Detention Without Parole
Northside Elementary

T580 Individual Media Proposal
Based on original idea by Rory Starks, Steve Brennan, Don Mitchell, and Mathew Powers

I. Introduction

Detention Without Parole is an adventure game based around the life of an elementary school student named Danny Madsen. Danny's the new kid in school. He's sort of a loner but he likes it that way. However, one day at recess Danny makes a "mistake" that bolsters his reputation and makes him a champion of the bewedgied and a hero of the swirlied. Players take control of Danny and guide him on his quest to maintain his status as the toughest, roughest kid Northside Elementary has ever seen.

Danny can travel all over the school to complete missions for many different people. Susie might ask Danny to steal Maggie's pretty pink hairbrush while Marlon Foster might see if Danny can strike a deal on imported candy from a foreign exchange student. After all that, he might be challenged by a bully to a rope climb in gym – winner gets the loser's lunch that day. Side missions might include sabotaging field trips to museums or causing chaos in convocations at the school auditorium.

This game expands on the *Grand Theft Auto* and *True Crime* genre of open-ended mission-based gameplay. Many elements from the two mentioned games will be found in *DWP*, but it will also contain some new features that will make it more original. Part of what has made games like *GTA* popular (aside from violence) is the storylines. *DWP* would have to offer players an intriguing story as well as solid gameplay elements to keep them interested.

II. Product Overview

DWP is an open-ended action adventure game set in the halls of Northside Elementary school. The game could be played on either PC or a console system, though a PC would be preferable because it would open up the possibility for additional content to be added later.

To finish the game, players must complete quests along the main storyline. Many opportunities for side quests will also be present throughout the game. Some will be in the form of subplots; others in the form of mini-games. Most quests in *DWP* take place in specific areas. After receiving the quest, players will be directed to the area(s) in which it takes place. For instance, Danny might be charged with humiliating a bully in gym class by beating him in dodgeball. Once Danny goes to the gym, the quest will begin.

Character Bios (re-written from original concept)

Danny Madsen – This is the character controlled by the player. He's the new kid. Quiet. Becomes a hero to the geeks, nerds, and physically downtrodden after his stray handball beats down the biggest bully in school. He wears a death metal t-shirt under a short sleeved button-up shirt, baggy jeans, and chucks.

Walter "Wally" Wright – A goofy cut-up kid who used to be quite popular before he barfed on Jenny Westmeyer's lap at lunch. He wears a red and white striped polo shirt with khaki shorts. He sits at the social reject table at lunch with Danny.

Gary Schneider – Nerdy kid who befriends Danny shortly after he arrives at Northside Elementary. He's a scrawny kid who always wears tapered blue jeans, penny loafers, and the sweater his mom bought him last Christmas. Becomes Danny's right-hand businessman after the handball incident.

Marlon Foster – The Troublemaker. This kid has been in and out of detention more than the rest of the entire school combined. He's the tough-talking, no-nonsense, badass little shit who's always wearing tracksuit pants and a huge black hoodie. In true gangster style, he also wears a large ring – a candy ring – on his right pinky. He's known to carry quite a stash of candy in the front pocket of his sweatshirt – he's the school's primary dealer. Marlon is undoubtedly behind any and all questionable activity in school.

Julie Farnsworth – A calm, poetic girl – much more mature than her age. Also sits at the social reject table. She wears a lot of black. Julie hires Danny for some work later on in the game. She's got a grudge with the popular girl clique.

Lane Daley – Washed-up poor kid who never says much, but when he does, it's to the point – like the time when Mrs. Alexander told him to clap erasers together and he told her to "shut up." Yeah. He always smells like sour milk. He's a junkie. A library paste junkie – eats the stuff like candy. The problem is the librarian, Ms. Strick, keeps the stuff locked up in her dusty office. Lane might need Danny's help to score his next fix.

Brian Spicolli – The school's toughest bully. He has stubble even though he's in elementary school. Some say he's much older than the other students in his grade, but he was held back because his grades and behavioral problems. Others say he was actually hired to be the school bully by some unnamed employer. It's only a matter of time before the real story is revealed.

Factions, Cliques, Clubs

Bully Union Local 406 – Bully's are getting a bad rap lately. Rumor has it that these guys are hired to rough up kids to keep them in line. No one knows who the "big boss" is though.

Short Bus Posse – These kids are very special. They're tired of being ridiculed by the smart kids and the bullies so they might need Danny's help at some point.

Library Paste Junkies – Junkies can't get enough of the paste. Known as "pasters" to those in the know, these kids need their paste fix or they get cranky. Really cranky. The problem is, the librarian knows all these kids' faces, so they're gonna need somebody else to find their stuff.

AV Goons – Geeks, nerds, and dorks: these kids are scorned by basically the entire school population. The AV goons are responsible for the morning announcements and any special event involving videos. They have access to cameras and would love nothing more than to catch their enemies in sticky situations.

PTA Liaisons – The upper crust of the school's socio-economic hierarchy. Some of the school's best and brightest come from this group. Problem is, most of these kids are straight-laced goodie goodies who will run to the nearest teacher when they think anything's going down.

Pretty Girl Clique – These girls are destined for extravagant, exotic jobs involving little or no brainpower. They aren't very bright.

III. Sample Scenes
(Script)

OPENING SCENE

DANNY MADSEN and WALLY WRIGHT are playing handball against the wall of the school during recess.

> WALLY
> So ya say you never been to tha zoo before? Hey, wait, what's going on over there?

DANNY grabs the ball and turns to look where WALLY is pointing.

> WALLY
> Man, it's that dick Brian Spicolli roughin' up poor Gary. I wish somebody'd teach that bum a lesson.

Faint screams from GARY SCHNEIDER are heard as his underwear is pulled completely over his head. BRIAN SPICOLLI laughs heartily.

> BRIAN
> You didn't pay me your dues Gary, so I had to give you a wedgie you little punk. Don't even try squealing to the teachers about this. If you even think about it I'll give you a wedgie so bad your mommy's gonna feel it.

DANNY and WALLY both return to their handball playing. WALLY makes a huge slap at the ball and sends the ball flying at the wall. DANNY recovers it with an equally hard smack and sends the ball way up over WALLY's head.

The camera switches to a view right behind the ball as it sails in slow motion over the crowded blacktop. Students look up in awe at the rubber missile as it seems to home in on something directly – almost deliberately. The shot cuts to BRIAN as he is kicking the tighty-whitey-blinded GARY to the asphalt. BRIAN looks up quickly just as he is smacked right in the face by the handball of death. The screen goes black. The camera changes to BRIAN's perspective. Sad violin music (something like Barber's Adagio for Strings) plays as he gets on his feet and lets out a big belly cry. His sobbing is truly the stuff of legend – he sounds like a beached whale with a stomachache. His view pans the crowd of kids as they look at him in amazement.

Suddenly, everyone – EVERYONE – begins to laugh and point at him as he continues to cry. The camera cuts to Brian running to one of the teachers as several girls begin singing a song about him while playing jump rope.

                         GIRLS (singing)
               Brian's a crybaby, wah, wah, wah! Got smacked in
               the head, ha, ha, ha, ha!

As BRIAN is escorted from the playground – presumably to the nurse's office – children begin to walk over to where DANNY and WALLY were playing handball. They surround DANNY and begin applauding and cheering. MARLON FOSTER emerges from the crowd and approaches DANNY.

                         MARLON FOSTER
               Hey, kid, I never heard of you before but I like
               your style. I got work for you if you want it.
               Meet me in the cafeteria at lunch.

MARLON walks back into the crowd, which then disperses.

                         WALLY
               Whoa, man, what the hell was that? You totally
               took out Brian Spicolli! You're gonna be famous!

END OF OPENING SCENE

It is at this point that the player is given control of Danny. They are free to walk around the playground and speak with the other children. Some are very impressed with Danny while others tell him he'd better watch his back. No other missions are given out at this time, but if the player chooses to talk to most of the kids, he or she will get a hint of the many groups Danny could encounter in the game.

The following scene is towards the end of the game. Danny's pal Wally has been tied up in the AV room where he thinks Marlon Foster will interrogate him.

AV ROOM SCENE

WALLY is seated at a school desk in the AV room. His hands are bound behind the chair back with a plastic jump rope. He struggles for a few seconds to get out of the chair, but can't. As the door creaks open WALLY sits up straight and tries to look tough. MARLON FOSTER struts in the door and shuts it behind him.

                    MARLON
          Well, well, Walter Wright. How's it goin' there
          Walter? A little tied up, eh?

                    WALLY
          You won't get anything out of me, Marlon. I
          ain't got nothin' for you.

                    MARLON
          Oh? Is that so? Well, we'll just see about
          that.

MARLON walks over to a radio that's sitting on a stool and turns
it on.

                    MARLON
          Ya ever listen to the high school radio show?
          Randy Beaumont's Rockin' Radio Hour? It's my
          personal favorite.

                    RANDY (from the radio)
          W'sup Northside High School! This morning I went
          through my dad's record collection and pulled out
          this dusty old hit from nineteen seventy-three.
          Check it out!

MUSIC: STEALER'S WHEEL's "STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU"

                    WALLY (scared)
          What, what are you going to do?

MARLON reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pixie stick. He
runs the paper stick lengthwise across his tongue and then opens
the package, dumping the powder onto his hand. He licks his
candy-ringed pinky and rubs it around in the sugar dust, then
puts it back in his mouth and dances around the room to the
music as he takes in the buzz.

                    WALLY (still scared)
          This about Danny? This is about Danny, isn't it?
          You can torture me all you want. Danny's my boy,
          I ain't telling you anything.

                    MARLON
          Torture? Man, it's a shame I don't have someone
          with brains like you workin' for me. I've been

                        known to take suggestions from time to time. I
                        guess I'll torture you then.

MARLON puts his pinky back in his mouth and begins sucking on it
while he dances over to where WALLY is tied up. He stands over
WALLY, who is squirming in his seat trying to keep his distance.

                              MARLON
                        How's about a wet Willy... or should I say,
                        Wally?

CU on MARLON grabbing WALLY's head. MARLON shoves his moist,
purple-stained pinky into WALLY's ear.

                              WALLY (screaming)
                        NO!!!

                              RADIO (music)
                        Clowns to the left of me
                        Jokers to the right
                        Here I am stuck in the middle with you
                        Yes I'm stuck in the middle with you

FADE TO BLACK, END OF SCENE

IV. Graphics

DWP could be either a 3D or a 2D game. A 3D version of the game would be played from a third-person perspective above and behind Danny. A 2D version of the game would probably work best from a top-down or isometric view. The idea is to give the game a "school" look, so any interface art would be drawn so that it looked like something a kid would draw. For instance, the inventory screen (if there is one) would look like a scrap of notebook paper with tally marks used to keep track of the quantity of items. A simple floor plan drawn on graph paper could be used for the in-game map or for maps shown to Danny before he is given missions. The characters would have a cartoon look. The game isn't striving for realism.

V. Sound

Sound assets for *DWP* would require recordings of sound in an everyday school building. Students gathering in the halls, the squeak of their shoes on the floor, chairs moving, and children playing at recess. Music could also be included in the game – perhaps in the form of a portable tape player that Danny listens to while roaming the halls. He could pick up tapes in random locations around the school that could unlock new tracks for him to listen to or he could win tapes as a reward for completing a mission. The music could also be turned off, of course.

In missions requiring Danny to hide or sneak around, footsteps would need to be heard so the player can tell if a teacher or hall monitor is close by.

Another mini-game that could be implemented in the game is a jump rope game on the playground. Girls would sing a song while Danny would need to keep rhythm and jump the rope. As Danny's reputation amongst his peers goes up, the girls might sing more flattering songs about him. Music like this would obviously need to be recorded.

VI. Play Action

The control scheme would be fairly simple using either arrow keys or a joypad. There would likely be a run button and a sneak button. The sneak button would allow Danny to walk slowly to avoid scuffing the floor with his shoes (in case he was trying to avoid an enemy). The run button would give Danny a short burst of speed, which would be helpful in certain mini-games.

Mini-games or missions might require a different control scheme while they are played. In this case, a quick message would be displayed on the screen notifying the player of which buttons they would need to use. For instance, a roller scooter game would require the player to wiggle an analog stick back and forth rapidly in order to make the scooter move. The faster the player wiggles, the faster the scooter moves. To stop, the player would just need to stop moving the stick.

Interaction during the game would be done with an action button – similar to the "door open / pick up things" button used in many role-playing games and first-person shooters. Pressing the button while standing in front of an object or character and pressing the button would perform the action associated with that thing. For example, standing in front of a notebook that is on the floor and pressing the button would pick it up and add it to the player's inventory. Standing in front of a character and pressing the button would initiate a conversation with that character.

There would also need to be some sort of "attack" button that would be used in missions requiring fighting or firing. Objects (like weapons) in the player's inventory could be assigned to the attack button. This button might be used to tap other players while playing tag in the gym.

Another button would be designated for calling up the inventory/status screen. From this screen the player could keep track of the items Danny possesses, his health, and his current mission. This screen is also where players could equip weapons.

VII. Play Mechanics

As in most adventure games, *DWP*'s Danny will have several attributes that players would need to monitor. Health and money will be the two most important. There will be a health bar at the top of the screen that keeps track of Danny's hit points. If Danny runs out of hit points, he will "pass out" and be taken to the nurse's office. This will result in the current game ending and players would have to return to their last save point or just before their last incomplete mission. Health can be revived in a few ways: candy, lunch, and bandages. Money is another important statistic. Money in *DWP* is not cash. Monetary value is derived from various items that children treasure, like stickers, candy, and school supplies. These things are treated as money to the students and Danny will be paid in these items throughout the game. Players can also use these things to purchase items from other kids (like spitwad guns or rubber band slingshots).

Weapons would have ammo that could be picked up all over the school or acquired as rewards from completing missions. Different guns would have different effects, but the idea is not to "kill" other children or teachers. Hitting someone with a spitwad might send him or her running in terror – which would be the intended effect. Some missions might have Danny firing from long range. This would require a weapon (probably something with a rubber band) that could propel the ammo a long distance.

VIII. Difficulty

The difficulty in *DWP* would increase with each mission. Some factions might have more difficult missions than others, but all missions would get progressively harder during the game. Side quests, which might be opportunities for additional items, would have a set amount of levels that would also increase in difficulty. One side quest might be finding library paste for Lane Staley. Lane would offer some amount of reward in exchange for a specific amount of library paste. The first level of this side quest would be fairly easy: sneak past the librarian, Ms. Strick, and grab a jar of library paste. The next time you offer to retrieve paste for Lane, Ms. Strick would be more aware that someone is sneaking around the library. She might move more quickly than before or the path Danny must travel to get the paste might be more difficult.

IX. Playability

DWP would have a lot of playability with all of the various mini-games and missions available to the player. Rather than every game focusing on one particular goal (i.e., killing everybody), *DWP* will have many different types of "games" used as a means of completing missions. Whether it's sneaking down the hall to avoid the dreaded hall monitors or a bare-knuckle fistfight on the playground, *DWP* will give players a lot of variety.

X. Play Life

DWP doesn't necessarily have to last dozens of hours. The story doesn't have to be as epic as other RPGs or adventure games currently available. Replay value of the game could be in the form of variable difficulty but that entirely isn't necessary. A multiplayer mode would give players the opportunity to continue playing the game with friends long after they've beaten the single player mode. The story mode should be engaging enough to keep players interested. If the game was developed for PC, there might be an opportunity for additional content in the form of downloads or expansion packs.

XI. Special Features

As previously mentioned, one special feature of the game could be the tapes that players collect that give them more music to listen to while playing. A multiplayer version of the game could also work, pitting up to four players against each other with school supply weapons (spitwads or rubber band guns) or having them compete in the various mini games in the gym. This wouldn't be a huge part of the game, but it could be added to give the game more playability.
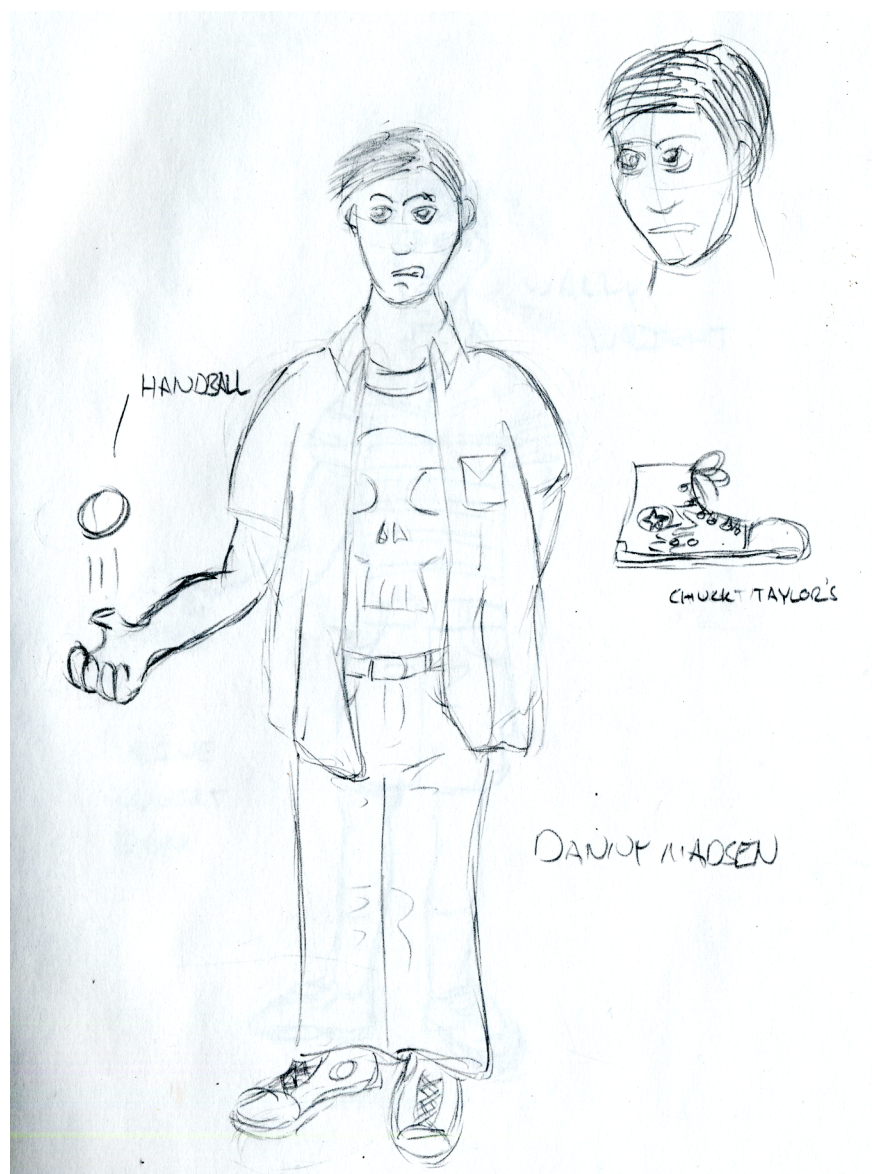
XII. Market Perspective

This game could easily be marketed towards children, but that isn't the idea. Children are already in school and to an extent they live lives similar to the characters in this game. This

game is aimed more towards the 18-34 market and would be designed to appeal more to that crowd. A lot of the characters and events are made to mimic more adult material, so the game might leave younger audiences confused because they might not pick up on some of the humor (i.e., candy and library paste being treated like illegal drugs).
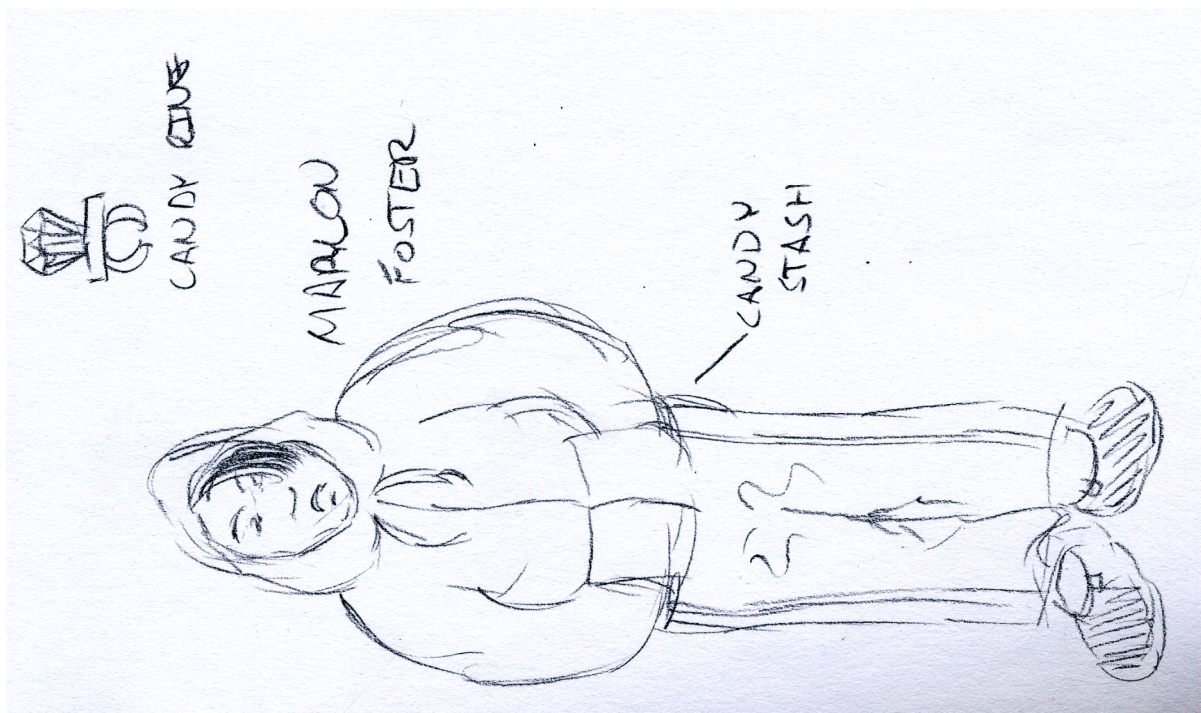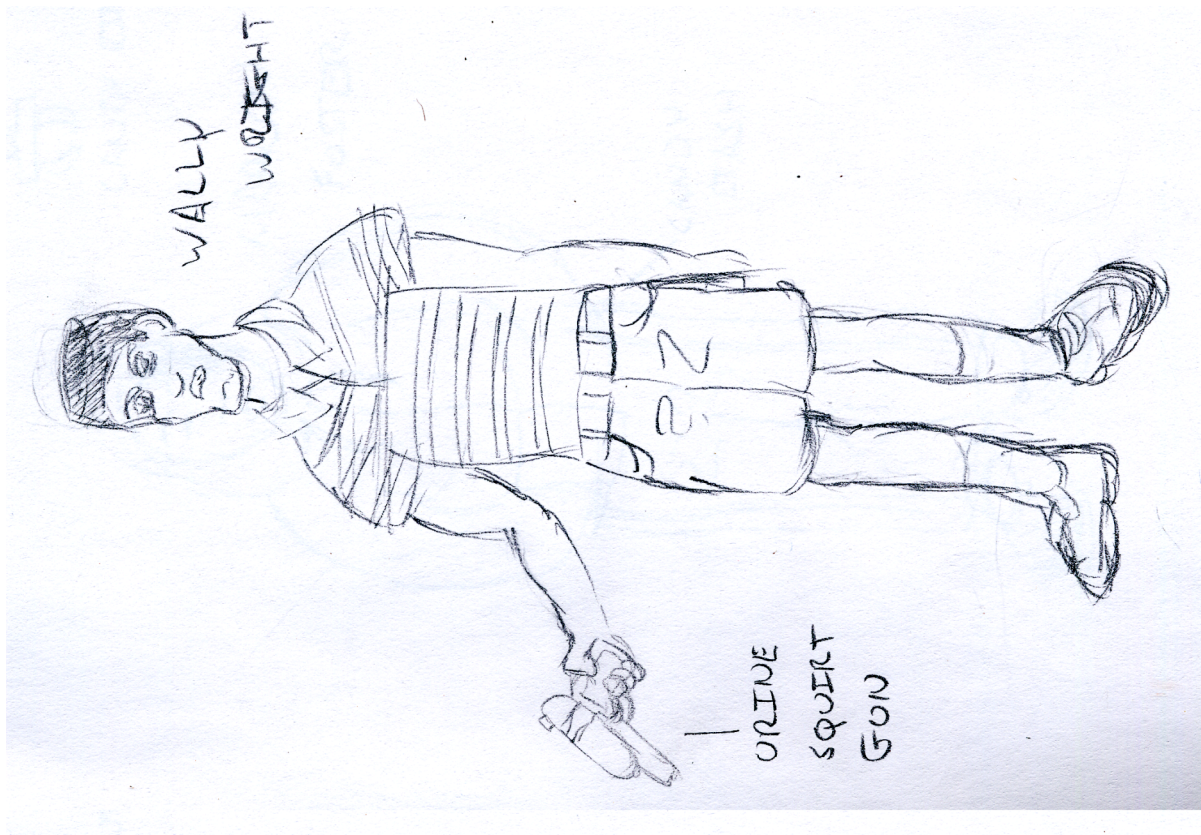
XIII. Summary
DWP aims to be a very enjoyable game for players who enjoy the action of the many crime-based adventure games but would also appreciate a somewhat clean, less violent approach to the genre.
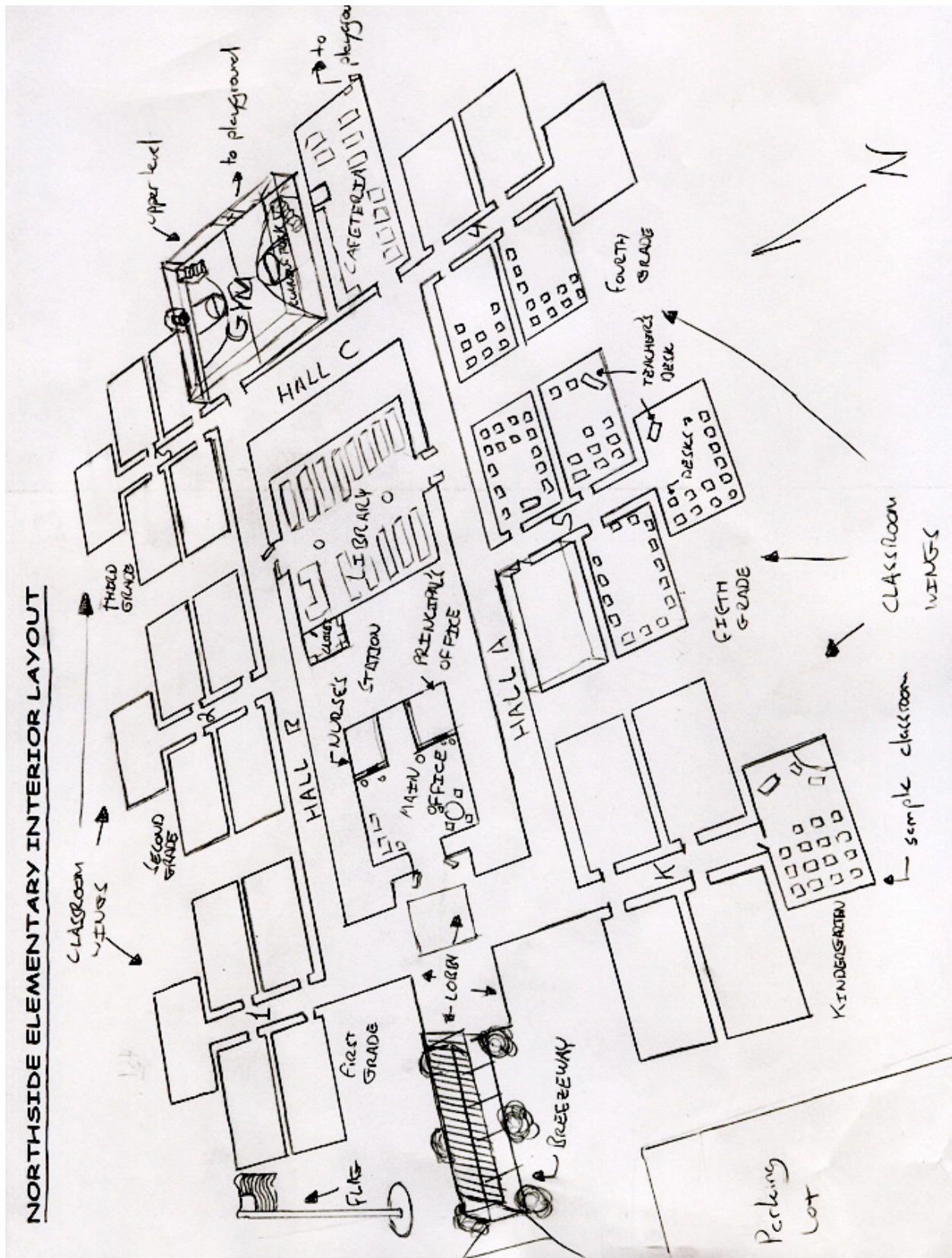
XIV. Concept Art

HANDBALL

CHUCK TAYLOR'S

DANNY MADSEN

Danny Madsen

WALLY WRIGHT

URINE SQUIRT GUN

CANDY CLUB

MARLON FOSTER

CANDY STASH

Marlon Foster and Wally Wright

Map of Northside Elementary School