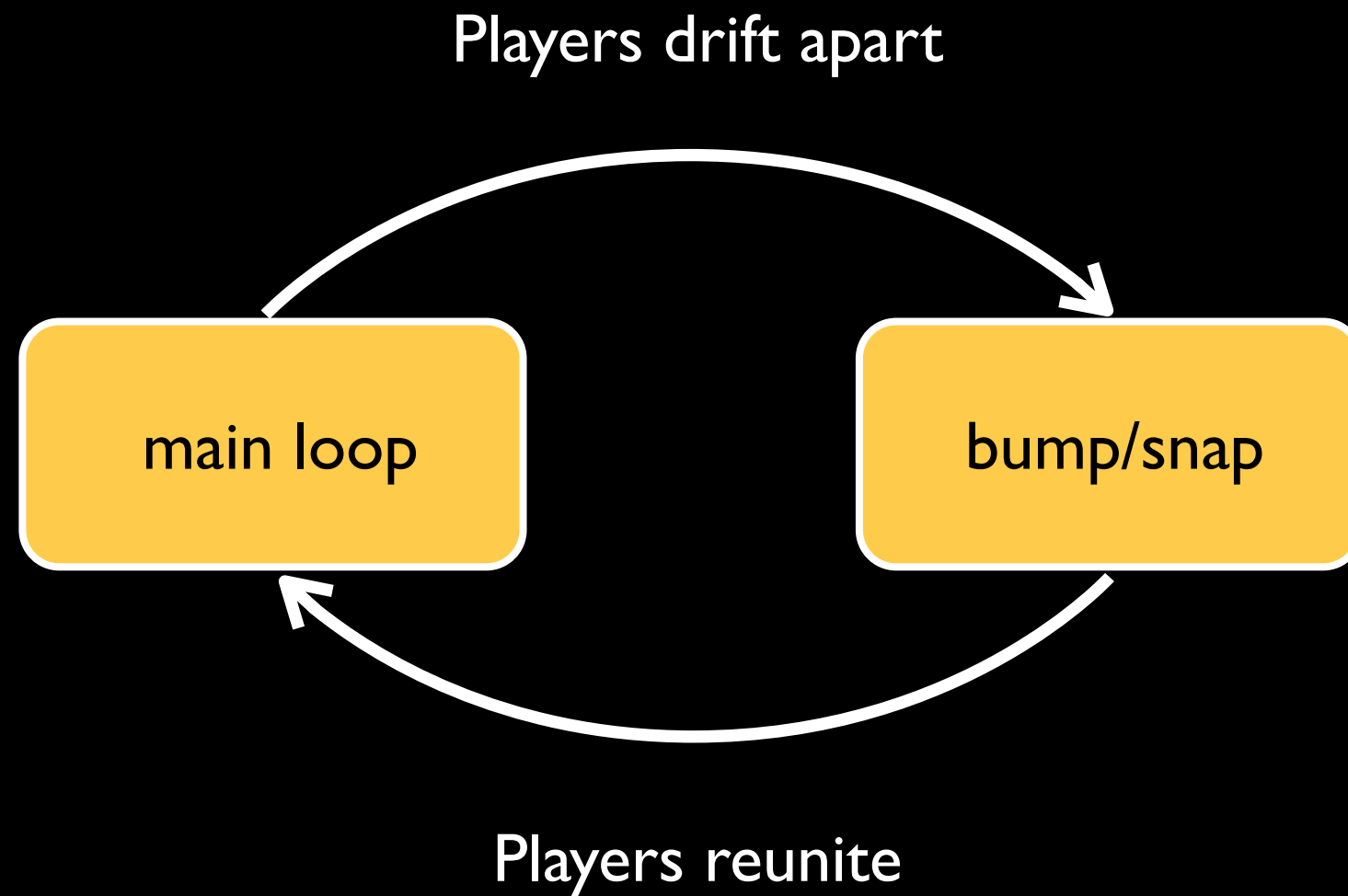
Voluntary



Gating/
tethering

No player proceeds until
all players proceed

**Gating/
tethering**



No player proceeds until
all players proceed

**Gating/
tethering**

Very prescriptive

**Gating/
tethering**

Very prescriptive

Straggler-centric

**Gating/
tethering**

Very prescriptive

Straggler-centric

OR sprinter-centric

**Gating/
tethering**

Very prescriptive

Straggler-centric

OR sprinter-centric

Tricks to conceal what is just an
invisible wall/leash

**Gating/
tethering**



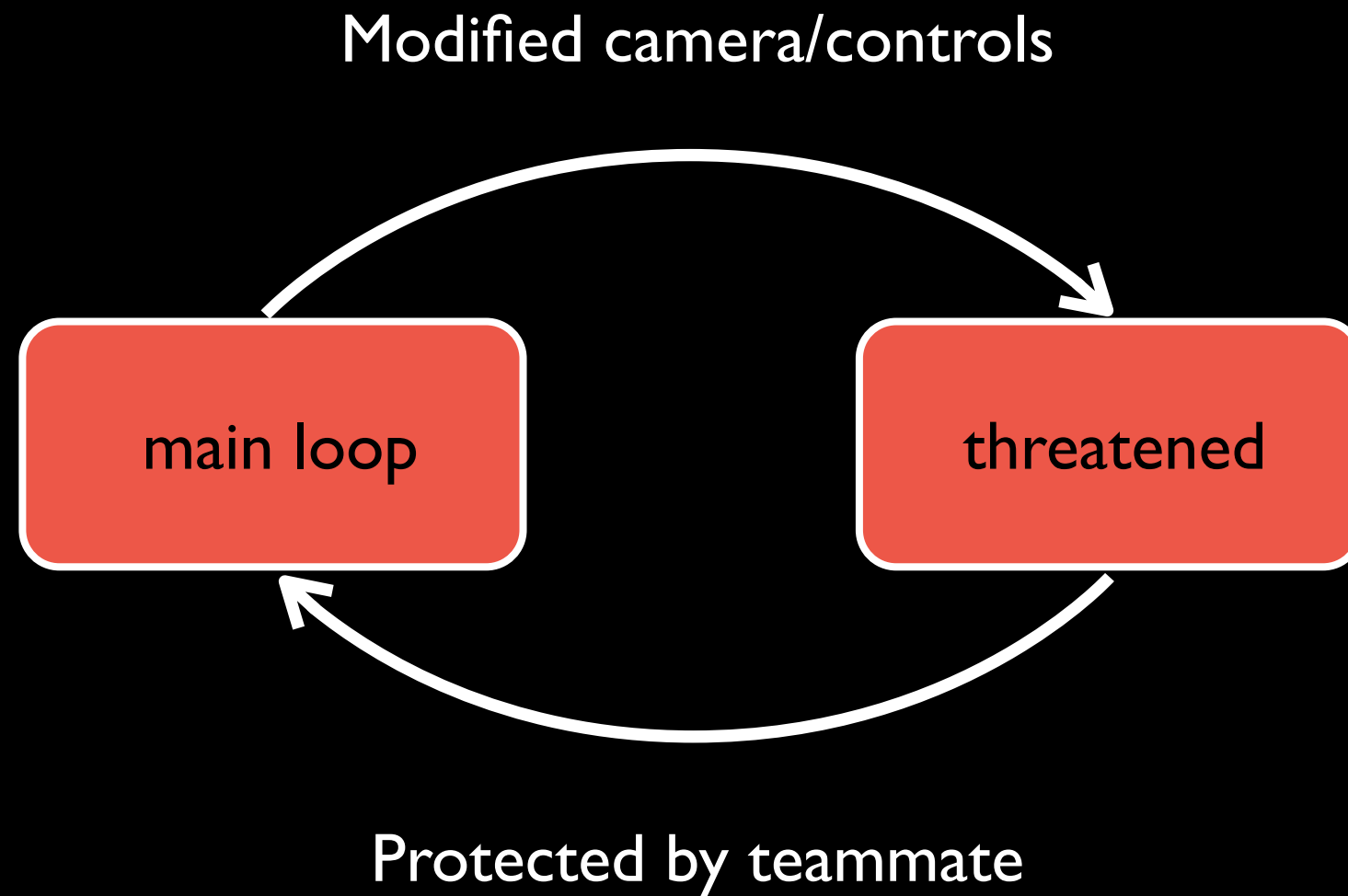




Exotic
challenges

Altered camera/controls
for some of the players

**Exotic
challenges**



Altered camera/controls
for some of the players

**Exotic
challenges**

Moderately coercive

**Exotic
challenges**

Moderately coercive

Risks associated with playing
separately grow sharply over time

**Exotic
challenges**

Moderately coercive

Risks associated with playing
separately grow sharply over time

More than one player needed to
avert trouble

**Exotic
challenges**





HACKING PROGRESS

63

HACKING 0m

EXECUTE

01

17

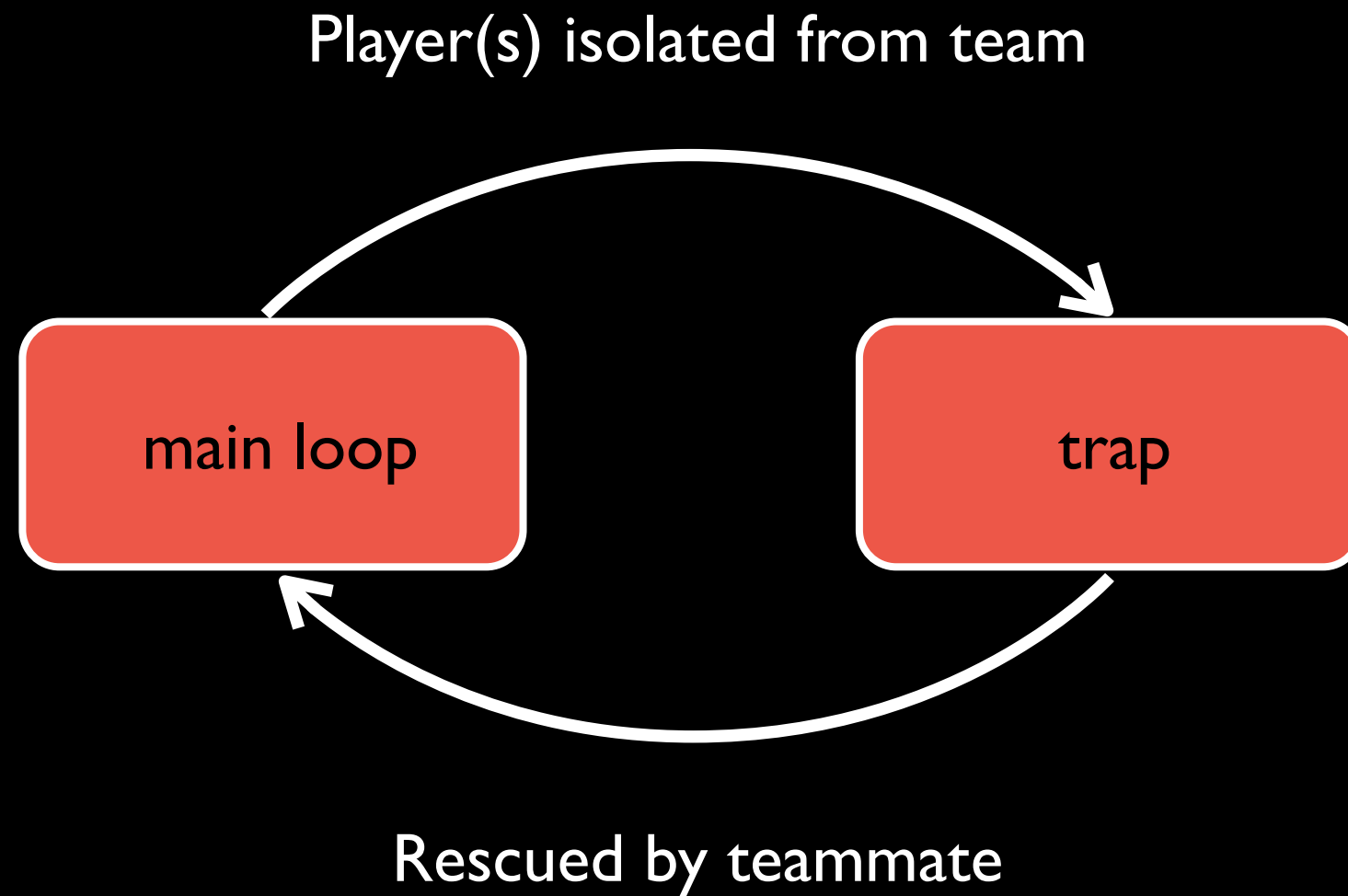
STICKY CAMERA



**Punitive
systems**

One player is trapped

**Punitive
systems**



One player is trapped

**Punitive
systems**

Requires rescue by another player
to survive

**Punitive
systems**

Requires rescue by another player
to survive

Negative feedback for everyone

**Punitive
systems**

Requires rescue by another player
to survive

Negative feedback for everyone

Can be avoided

**Punitive
systems**



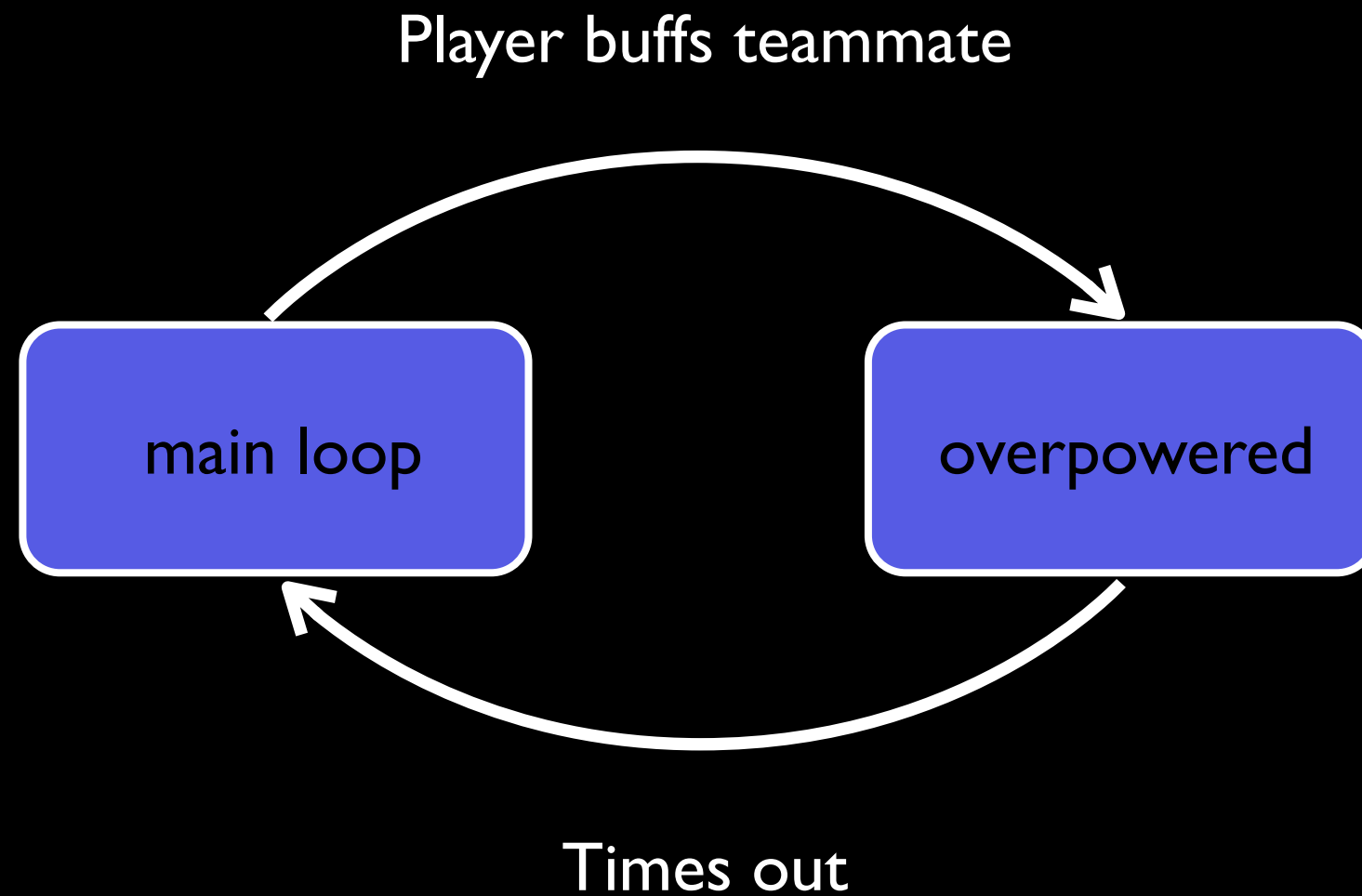




Buffing
systems

One player makes another
mechanically more
powerful

**Buffing
systems**



One player makes another
mechanically more
powerful

Buffing systems

Could be passive or intentional

**Buffing
systems**

Could be passive or intentional

Benefits are conditional,
temporary

**Buffing
systems**

Could be passive or intentional

Benefits are conditional,
temporary

Voluntary

**Buffing
systems**

Could be passive or intentional

Benefits are conditional,
temporary

Voluntary

Players can choose whether or
not to opt in

**Buffing
systems**



BODY COUNT

SALEM



024

RIOS

029



86



ADVANCE



6
207



FEIGN DEATH

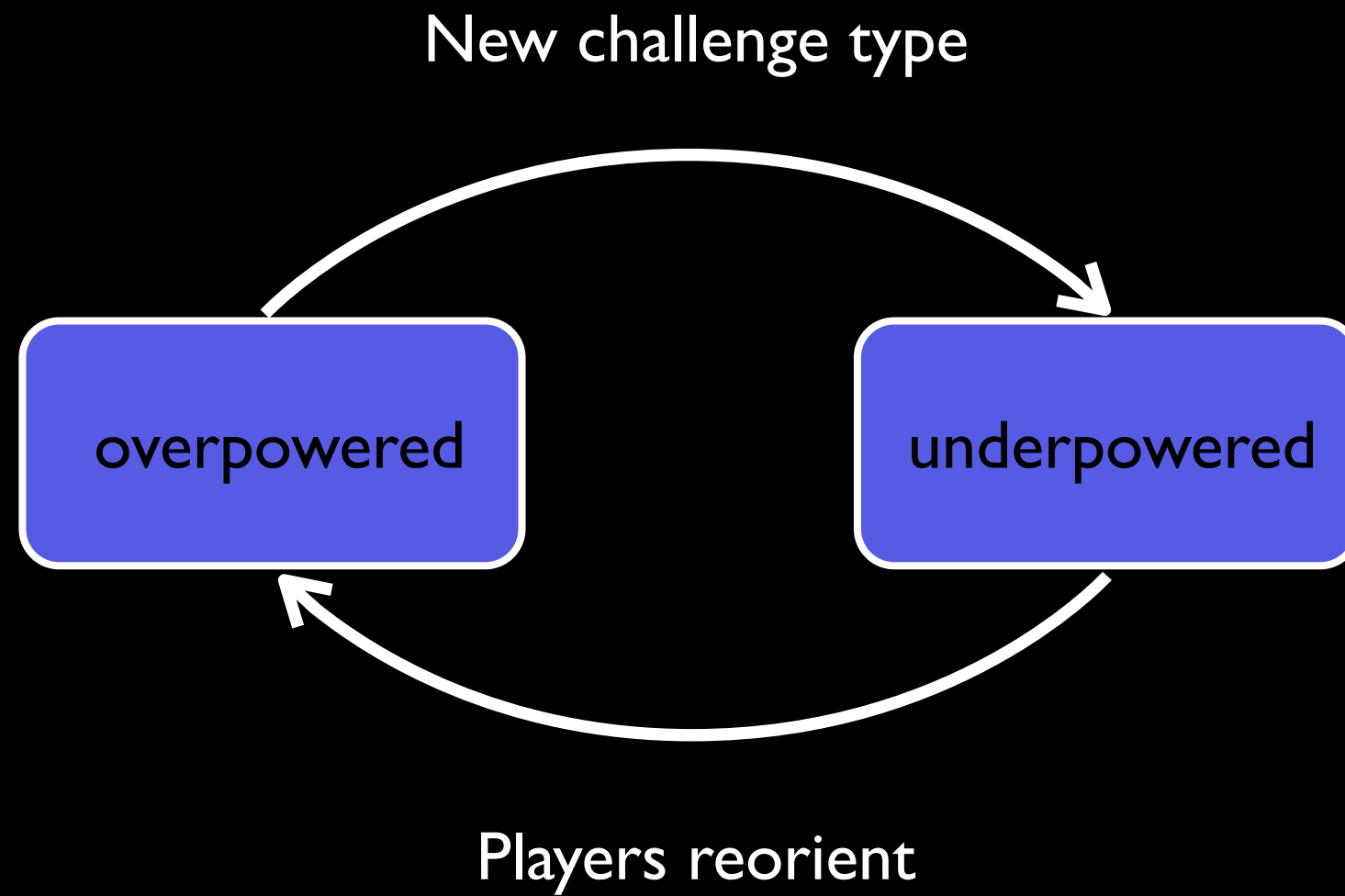




Asymmetric
abilities

Players have different
sets of game actions

**Asymmetric
abilities**



Players have different
sets of game actions

**Asymmetric
abilities**

Might be orthogonal classes or
customization system

**Asymmetric
abilities**

Might be orthogonal classes or
customization system

Players can't max out

**Asymmetric
abilities**

Might be orthogonal classes or
customization system

Players can't max out

Players free to progress
individually with the available
mechanics

**Asymmetric
abilities**

Might be orthogonal classes or
customization system

Players can't max out

Players free to progress
individually with the available
mechanics

Strengths/weaknesses suggest
mutual support play

**Asymmetric
abilities**



SHOTGUNS

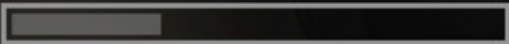
SPAS-12 SUPPRESSOR SHOTGUN

TOM CLANCY'S
SPLINTER CELL
CONVICTION

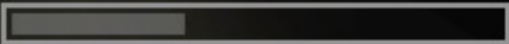
POWER



RANGE



ACCURACY



MARKS >>>

MAGAZINE SIZE 8

The SPAS-12 suppressor shotgun offers semi-automatic fire power, which can be used to cover medium to far ranges with pellets.

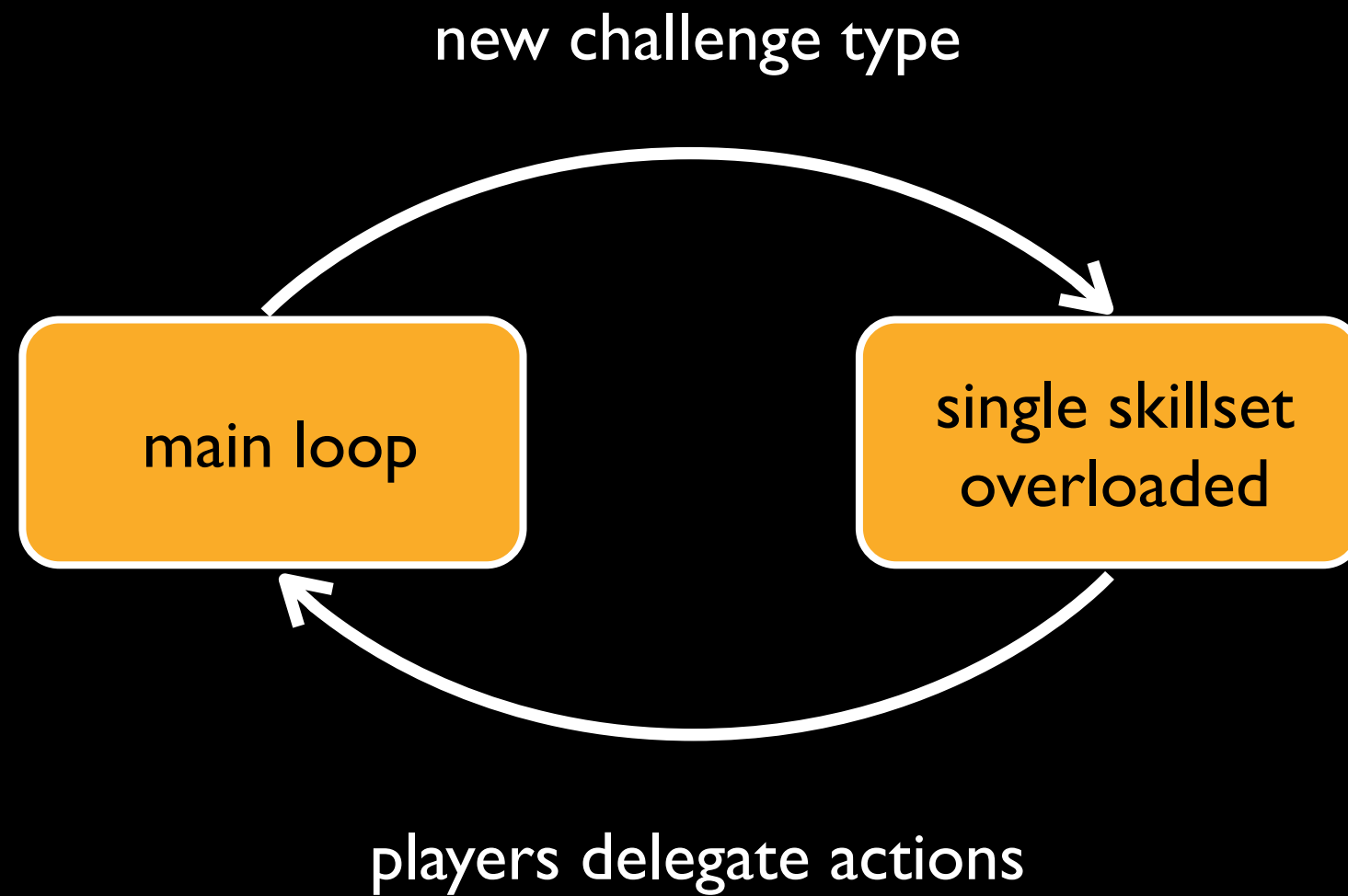




Combined
actions

Players need to apply
more than one skillset at
the same time

**Combined
actions**



Players need to apply
more than one skillset at
the same time

**Combined
actions**

Any game challenge attacks a
discrete set of **player skills**:

**Combined
actions**

Any game challenge attacks a
discrete set of **player skills**:

*Precision, timing, measurement,
management, tactical choice,
strategy, puzzle-solving*

**Combined
actions**

Any game challenge attacks a discrete set of **player skills**:

Precision, timing, measurement, management, tactical choice, strategy, puzzle-solving

Player-directed

**Combined
actions**

Any game challenge attacks a discrete set of **player skills**:

Precision, timing, measurement, management, tactical choice, strategy, puzzle-solving

Player-directed

The hard part is identifying the compound challenges

**Combined
actions**

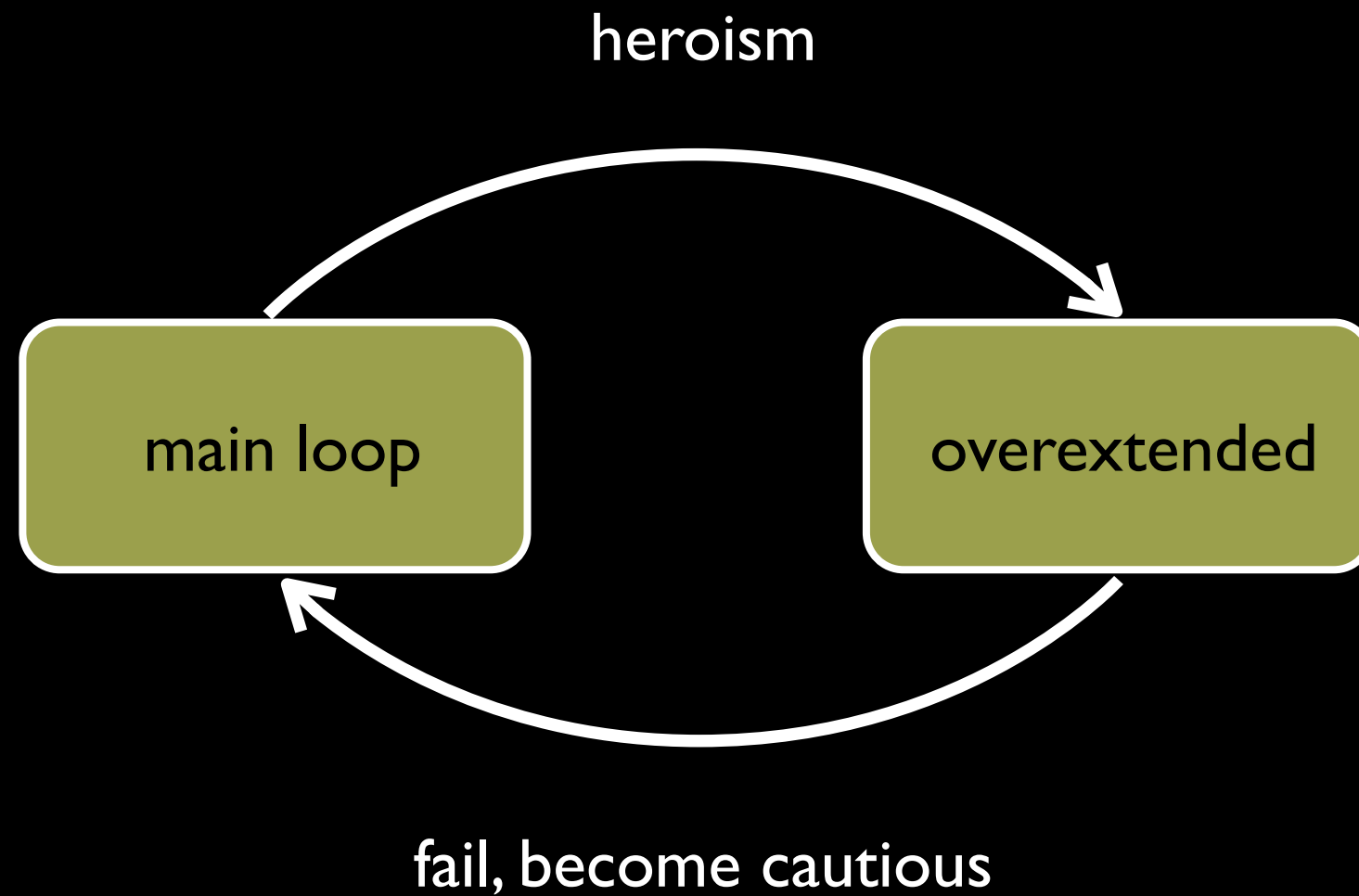






Play continues for as long
as 1+ players survive

**Survival/
attrition**



Play continues for as long
as 1+ players survive

**Survival/
attrition**

Many survivors possible, but
casualties are perma-dead

**Survival/
attrition**

Many survivors possible, but
casualties are perma-dead

Survival guarantees a share in
the collective victory

**Survival/
attrition**

Many survivors possible, but
casualties are perma-dead

Survival guarantees a share in
the collective victory

The MVP is an outlier

**Survival/
attrition**

Many survivors possible, but
casualties are perma-dead

Survival guarantees a share in
the collective victory

The MVP is an outlier

Players weigh risk/rewards

**Survival/
attrition**



Rebel
SGT Getz(BI)

10 Targets

42:10

SGT Getz(BI)

sharpe(B2)

SAM(B3)

005

89

NW | N | NE



Lessons learned

Players used shared marks more intentionally

«»»» [E] ЛИКВИДИРОВАТЬ
00 04
ПЕРЕНОСНОЕ ЭМИ

Lessons learned

Drama emerged from
punitive dynamics

«»»» [E] ЛИКВИДИРОВАТЬ
00 04
ПЕРЕНОСНОЕ ЭМИ

Lessons learned

Exotic moments exposed
the limits of interactivity

«»»» [E] ЛИКВИДИРОВАТЬ
00 04
ПЕРЕНОСНОЕ ЭМИ

Lessons learned

High-level plot was not as important as low-level character events

«»»» [E] ЛИКВИДИРОВАТЬ
00 04
ПЕРЕНОСНОЕ ЗМИ

Best practices

Don't pour production
values into prescriptive
systems

Best practices

Give the players tools
for mutual support

Best practices

Design game ingredients
first for legibility, then
for beauty

Best practices

Trust that groups of
players will naturally
improvise solutions to
hard problems

Further investigation

Level design (aesthetic)
strategies

Further investigation

Requirements for
presentation design

Further investigation

Tools for communication
and coordination

Q&A

