
Without You Cutscene Breakdown

Try to maintain a balance a reasonable amount of cutscenes with a pacing that does not retract from momentum of gameplay. Introduction to the story, and short introductions to smaller aspects of the game, but never more than 2 minutes, unless the cutscene is a major 'set piece', like the intro or outro, or presenting a major story element where 'seeing it' is a necessity.

- 1) Introduction to the Game. This cutscene will be prior to the player even pressing the 'Start' button to get going. It will be a collection of cuts of the city from overhead, interspersed with images of Paul Alison (our protagonist) walking with a VERY slight limp down a sidewalk, on his way to work. It will pan to an over-the-shoulder cam, and follow Paul's progress down the sidewalk. Streets not too busy, but there are young families and older couples walking together. It is daytime. Occasionally, we will see from the perspective of one of the passersby into Paul's face. Paul's eyes look lost in thought about something important, maybe work, but not the 'thousand yard stare'. Paul is intense without being a creep. This cinematic should just be a loop of different streets and people that repeats after about 2-3 minutes. Something to setup the character and some background physical idiosyncracies like his limp, his demeanour, etc...
- 2) Intro'ing Paul's 'real world' to the player. After the player has started their game, we cut to this scene. Paul has responded to a missing persons report, and we see him collecting interview canvas notes from an assistant officer after speaking with the mother of the young woman who has been missing. It will take place just outside the home of the young woman (Paul's first case), and set us up as to what Paul does, and how he does it.
- 3) Introduction to main storyline case. After an hour 'tutorial' on the first case, Paul will return to the office. On his desk is a blotter, covered in case notes torn from a small pad, a picture of an older woman, an older push-button telephone, and a typewriter. Once more, we reveal some of Paul's personal preference, and some background into his life in the picture on the desktop. Paul sits at his desk and begins to fill out the final papers for the case he just completed (a success, to bring the player in on a 'win'), when the phone rings. A case has come in, and he has been assigned to it. Paul scratches out some notes on an old

pocket pad with a look of resignation. With a large sigh, he thanks the voice on the phone. Before he gets a chance to hang up though, the voice reminds him – “Look Paulie, you’re sitting on a half-year before you get outta here. Don’t cry to me about the softballs you’ve been getting since your accident. Lieutenant must love you and your bad ticker, or else this kids’ work would be getting a little more play with the guys who wouldn’t mind a couple days R&R instead of hauling in junkies and splitting up drunks on their own beats”. With that, the line goes dead, and Paul puts the receiver down. We pan from the phone across Paul’s notepad, and in the chicken scratch notes, the name ‘Allan Smith, 32’ tops the page. Paul grabs the pad, we pan out to see him stuff it in his jacket pocket while he grabs his coat and turns from the desk.

- 4) Paul enters Allan’s apartment for the first time. In this scene, we set the stage for the kind of mentality Paul will wrestle with throughout the storyline. We enter the apartment behind Paul, and watch him work – he peeps under books with his pen, cracks the refrigerator to check expiration dates on dairy, looks to see if the lights still work. Mundane, fact-checking cop stuff. Only when Paul enters further into the apartment do we see Allan’s ‘true face’ – books on the occult, old videotapes from psychic ‘experts’, and reams of paper with religious symbols scribbled on them, surrounded with unintelligible notes. Paul sniffs disdainfully as he checks around the mess with his pen-lifting looks. Further into the apartment, we come to the real lion’s share of Allan’s psychosis, which culminates in a reveal of his bedroom, which has been converted into a library, walls lined with books, floor covered in more notes, and papers piled everywhere. Paul flicks the lights on and then off, and leaves the apartment, putting his pad back into his jacket pocket. “Jesus, Mary. If I’d have known this was going to be the rest of my life, I’d have gone with you...”, and the door to the apartment slams with the ‘click’ of the lock as he leaves.
- 5) Visiting Allan’s wife. In this scene, we setup more of Paul’s backstory, after a commentary from Allan’s wife, and how he got to the point we saw back at the apartment. Paul climbs the few steps to the front stoop of a small suburban home. An older house, 2 floors but skinny. Yellow paint. Paul taps the door through a missing wirescreen panel with two knuckles, then pulls his pad from his jackets’ breast pocket. A young woman answers the door, and asks him to come in. She knows that Paul is here to ask about Allan, and just wants this to be over. During Paul’s walk through the hall to the front room, we see pictures of Allan with his wife Elizabeth, and their infant daughter. Good memories of good times. Paul speaks to Elizabeth, and she offers Paul a piece of advice – Allan wrote obsessively in a personal diary after losing their daughter. What began as a therapeutic method of

- 6) Returning to the office. Upon leaving Elizabeth's home, Paul drives slowly to the office, looking at a box of personal effects given to him by Elizabeth. We get some dialogue, and exposition into Paul's backstory, and his slight limp. "Goddamn kids, taking off without any idea of what they're leaving behind. I'm still here for you, Mary. I'll see you someday, no doubt, but as long as I'm still here, I'm still here for you. I'd never let you rot alone like that. Not while I could help it." The scene cuts to the box of personal effects being dropped on Paul's desk, moving the picture of the woman. Paul's hand reaches into the shot and adjusts it back, so she is looking at us again.
- 7) Post-diary acquisition, speaks to Allan's priest. Priest explains how he tried to convince Allan that he would see his daughter again, in God's kingdom. Allan seemed happy with this, returned the next day with a sealed letter, asking the priest to give it to his wife when she came looking. However, she did not, so the letter is given to Paul.
- 8) Trying the ritual. After reading the letter (suicide note), but also getting conflicting messages of hope from the diary, Paul goes back to the apartment for some answers. We follow Paul through the apartment again, but this time, it's darker. It is early in the afternoon, a time specified in the diary to attempt 'contact' with his daughter. As we follow Paul into the apartment, he leaves our field of view, and we pan through the apartment with low-angle shots, observing the mundane objects again, but with dialogue overlaying the scene with exposition about Allan's situation, and Paul's own life. Finally, the camera pushes down the hallway, into Allan's bedroom. A bookcase has been moved aside, and we see Paul, silhouetted in a white light, which haloes out around him, drowning the camera to end the scene. Final dialogue taking us out is Paul's voice, slightly broken; "My God..".
- 9) Speaking with Allan. After a period of play in the 'other world', our player finally meets with Allan. The scene cuts from a high shot over the milky, strange world to focus on a man playing with a young girl in a small, circular playground area. Paul enters the frame from the bottom, and we pull back behind him to an over the shoulder shot of the man and girl. The man looks up, and the girl remains still. He picks her up under the arms, and hugs her close to him, approaching Paul. Paul slows his approach, while the man walks right up, We get a face to face wide shot of the both of them. The man speaks – "Looks like I should have cleaned up after myself. Well, let's talk." This

cutscene will lead into a conversation and questioning period the player can have with Allan, learning more about the ritual he performed.

10) Paul's House. We see Paul's home for the first time – it is clean, and well taken care of, a paradox to the slight mess that his desk represents at work. He swings open the door and throws his keys onto a nearby table, dropping his coat. Not the kind of activity you would expect from a man so meticulous about the cleanliness of his home. We cut to him walking quickly down a hall, and he enters the master bedroom. Cut to the bedside table, and he is pulling open a drawer, fishing his hand deep into it, searching for something. He pulls a key out, and we go to a series of quick cuts – he rises, walks out, we see his feet rushing up a set of steps. His hands shake, and he fumbles with a locked door. From inside now, we see the door swing inward, and a light floods the room, filtering through risen dust. Paul is silhouetted, again, but this time, we see outlines of the room he is entering, and he walks in, tracing his fingers in the dust on bookcase by the door. “Mary, I’m coming.”

11) After a futile search of places that Paul believes to be special to Mary, he finds the box of ‘precious things’. Paul enters Mary’s office again – the player has had an opportunity to investigate the room for a few play hours now. Cursing his own impulsiveness in the matter, feeling he’s gotten too involved in what he still feels is absurd, Paul begins to destroy the office in a fit, mirroring the state of Allan’s apartment when Paul came upon it. In his anger, Paul kicks the front of her desk, and something falls out the back – a false back to the desk, revealing a box. Paul opens the old shoebox, and finds a series of things – train ticket stubs, a half pack of cigarettes with a receipt from a shop in Seattle tucked into the back of the pack, and a couple of letters from a man, asking her to visit him again, to come back to ‘somewhere she is appreciated’. Feeling a slight stab of anger at the realization of what has happened, and blaming himself even more for Mary’s death, Paul decides he can now go to her, and be with her.

12) The ritual. In this cutscene, there will be certain ‘Quicktime Event’ points at which the player will have to press buttons to keep the event alive. This will be used to reflect the nature of what Paul is doing to continue speaking to Mary. The cutscene begins after the player has prepared for the ritual, mirroring, once again, Allan’s own efforts. We begin with Paul on the floor of Mary’s office – it didn’t work, and his heart problem is kicking in. He curses, loudly, his stupidity, and slams his other fist into her desk. Her voice, however, stops him from doing it again. The player now realizes the ritual only half-worked. Mary will explain to Paul that the memories to bring them together needed to be

shared, not just hers. The father and daughter came together easier because the memories of the daughter were only ever shared memories, and easy to cross over. However, Paul's work always drew him away from home, and away from Mary. She tells a tearful Paul she never blamed him for this, and always loved him. No matter what else in life and beyond, she has always loved him. She only wants him to know that she has never blamed him for her death, and it hurts her to know that he has lived with this guilt and blame for so long. He wants to know why they can't be together now, and she tries to explain to him why it can't be. Paul sinks onto the floor, and sees her face coming to him, still speaking to him. "Paul, it's going to be alright, sweetheart. We're going to be okay." At this point in the ritual, however, the Quicktime Event button pressing stops, and the player is dumped back into 'gameplay mode'. The heart arrhythmia meter is pumping fast, and the player model drops to the floor like any other time in the game where the meter gets too high. The screen drops to black.

13)...3 days later. The black screen gives way to the words "...3 days later", and fades to the front door of Paul's house. We see a police cruiser parked outside, and two officers and a plainclothes detective roaming around the main floor. One of the officers ascends the staircase to the upper floor, and we pan around the detective, lifting object around the house with his pen, checking expiration dates in the fridge. Mundane cop stuff. From upstairs, we get a shout 'Hey dick, you're gonna want to see this! Radio home, and close off the front door!' We see the interior of Mary's office, with Paul's body in the foreground. The detective walks in and investigates the state of the room. Checking around, he fingers over Paul's notepad, lying on the floor next to him, chronicling his case with Allan, and the subsequent patterns that he followed to where he is now. The diary, as well, lies nearby, and the new detective picks it up by the back cover. It opens, and we cut to an over the shoulder of the detective looking down into it, rubbing the side of his stubbly face –

"I have everything I need, and I'll see you soon. I know now, I'll never have to live another day without you"

Close book, detective puts in his own coat pocket. Pan from office, out window, to long shot of street in midday. Families walk together, couples are strolling, and kids are playing. Everything is right with the world. Fade to black.