

By [Miguel Babai](#), Games Editor

[Overclocked: A History of Violence](#)

A search for truth and reality based on violence

Whenever you get to hear that people are working on a classic point and click adventure game that will allow you to control no less than six different characters at given times to be able to proceed, you know that is a title worth waiting for. And this was exactly the reason I was eagerly anticipating *Overclocked: A History of Violence* from developer House of Tales (*The Moment of Silence*, *The Mystery of the Druids*). Unfortunately, the experience of playing *Overclocked* doesn't manage to rise to the standards promised by the developers, even though their title is far from being a below average one. **Story** Basically, the game is nothing but a journey of self-discovery, a quest for the main character to bring his life back on track or, at least, to save whatever is left of it. You will play psychiatrist Dave McNamara, an important trauma specialist who is called to New York to assist a rather strange case of amnesia and unprovoked violence. Three young men and two women were found at the same time in New York, scared to death and screaming without knowing why, barely wearing any clothes and covered in blood. They have no memory on what happened to them and neither the police forces do. So they call you, Dave, to solve the mystery. As you can see, it's the typical premise of a standard point and click adventure game. However, *Overclocked* manages to turn this rather unspectacular start of the story into an addictive one, filled with plot twists, memorable moments and a heavy, gruesome atmosphere. Honestly, the story is the only thing that kept me playing House of Tales' title and I really regret I can't detail it a bit more without spoiling the whole thing. All I can say is that nothing is what it seems to be and, even though you will get little clues throughout the game regarding what's actually happening, you will never get the chance to say "Yeah, I saw that coming!" **Shooting And drinking** **Gameplay** *Overclocked's* gameplay is a bit unusual for classic point and click adventure games. Of course, you will have your fair share of clicking, exploring and solve inventory-based puzzles, but you will probably spend the most of your time trying to find triggers: in order to keep the story going, Dave has to hypnotize his patients and bring back their memories. However, this happens in a reverse chronological order, meaning that, for the first time, it's more important how things started rather than how they ended. Even though it is really interesting at the beginning to find the right patient to trigger a flashback to, this will soon become a really frustrating thing. Dave has a PDA where he records the conversations he has with patients and, in order to trigger a flashback to a patient, he has to replay a specific recording to a specific person. Finding it might prove sometimes a real challenge and you will eventually end up clicking on each and every one at random until the right one is found. So this thing didn't really end up as intended. Even worse is the fact that there are quite some times when you do your best to find the right recording and, when you finally find it and get ready to actually start playing, you only get a cutscene and your "find the right recording" quest starts over again. And that really drove me mad! However, there's a good part resulting from all this trouble: since every patient has its own version of what happened, you will always be surprised to find out that what you thought to be correct didn't actually happen the way you thought it did - consider each patient to be a gatekeeper, holding only a part of the pieces of the puzzle, while you are the "hero" that has to collect them, match them in order to get the whole thing. Also, since you will play each patient in his or her flashback, this adds a new and interesting dimension to the game. However, since none of your patients actually brings something new to the gameplay, you won't consider this to be something really innovative or breathtaking - it's just a better way to say a perfect story. **Dark atmosphere And confort** There are also two huge drawbacks: the game is 100% linear and way too scripted for a 2008 game. In order to advance, you will have to perform your tasks in a certain sequence - fortunately, all the quests are really easy to solve and you will rarely have to travel much before solving them. Still, the scripted part of the game is really hilarious sometimes: for example, there is only one place where Dave accepts to call his NYPD assistant, Detective Moretti - right in front of the hospital. If you try doing it somewhere else, you will not be allowed! Another thing that was a complete turn off for me was the animation handling: whenever you're in a dialog, you can't skip one person's line, you can only skip the entire sequence. Having in mind that there are lots of unnatural pauses in the conversation (before one line is said and the other begins) and the fact that you'll sometimes get some clues from these conversations, it becomes

a real pain to just sit there and look without being able to proceed just a bit forward. As I've said, the puzzles are far from what I would call difficult (except for the replaying the recordings) and you won't have any problems in solving them. Actually, there are so few people you can interact with or locations to explore, that it will be a real piece of cake doing what you have to and going forward: the only items you can analyze or pick up are those needed for your current quest (and I doubt you'll ever carry more than 3-4 things with you during the flashbacks) and you'll only get a handful of people to talk to during the entire game. Actually, the entire city seems to be deserted (and we're talking about New York here!). Still, I really liked the fact that different stuff you did during the flashbacks will be available to you (such as leaving a gun in a certain place, opening a door and so on), but having in mind that you didn't actually had the choice not to, due to the game's linearity, there's not really too much satisfaction involved.

Sick And scary**Graphics**The whole game is divided in two parts: the cutscenes that are absolute eye candies, and the actual gameplay where you seem to be playing another game. The visual aspects are not a complete miss, the lightning and weather aspects are really well done but the character design is not that great. Actually, the characters look very much like the ones you got to see in The Movies (and the game was released three years ago!) when it comes to both physical appearance and the way they move and react. After all, even though you could call me an ignorant, the characters are plain ugly. Even those who are supposed to look great (one of the patients is a model!) are plain ugly. Of course this is under no circumstances a deal breaker, but I still love to see unnatural beauty in video games. Here I didn't.

Except for these, we'll also get to see a very Indigo Prophecy-like (or Fahrenheit, for the Europeans) split-screen style. And that's not necessary a bad thing, but having in mind that is not better nor it brings some innovation to the aforementioned game, it just seems to be a copy that tries to spice up things a little bit.

SoundsThe voice acting is pretty decent, not outstanding, but you can live with it. The long breaks between one line and another are really annoying and sudden changes of mood don't really fit the story (for example, Dave has the same line he says to the hotel clerk when leaving and he always sounds happy when saying it, even though sometimes it follows really embarrassing or very sad lines). The soundtrack, on the other hand, is brilliant. It fits the story perfectly and it adds the extra bits of creepiness or mystery whenever they are needed, even though it is clearly not the biggest soundtrack in video games. But it does its job great and I really can't imagine playing Overclocked without it.

Sweet And even sweeter

ConclusionOverclocked is not a memorable game and I have the feeling that it doesn't manage to rise to the standards. However, it has an absolutely great story that will keep you in front of the computer, with your headphones on since the soundtrack is also great. Except from that, it lacks complexity - too few characters, too few interactions, too few locations, not enough to make you care about anybody or anything in the game. And that is really sad, having in mind that the story deserved some strong characters to feel sorry for, to love and so on. It also seemed to me that developers started to lose interest in the game as the story progressed, since the last few "missions" are poor and predictable. Not to mention the game's ending which is far from being great - it basically cancels all the benefic effects the story had until the moment they decided to end it. If Overclocked was a movie, I would've said that it was a classic Hollywood flick. But since it is a game, I'll say it has a bad, Hollywood-like, unnecessary ending.