

Overview

“Prosecutor General” started off as “District Attorney”. I got the idea for the game from my fascination with the legal system and my experience growing up in San Francisco, where the District Attorney actually has a very low conviction rate. As time went on, I realized that the game made more sense set in Japan rather than in its original American town.

Though many know about Japan’s low crime rate, the flip side of that is Japan’s 99.9% conviction rate. I first learned about the Japanese justice system this summer, when I visited Tokyo for the first time. In preparation, I consumed lots of material about Japanese culture. The most striking piece of media was a video called “[Why Every Japanese Criminal is Guilty](#)”.

With this game, I hope to bring awareness to the many innocent people who are facing coercion and intimidation in Japan right now.

The player will assume the role of a nameless new prosecutor, eager to participate in a justice system that they have admired their whole life. Through the course of their first week on the job, the player will meet Suzuki, Daisuke, and Makoto, the three defendants whose futures are in the player’s hands. Whether they choose to stay on the straight path or compromise their moral compass, the short but intense story will have players questioning their purpose as a prosecutor.

Link

[Play it here](#)

Playtests

Playtest 1: 3 players, in class

Feedback 1 - male

- backstory, financial trouble is helpful
- Limited is the number of choices available
- Make choices clearer
- Like the realistic elements, ie Maria confession to drug dealing by accident

Feedback 2 - male

- Fun, engaged
- Wanted more information, so was asking questions. Can make these issues clearer
- What is the scale of this game?
- Good ethical/ moral questions that you get the player to think about

Feedback 3 - male

- cool premise, very real
- The dilemmas are realistic, they have lives and are trying to fix them. You also have a family, career aspirations, etc.
- Money is interesting
- Career progression to become district attorney if you meet your goals would be cool, career and money feels separate

Changes made: Wording was clarified to make the result of choices obvious. More out of character instructions were added to the beginning of the game to give players a sense of scale, goals, and context.

Playtest 2: 1 Player, female, 50s

- Felt strong connection to Maria
- Feels that decisions are still not specific enough in wording to understand what the result is
- Does not feel ask bad for Jack as Maria
- Passages feel too short, maybe they can be combined?
- Sidebar layout is confusing
- Did not like the visual design
- Likes the premise of the district attorney but thinks that it is unrealistic

Changes made: Even more clarification of choices. Moved the sidebar to the top rather than having it centered. Changed some links to expand the existing passage rather than jumping to a new page, effectively making short pages longer. Added more development to Liam, as the player did not feel as strongly about Liam as other characters. This includes adding Liam's father as an off screen character. Made realism adjustments like having to go to the police station to interrogate a defendant. Will make changes to visual design in the future.

Hello! Welcome to Distinct Attorney, an interactive fiction which will test your resolve in the face of justice.

Are you ready to get started?

Yes

Week 0

Intro

Week 1

Office

Upon entering, you are greeted by a cheerful looking woman sitting at the receptionist table.

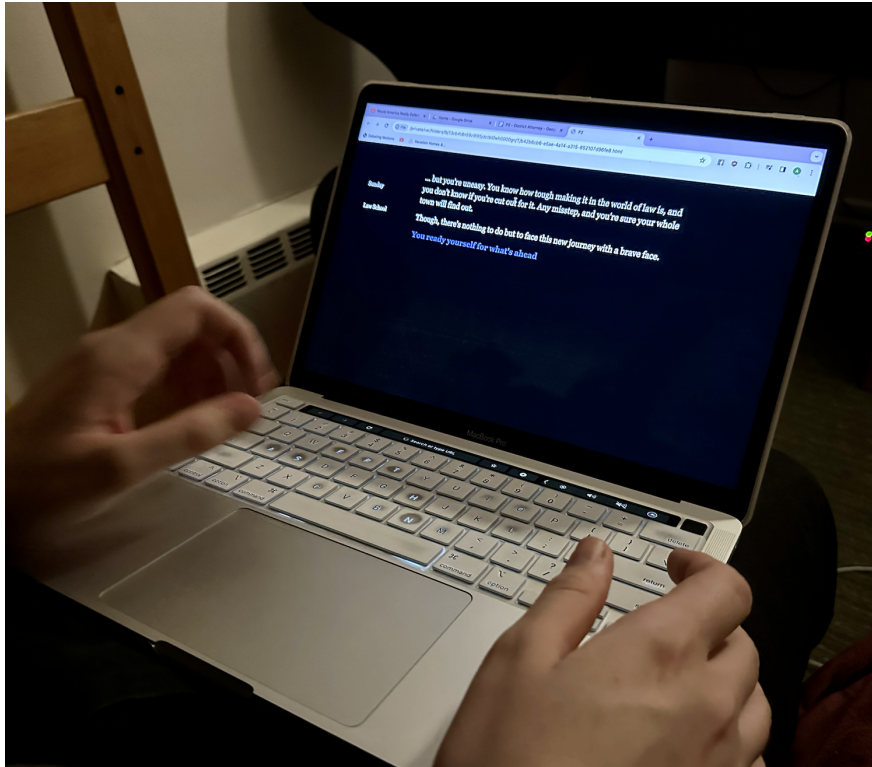
"Hey there! You're the new hire. Boss is waiting for you in his office. Go ahead whenever you're ready, but don't keep him waiting too long! Oh, and your desk is right through there."

Meet your boss

Go to your desk

Sidebar changes shown above.

Playtest 3: 1 Player, male, 20



- Did not like that all of the text was the same color
- Immediately wanted to replay the game to make different choices
- Hated Liam (successful change from previous playtest!)
- Ran into some bugs
- Suggested that the game be moved to a Japanese setting (this was someone who was with me in Japan last summer)
- Did not understand which actions took a day and that days were finite.
- Wanted the game to be longer (game was incomplete and only had one week. At this point, game was planned to be three weeks.)

Changes made: Added a restart button at the end of the game to encourage replayability. Made the game set in Japan. Fixed a large number of bugs. Made “end day” text red to make players aware that they are making an important choice. Specified length of game in the intro. At this point, downsized the game to one week due to personal illness.

Playtest 4: 1 player, female, 21

- Felt that coercing Daisuke and Makoto in the same way was repetitive. Should have more choice in coercion.

- Continuity issues with the game remembering what information the player knows the second time they meet characters.
- Felt badly about sending Daisuke to jail, but did so anyway.
- Did not feel that the ending was satisfying compared to the build up of the rest of the game.

Changes made: Fixed continuity issues, including giving the player an option to ask about Makoto's dad the second time you meet them. Added more variability to the ending depending on what the player's choices are, including explaining what happens to characters in the future based on your choices. Added speaking to Jiro as an option to spend a day, which unlocks coercion in an attempt to make it feel more special because it is now locked behind two days.

Makoto seems crossed at being called back into the station.

"Make it quick, I've got things to do," he says.

`(if: $MakotoDad is not "known") [`

`(link: "Ask Makoto about his dad") [`

`(set: $MakotoDad to "known")`

`Makoto's face somehow gets even more smug.`

`"You know Judge Yoshida? The one who deals with all of the cases in the district? That's my dad. So, yeah, he's not letting me get put in jail."`

`Your stomach churns. Makoto Yoshida! How did you not notice that he had the same last name as the district judge?`

`With this new development, you're worried whether the case is as slam dunk as you think it is.`

`]`

`]`

New choice to ask Makoto about his dad the second time you meet him.

Playtest 5: 1 player, 20, male



- Suggested that coercion buttons be a different color
- Did not understand that they needed 3/3 convictions rather than 100% conviction of the players they pressed charges on
- Felt that there could be more world building
- Really hate Makoto, such that they immediately replayed the game to sentence Makoto when they failed the first time.
- Wants more choices in general

Changes made: Made coercion choice red and end day choice green so coercion feels like a bigger decision. Added more world building elements, such as names of locations and references to real life Tokyo. Added more branches. Clarified conviction rate issue.

Daisuke looks upset to see you again.

"I don't know why you called me back here. I've got nothing to tell you."

Try to make him confess

You need to make sure Daisuke gets convicted to keep your job. There's no other way about it.

You lie to Daisuke, saying that there are multiple employees from the store who have already testified against him. Daisuke looks hopeless at this new revelation, until you tell him that you're willing to drop the charges from his record and ask for only community service if he confesses.

Daisuke resigns, and signs a confession. Of course, there isn't actually a plea deal.

End your day

Coercion is now red.

Playtest 6, 1 player, female, 19

- Feels emotionally compelled by character stories
- Wishes this were a longer game
- Should give a longer explanation for what happens to characters that don't get convicted
- Maybe add images
- Did not know about the issue in Japan until playing this game
- Loves the red coercion text

Changes: Added better description of what happens to characters that you don't attempt to convict. Cannot make the game longer because I am out of time. May consider revisiting for P4. Will not be adding images due to complexity.

Reflection

The first thing I learned making this game was the importance of scale. Especially when it comes to interactive fiction, where everything needs to be written by yourself, completing the large grandiose games we all first imagine ourselves building is a much larger task than anticipated. I started big, and learned to go small. Next time, I would like to start big and then scale up as appropriate. Secondly, I didn't start playing with the color and visual design aspect of Twine until closer to the deadline. In doing so, I received an immediate response from my game testers that it increased the emotional weight of the game. Next time I would like to spend more time focused on making my game visually appealing so as to create an even more immersive experience. Finally, I spent a lot of time carefully crafting the characters in my game to have their own voices. I'm not a writer, so this part was quite difficult for me and took a lot of tried to get right. I learned a lot of writing techniques that I am excited to put into use earlier on in the process next time, such as giving each character some unique dialogue quirks to tell them apart better.