

"CROCODRACULA" / "CROCODRACULA: THE BEGINNING"
Registration Key Factsheet --- by BLP

The first Crocodracula tie-in game by Taleframe, known as "Crocodracula" and then "Crocodracula: The Beginning", is equipped, like all Taleframe games, with numerous quite nasty copy protection techniques, none of which have stood up to the efforts of the cracker community. But undoubtedly the most embarrassing example of Taleframe's attempts is the registration key system in "Crocodracula: The Beginning".

Several checks are built into the game to detect a copy. If the first checksum fails, the game makes you enter the registration key when you try to unlock the bike. If the second checksum fails, you have to enter the key whenever you try to turn on the airboat (which becomes quite inconvenient if you're the type of player who "roleplays" by turning off the airboat engine when not in use). If the third checksum fails, you have to enter the key whenever you pass through the school basement door. Any time you enter an invalid registration key, the game finds a clever way of sealing off further progression until you enter the correct key. (Cutely, each key input point involves a "key" used in-game.)

This might be quite discouraging if the key weren't laughably easy to reverse-engineer. The underlying code that stores and encrypts the key is tied to the random number generation routines, probably intending to randomly disguise the key if the player attempts a dump of the internal text. However, an unknown programmer's incompetence caused the registration key to be used as the seed value of the random number generator itself. Furthermore, the random number generator (doubtfully coded by the same programmer in charge of copy protection...) uses a quite simple method to pick from different pieces of text, so the seed and thus the registration key itself can be deduced by simply looking around the game and taking careful notes.

Digits 1-6

The first six digits control these details:

- the letters visible on the water tower
- the painting in the house at the end of Ash Street
- the type of item that Hank gives you
- the name of the ghost
- the solution to the swamp navigation puzzle
- the noises you hear on the Sandy Road

But these details are the same in every copy of the game, because the first six digits of every registration key are 848275 (84 82 75 = T R K = Taleframe Registration Key).

DIGIT 7

The seventh digit of the key affects the wanted posters in the sheriff's station. There are three of them and they always appear in the same order. Find the three that appear in your game on this list and there's your key digit.

creepy smile - 0 only
boy your age - 0 or 1
"crazy eyes" - 0, 1, or 2
brother and sister - 1, 2, or 3
shaved head - 2, 3, or 4
"froglike features" - 3, 4, or 5
elderly gentleman - 4, 5, or 6
huge lips - 5, 6, or 7
buzz cut - 6, 7, or 8
mohawk - 7, 8, or 9
a dog - 8 or 9
top hat (JM?) - 9 only

~~Call Mark!~~

★ Call Mark!

Wm



DIGIT 8

The eighth digit determines the tapestry in the castle. Basically, the digit is divided by 4, then the quotient determines the person in the tapestry and the remainder determines what they're doing. The "boy with a sword" appears in the code but can't show up in the game, more evidence that the programmers were basically flying blind at this point

| | contemplating globe | dour older woman | bowing to king | beneath a tree |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| pale woman | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| man with beard | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| billowy dress | 8 | 9 | x | x |
| boy with sword | x | x | x | x |

DIGIT 9

Similar to Digit 7. The ninth digit determines what items (all with no apparent gameplay purpose) you can find in the thrift shop. The game picks four items based on that digit, and each time you look at the shelves it shows you one of those items. (Their order of appearance is randomized too, possibly based on other digits in the registration key.) You'll have to inspect the shelves several times to narrow down what the ninth digit is.

silver trophy - 0 only
lamps - 0 or 1
board games - 0, 1, or 2
cookbooks - 0, 1, 2, 3
model boxcar - 1, 2, 3, 4
telephone - 2, 3, 4, 5
glass frog - 3, 4, 5, 6
crib - 4, 5, 6, 7

DIGIT 9 (CONT.)

viola case - 5, 6, 7, 8
novels - 6, 7, 8, 9
belt - 7, 8, or 9
ceramic duck - 8 or 9
paperweight - 9 only

DIGIT 10

quite simple, the tenth digit just determines what kind of fish is mounted in the airboat rental shop.

0 - barracuda
1 - catfish
2 - bass
3 - marlin
4 - red snapper
5 - grouper
6 - gar
7 - bluegill
8 - pickerel
9 - bowfin

DIGIT 11

Not sure what the programmers were trying to do here. The chimes outside Miss Muriel's shack will jangle on a regular schedule, but they'll only jangle a certain number of times (which resets whenever you leave the location). Just waste time in the location and count how many times the jangling-chime message prints before it stops. If it jangles 4 times, the eleventh digit of the key is 4. If it never jangles, the eleventh digit of the key is 0.

DIGIT 12

Another weird one. The twelfth digit is added to all the numbers on Miss Lipton's chalkboard. By default, the first number is 102, so subtract 102 from whatever number appears, and there you have it.

DIGIT 13

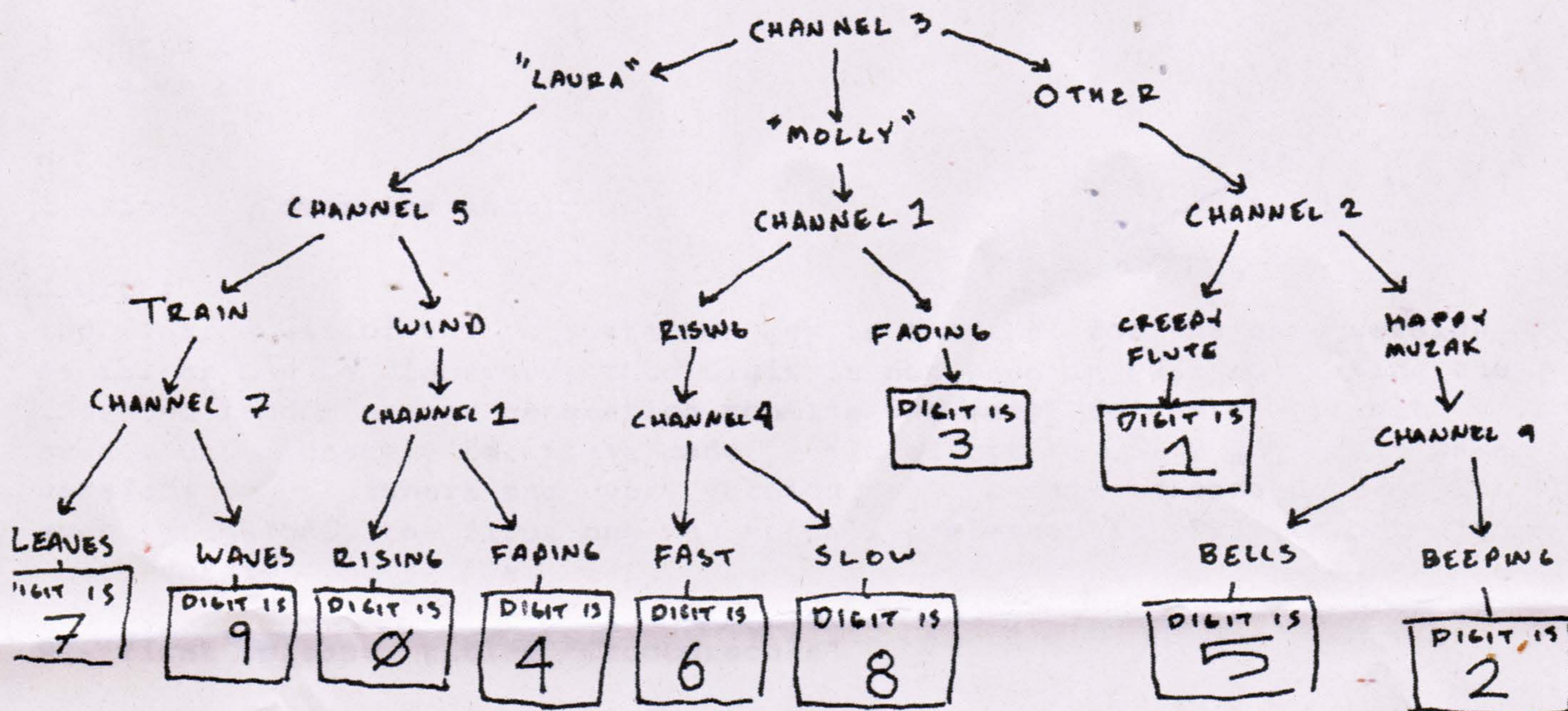
The thirteenth digit determines the letter on Drew's baseball cap (although Zoe will be wearing it after you give it to her).

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| A | R | N | O | L | D | J | C | H | I |

The full string in the code is "ARNOLDJCHIVE," probably an homage to Taleframe's president, Arnold J. Chive.

Digit 14

this is the weird one. the fourteenth digit affects the sounds that play when you mess around with the black dial in the radio station. there are nine different channels on the dial, but luckily you don't have to listen to all of them to determine the fourteenth digit of the registration key. if you use this "dichotomous key" you can narrow it down by looking at only a few channels.



Digit 15

the fifteenth digit determines the slogan on the sign outside the school. this one is slightly tricky because several of the slogans are basically identical.

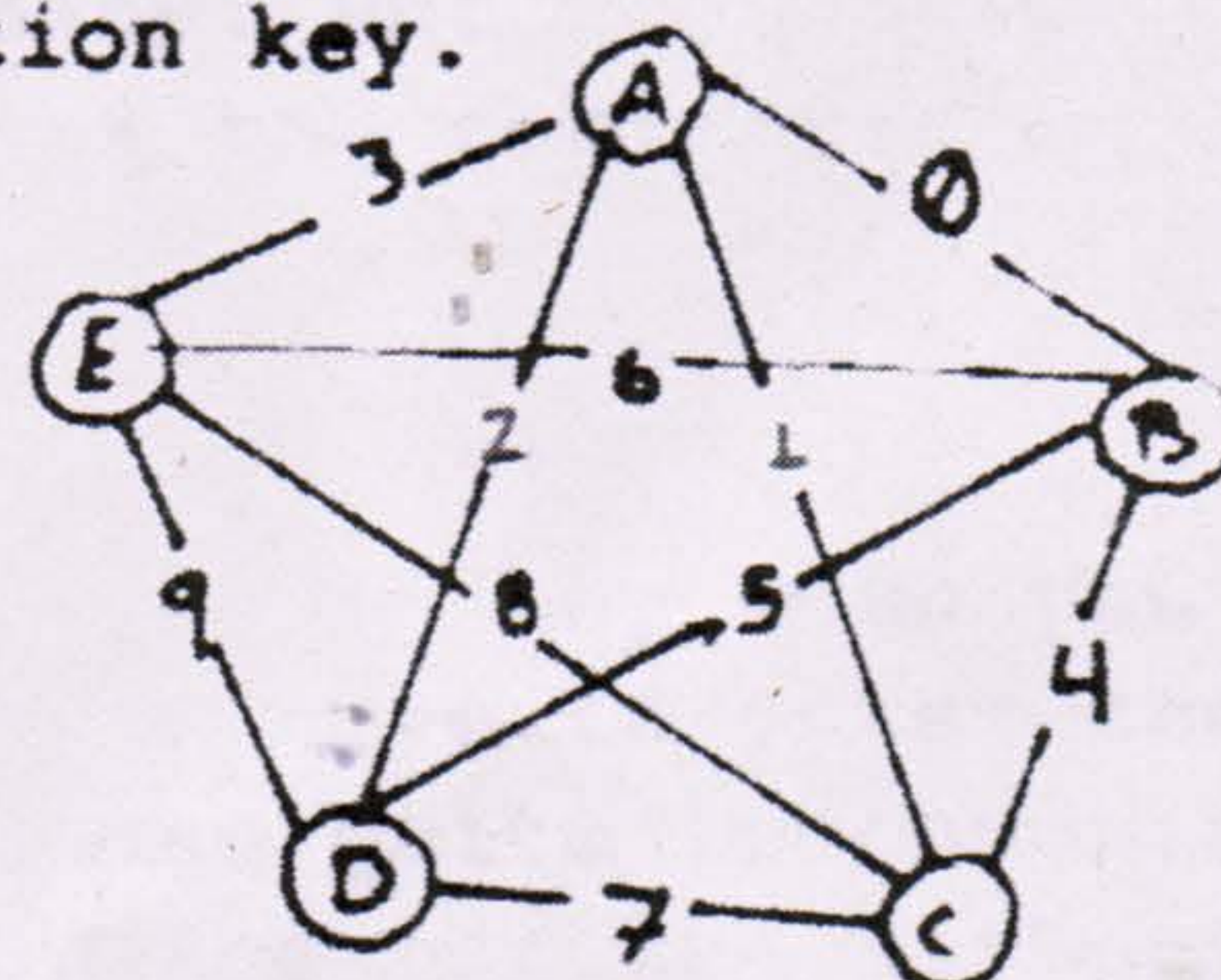
- 0 - "GO MARLINS!"
- 1 - "CHESS CLUB CANCELED"
- 2 - "GO MARLINS"
- 3 - "LET'S GO MARLINS"
- 4 - "FIGHT ON MARLINS"
- 5 - "GO MARLINS GO!"
- 6 - "ESTABLISHED 1972"
- 7 - "MARLIN PRIDE"
- 8 - "ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND!"
- 9 - "GO MARLINS!!!"

Digit 16

The mannequin in the thrift shop window moves when you're not looking. Actually, it switches between two poses, whenever you move far enough away from the thrift shop location. The sixteenth digit determines the two poses.

It's hard to represent this one in a simple table so follow these instructions: Note the two poses and the corresponding letters. Then find the line connecting those two letters in the pentagraph below. That line is marked with the sixteenth digit of your registration key.

- A - hand on its hip
- B - arms crossed
- C - waving
- D - slouching
- E - looking over its shoulder



Digit 17

the final digit of the registration key is a marker for the game version. as far as can be discerned, this digit is not used in RNG (suggesting the intended random number generation routine was meant to use a 16-digit seed). unfortunately teleframe made little effort to distinguish the game versions for consumers and every version has the same release date on it even though only the first one was actually released in 1990. to determine which version you're playing:

- 0 - first release, titled "Crocodracula"
- 1 - second release, title changed to "Crocodracula: The Beginning"
- 2 - third release. the easiest way to tell this apart from 2nd release is to refer to the airboat as a "fanboat." In version 2 (registration key ending in 1), "fanboat" is not recognized as a synonym, but it is added in this and all subsequent releases.
- 3 - fourth release. the only difference between this release and the previous release is in the game manual, where, for this release, the price for a Vocabulary Deputy star was hiked up from \$10 to \$15.
- 4 - fifth release. the bug that allowed you to carry Calvin around was fixed here, among others.
- 5 - final release, quite rare. this version added the option to play as either Becca or Zoe to give the game additional "replay value." (Aside from some text changes in the puzzle with Drew's baseball cap, the two characters play exactly the same.)