

LILY

SEUNG-MI

WESLEY

NUMBER THREE BIBLE



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THE FILM

Branded to Kill is a 1967 Japanese montage of action, slap-stick comedy, and erotic scenes that follow the third-ranked hitman Goro Hanada after he accidentally kills a civilian during a mission. With a bounty now over his head, Goro becomes prey to the first-ranked hitman, Number One whose methods target the mind.

THE GAME

Number Three is a mission-oriented, third-person narrative noir game that retells and builds upon the plot of *Branded to Kill*. It takes inspiration from games like *Grand Theft Auto*, *Detroit Become Human*, and *Genesis Noir*. *Number Three*'s genre will follow its architect, making use of dialogue and mini-games to reveal new story beats.

Though *Branded to Kill* was shot from Goro's perspective, *Number Three*'s gameplay will switch the focus to Number One, who is ordered to eliminate Goro after his mission fails.

The game's intended audience are fans of games like *Bandersnatch*, which use gameplay, repetition, and imagery to portray aspects of human psychology. The game will be available to play on PC and game consoles like Xbox and Playstation. Its revenue model is transactional; players can download the game after an initial payment.

THE WHY

Number Three will explore the concept of obsession and uncover its most defining characteristics: where it stems from, the different forms it takes, how it affects people, how it shows itself through people, etc. *Number Three* will additionally demonstrate the power imbalance between those who fear and those who inflict fear, with obsession making its ties into the dynamic.

The player will control Number One both in and out of his missions, getting to experience firsthand his view of the narrative— something *Branded to Kill* excludes.

INTRODUCTION

OBSESSION

Number Three focuses mainly on the theme of obsession. Much like in *Branded to Kill*, all the characters in *Number Three* share one thing in common— they are unusually fixated, obsessed, with a specific item or idea. Mami is obsessed with sex, Misako with the danse macabre, Goro with... sniffing steamed rice. A character's desire to satisfy their obsession dictates their course of action and, to some extent, their entire persona. Often, the character is left blind-sighted and, as a result, predictable.

Number Three's gameplay mechanics and narrative content are mostly driven by Number One's obsession with power. But its gameplay also relies on exploiting other characters through their own obsessions, to the player's benefit.

FEAR

Fear is a tool used to control, to manipulate; as fear takes away confidence and moxie, it brings forth irrationality and uncertainty. Though Number One has access to a whole arsenal of guns and knives, fear is his most potent weapon. Seeing his victims break down and left vulnerable due to his well-crafted stage, impeccable timing, and meticulous attention to detail gives Number One a rare feeling of self-satisfaction, pleasuring his superiority complex.

Fear fuels Number One's obsession, acting as a motive to resort to his methods. So great is his obsession that the player's rubric for success in the game is not the efficiency of their kill but the trauma they inflict on their target beforehand.

As the story progresses, fear is especially highlighted through Goro and his compulsions as he finds himself at an ominous standstill with Number One.

POWER AND GREED

Number Three illustrates the imbalance between those who take away power and those who have their power taken away. But through its elaborate gameplay, *Number Three* also suggests that power puts people in a never-ending cycle of greed, always wanting more. The game's general progression and difficulty of levels go hand in hand with one another, and both will adapt to how well the player performs, in order to reflect the idea that Number One will never truly be satisfied with his work in his everlasting hunger for more power.

THE WORLD - THEMES

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is nothing short of a standard for a killer to keep their status or ranking, but it is also a measure of one's sanity and collectedness. The gameplay of *Number Three* demonstrates how fears and obsessions can bring out the worst in people and how these uncontrollable impulses can completely rid one's professionalism and grace.

"This is how Number One works; He teases you, tires you; Then he kills you."



THE WORLD - THEMES

YAKUZA & ANARCHY

In *Number Three*, there are no active forces of law. An underlying yet rampant presence of the yakuza in combination with the lack of police control breeds instability and vulnerability within the people of the city. Serving as the catalyst for organized crime, the absence of an effective government leaves people susceptible to fear and manipulation.

Unlike traditional stealth games, the player is not incentivized to remain undetected to avoid law enforcement that would protect the target or punish the player for their crimes. Instead, in this field of lawlessness, Number One attempts to avoid detection solely because he knows it will heighten the paranoia and fear of his prey.



GORO HANADA (TUTORIAL CHARACTER)

The third ranked hitman in all of Japan, Goro once held quite the reputation for getting the job done and flawlessly executing his assigned targets. But when Goro fumbles during a mission and accidentally kills an innocent bystander, he is marked for death by the underworld— more specifically, the number one killer— for his incompetence. Over time, Goro loses his initial calm and collected attitude, and he becomes increasingly paranoid and erratic as he is haunted by Number One.

NUMBER ONE (PLAYABLE CHARACTER)

As his name suggests, Number One is the most notorious killer in Japan. Number One is an extremely proud, yet power-obsessed man— in fact, he has an unhealthy tendency to play with his food. No one knows of Number One's identity or status, not even the people who commission him.

Number One took a certain interest in Goro long before he was given the order to kill him. The two met in one of Goro's past missions, and they formed a silent, yet mutual respect towards each other (however, Goro was unaware of who exactly he was working with). Though he considers Goro an equal to him, Number One's god complex remains perturbed; as such, a part of him refuses to accept that very notion.



THE WORLD - CHARACTERS

MISAKO NAKAJO

Misako is a mysterious woman who is fascinated by death. She works under Michihiko as a messenger between him and his clients— she is the one who relayed Michihiko's failed request to Goro. Despite his botched attempt, the two eventually fall in love, and Goro starts obsessing over Misako. Number One uses Misako as bait to break Goro's psyche and get inside his head.



MINOR CHARACTERS

Gihei Kasuga
Mami Hanada

MICHIHIKO YABUHARA

Michihiko is the most powerful yakuza boss and the main source of Number One's missions. He used to give Goro paid tasks as well, but want him dead after the incident. Though he is generally patient with his requests so long as they are fulfilled, Michihiko becomes increasingly frustrated as Number One defies his orders and stalls Goro's death for his own amusement.

The player won't be seeing Michihiko at any point of the game (with the exception of a certain ending). He will just be a voice coming from a phone or cassette tape.

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THE WORLD - CHARACTERS

The story of *Number Three* takes place in a late-1960s Japanese city that is corrupted by the yakuza. The world will be rendered with a black and white filter that darkens the atmosphere and pays homage to the visual identity of *Branded to Kill*.

In a general sense, the layout of the city has an impressive square at its center, surrounded by train lines leading to other towns. Within the square, there are smaller alleyways that are much more broken down—much like its governmental situation, the city attempts to hide its shortcomings.

Within the city, there are masses of NPCs going about their life and members of the yakuza brazenly walking the streets. The player passes through the crowd like a ghost, only engaging with their environment when it comes to gathering pertinent tools or information for subsequent missions.



THE WORLD - SETTING



After watching the news of a murder involving an innocent civilian, Number One receives a call from Michihiko, who informs him that the murder was due to Goro's blunder. Michihiko then tasks Number One with killing Goro, to which Number One replies by saying he still has a few more missions he must complete. (This will prompt the player to play a couple Missions, including a tutorial Mission.)

Once Number One finishes his remaining missions, an irritated Michihiko gives him another call, reminding him of his task. Number One thinks back to when he and Goro first met (a flashback cutscene plays, showing the event of their encounter). After reminiscing, Number One finally decides to eliminate Goro; however, once they actually come across each other, Number One chooses to temporarily spare Goro instead. This is because to Number One, Goro is a special case, an anomaly in his routine life— for the first and possibly only time in his life, Number One sees himself in someone. He loathes that he has an equal, but he is fascinated and curious at the same time. Number One's internal struggles cause him to constantly hesitate; consequently, Number One frequently harrows Goro in between missions but refuses to pull the trigger

Regardless of Number One's internal conflicts, an exhausted Goro decides to retaliate. (The outcome of this confrontation depends on the story path the player took based on their performance throughout the game.)

THE WORLD - PLOT ARCS

When the player is not in a mini-game referred to as a Mission, they are free to explore in an open world/sandbox of the city*. During Missions, the player is enclosed in a much smaller and limited space.

In order to fully embody the intended themes of Number Three there will be a scoring system during Missions in which players score points based on how much fear they inflict on their victims before successfully killing them.

*In order to maximize the amount of Fear points scored, the player must explore the city in between missions and collect information (through dialogue with NPCs, or interactions with the victim's whereabouts), as well as tools to use in a Mission.

Each Mission consists of three timed phases.

1. **Setup Phase:** The player sets up objects that can score Fear points. They must then find cover or a place to hide.
2. **Execution Phase:** The target arrives on the scene and interacts with the objects the player set up in the previous phase. This is where Fear points are awarded. A gauge will show how many Fear points have been accumulated. If the player is discovered by the target during the Execution Phase, it will be skipped entirely.
3. **Assassination Phase:** The player reveals themselves and interacts with the victim (unlocked dialogue give the option to score extra Fear points) before finishing them off. A small amount of Fear points are awarded right before the victim dies.

GAMEPLAY

[KNOWN EXCEPTIONS]

During certain levels (i.e, against other hitmen), the amount of Fear points gained right before the moment of the kill is taken into consideration; if the score is too low and fails to meet the threshold, the player gets killed and will have to restart the Mission. Conversely, if the score is high enough, the player will survive and as a result be able to progress.

During Hanada Missions, the Assassination Phase will be skipped and the target will not be killed. Instead, a story cutscene will ensue.

Different levels and eventually, different endings will trigger based on the player's total accumulated Fear points.



WITH UI*



WITHOUT UI*

GAMEPLAY

GAME INTRO

Number Three's gameplay begins with an introduction to Goro and Misako to set up the world's visual cues and rules. It will act as both the credits scene for the game and as a tutorial for players to learn how certain UI pertains to the game objective. The intended story moment plays as follows.

light rain falls as the scene begins

GORO [00:30:23]: What do you want?

MISATO [00:30:25]: There's a foreigner I want you to kill. I rented a room. You can shoot him from there. He usually takes a woman by the left arm.

rain pours

STORY MOMENT



You'll only see us for three seconds.

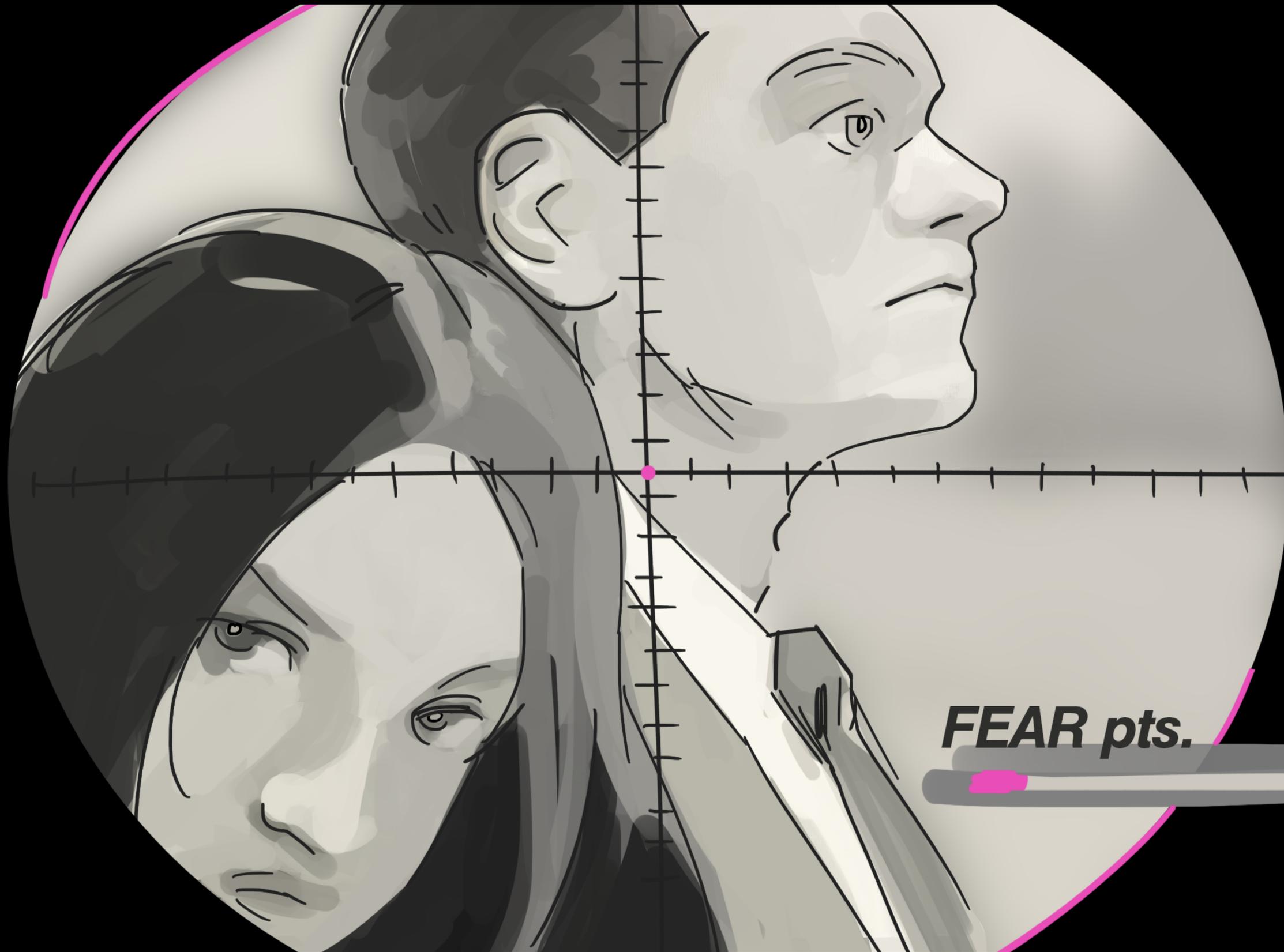
MISATO [00:30:55]: You'll have a fifth of a second to hit his heart, a two-inch target.

GORO [00:30:58]: That's *superhuman*.

MISATO [00:31:00]: I've heard you're like a god.

Misato and Goro's exchange from the film is displayed on screen for players. As they click through the dialogue, they are tasked with their first mission. They play as Goro in this introductory scene, who has been paid to kill a foreigner. The scene will proceed in first-person view; specifically, they play using Goro's vision through the barrel of his sniper. Although the rest of the game is played in third-person perspective, this introductory intends to demonstrate the "fear gauge" and timer user-interfaces to the player. The difference in perspective (in both how the game is played in first-person and through Goro's perspective) is to set apart this initial gameplay from the rest of *Number Three's* experience.

STORY MOMENT



FEAR pts.



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Players will try to kill the foreigner, but like Goro in the film, the player will misfire, killing a civilian. The actual gameplay will begin after a pan out of the failed mission through a televised report of the incident. Players will now proceed with the game from the perspective of Number One, who watches the report of the killed civilian.

STORY MOMENT