

The Virtual Victim

The Case

- Inspector Simba comes to Detective Dani with a strange case
- A game developer, Dave LeCompte has been killed in slightly unusual circumstances.
 - There footage(?) of the murder.
 - Last night, Dave was killed while participating in a stream of his hit VR battle royale game *Shattered World*.
 - The streamer, Nicole “Verge” Vergeson watched the murder in real time, then quickly shut down the stream.
 - They were playing with a third person, a friend of the streamer it seems (Josh Yang).

The Stream

- Nicole Vergeson welcomes everyone to the stream, announces they’ll be playing more shattered worlds with Dave and Josh.
- Jumps onto a quick video call with Dave (Josh is just audio). We see Dave sitting at their desk, says that at the end of the stream, they’ll be making an announcement about *Fangs and Fortune*, a new project people should be excited for!
 - Josh is not a professional streamer, their sound quality is not great, like they’re coming in on a phone.
- The game starts, and we see *Shattered World* from Verge’s perspective. It is an open, post-apocalyptic city-scape, Verge looks down, showing off their hands and avatar body.
 - Note: we no longer see the video call, and can only see Dave and Josh as virtual avatars in the game
- The trio plays together, their positions linked to each other so as they move to new locations they all stay together.
- Lots of normal banter. Josh is clearly the worst player, but doesn’t seem to mind. Verge and Dave get mad at them for a little bit for not paying attention, just running around
 - “I’m having fun! Gotta zig to put off the enemy,” says Josh.
- At one point, Dave’s avatar suddenly drops to its knees.
 - “Sorry, I tripped on something...”
 - We see his arms brushing the floor, eventually he gives up. “Ok, I’ll check when we’re done”
- Near the end, the avatar lunges forward, then turns around “who’s there?”
 - It raises its hands to protect its head “Ok, ok, stop!”
 - Head suddenly looks straight up. “What are you doing here? Woah, hey, we can talk about this! I know you think... wait let me mute...”
 - Hands flail about as if in an argument, protect head again. Then the avatar turns around “Sorry about that, just had to- Aaargh!”
 - The avatar slumps forward. Verge calls out a few times, then the stream ends.

The Crime Scene

- Dave was streaming from his penthouse apartment in the city. The door opens up to his large living room, in which his desk and VR space are front and centre.
 - To the right of the door is the entrance to the kitchen, and around behind his desk are the bedrooms, bathroom and second living area.
- The door to the apartment is open, with no signs of forced entry.
 - Searching the apartment finds a smashed window that leads to a fire escape. Further investigation shows that the glass has been pushed out, as if something or someone went out the window, not in.
 - The window was broken with a light end-table in the hallway nearby.
 - This was Josh, fleeing the killer after witnessing the murder.
- The desk is in disarray, though nothing obvious has been taken (plenty of expensive things remain, hard drives, etc).
 - On the stream, when watching footage of Dave speaking at his desk, a colourful hard drive can be seen on the desk, fairly prominently.
 - The searching was done by the killer, who was looking for the hard drive that had already been taken by Josh
- Dave's body can be found by his desk, a large kitchen knife embedded in his back.
 - The knife appears to have been taken from his own knifeblock.

THE VICTIM - Dave LeCompte

- Dave LeCompte was a video game developer. He runs a studio called *Fracture*.
 - Initial release was *Shattered World* which has taken the world by storm, LeCompte has made a lot of money fairly quickly.
 - **Hidden Fact:** This game was stolen from a rival developer, Emily Shade, when they worked together at previous employer “Gunpoint Games”
 - LeCompte released the game after leaving the company, and Shade couldn’t contest it as if she did, the game would be the property of Gunpoint
- He has been playing regularly with Verge and Yang to promote the game.
- After the success of *Shattered World*, none of *Fracture*’s other games have been very well received.
 - Dave was trying to develop these himself, but he’s not actually a good developer.
- His latest project was a mystery, but on the stream he announced he was going to lay out details for *Fangs and Fortune*.
 - This is a stolen copy of Shade’s *Vampire Communications Towards Full Unity*
- He also has a hard drive with a fortune in bitcoin, a fact only Verge and Yang know, as it came up in a pre-stream conversation.
 - Yang would not admit this fact, as it is what inspired him to try to pull off the heist on the day of the murder
- He founded *Fracture* with his co-founder Luke Hollomon.
 - Luke has a far better sense for the business side of things.
 - Is worried about Dave’s development schedules.

THE STREAMER - Nicole Verge

- Helped make *Shattered World* popular. Very much a gaming tastemaker
- Streams weekly with LeCompte and Yang
- Organises and runs the stream, Yang never has a camera, but also had to change out their mic for their phone.
- Likes Dave, thinks he's a charismatic guy, good for the stream (could play up a romantic angle for possible red herring motive, won't lead anywhere).
 - Great developer, and good with marketing
 - *Shattered World* was a bit of lightning in a bottle, other games haven't been as good.
 - Gets a bit of hate in the chat sometimes, seems like the same person even though they get banned every time.
 - Definite game development imitators, like Shade's attempt with *A Gun Fired by the Soul is Precious to Me*.
 - Invests well, has a hard drive full of bitcoin that must be worth millions.
- Thinks Josh Yang is a cool guy, but a bit unlucky
 - Not actually a streamer, runs his dad's small catering company.
 - Doesn't gel well with Dave. Maybe jealousy?
 - Isn't much of a gamer, but definitely better than he was playing last night.
 - Seemed shocked by the death, wasn't talking at the end of the stream.
- Suggests Emily Shade as someone who might know Dave
 - I think they worked together at some point.
 - Has some really interesting indie games, terrible for streaming because they're obtusely designed, but very cool.
 - Made a rip off of *Shattered World*, maybe that's why Dave doesn't like them much.
- Suggests Luke Hollomon as someone who might know Dave
 - Met up a few times to discuss stream etiquette, branding, etc.
 - Not many people know he exists, he works in Dave's shadow a lot.
 - Asked to be on the stream, but hasn't happened yet.
- Doesn't know the Nosy Neighbour Sarah Tofflemire
 - There is a super creepy chatter called "Righteous Lemon" who seems to be obsessed with Dave.
 - Talks about oddly specific stuff "Can you hear me?", "Want me to bring a drink up?"

THE FRIEND - Joshua Yang

- Old friends with Verge, joins in on the games occasionally.
 - Helps me out with money sometimes, but I don't like charity
 - Courts a little bit of drama, but generally a nice person.
- Works for his dad's catering company, not a huge amount of work.
- Has issues with class and money. Doesn't resent Verge's wealth too much as at least they give to charity and have a family to support. Joshua also supports his extended family.
 - Verge also gives great gifts (gizmos, gaming setups, a roomba, etc)
- On the day of the murder, Josh set up his VR headset on a roomba/broomstick, had a water bird hit the fire button
 - Knew about LeCompte's bitcoin hard drive from previous conversations pre-stream
 - On the stream, you can hear traffic sounds during one of his conversations
 - Catered a party at Dave's house last week to case joint, and made a copy of his key then.
 - Saw Dave putting away a hard drive when he was getting set up, assumed it was the bitcoin drive, but it was actually the recently stolen Vampire Drive
 - Dave said he had to get some urgent business done, which gave Josh the opportunity to copy the key.
 - Entered Dave's apartment in a dark hoodie, crawled across floor (was tripped on by Dave), took hard drive, then hid when Shade entered the room.
 - Saw Shade kill LeCompte, and fled out the window to avoid being discovered.
- Didn't get a good look at the killer, as they were also wearing a dark hoodie
 - These hoodies were given out at E3 years ago, all the people in this story have one.
- Knows about Luke Holloman, has a general respect for them
 - They pay invoices quickly (doesn't want to specify this is about their catering job).
- Sarah Tofflemire bothers Josh.
 - Met her at the catering event, kept bugging Josh with questions. Not sure they were meant to be at the party.
 - Could have killed Dave, maybe a stalker?

THE RIVAL DEVELOPER - Emily Shade

- Used to work with LeCompte and holds a grudge.
 - While working together at *Gunpoint Games*, Shade developed the bones for *Shattered World*. Dave stole her entire code-base, while she was waiting to quit so that the game wouldn't belong to the company.
- She is a talented programmer, but a terrible marketer/UI creator
 - *Shattered World* was originally *A Gun Fired by the Soul is Precious to Me*
 - Her version of *Fangs and Fortune* is called *Vampire Communications Towards Full Unity*
- She had a meeting with Holloman last week (same day as Dave's party) to talk about forming a company together.
 - Says he is an untrustworthy snake.
 - While she was in the meeting, Dave broke in and stole her hard drive
- She has a painting in her house with a pattern that matches the stolen hard drive decal.
- After seeing that Dave was announcing a new game she left to confront him, enraged.
 - While there she yelled and hit him, but when he dismissed her she snapped and killed him.
 - Saw Yang escaping the apartment, if she sees him again she'll try to kill him.
- She watches all of Verge's streams, and leaves nasty comments when Dave is on.

THE BUSINESS PARTNER - Luke Holloman

- Co-founder of *Fracture*, Luke thinks of himself as a visionary, but receives no credit for the game
- Wants to go out on his own and was planning on doing so with Emily Shade
- He wanted to keep it secret from Dave, but he found out and was worried Luke wanted to bring her in to the company.
- Dave has a strange development schedule, brings in games mostly finished and has the team/company clean and fix them.
 - Goes on development retreats by himself, comes back with a solid game idea, then works to make it interesting
 - Announced he would be on one at the party last week, haven't seen him since.
- Dave gets all the press, including all the weirdos. Like Tofflemire, who has ended up with my number and calls a lot.
- Shade seemed like a promising developer to work with, but went crazy after the meeting. Maybe all developers are weirdos.

THE NOSY NEIGHBOUR - Sarah Tofflemire

- A huge fan of *Shattered World* and Dave LeCompte
- Generally not allowed near Dave, but snuck into his party last week while he was gone (left in the morning, had caterers moving things in, so Sarah snuck in).
- Saw someone going up the elevator in a dark hoodie on the day of the murder.
 - An E3 hoodie. Every character in this story owns one
 - Saw them leave not long after.
 - Weirdly, they must have left earlier, because I saw them coming up the lift a second time before they left, maybe they left something downstairs?

A SECOND ATTEMPT

- If Emily Shade can identify the face she saw in the apartment as Joshua Yang, she will go to his house and attempt to ransack it for her hard drive, possibly trying to kill him to protect her identity.
- She can identify him if Dani lets slip that he was at the apartment.
 - If not, there is an overnight time skip, and in the morning Verge and Jason stream again, this time in the same place so that Josh's face can be seen.
 - She will then find his address and ransack.