

My Resident Evil 4 Chronological Run: Merging the Main Story with Separate Ways

I have lost count of how many times I have played Resident Evil 4. The GameCube original, the PlayStation 5 remake, the VR version - I have seen Leon S. Kennedy fight his way through the Spanish village in almost every form. But last year, I decided to try something different: a resident evil 4 chronological run that combined the main campaign with the Separate Ways expansion, played in story order rather than release order. It completely changed how I see the game.

The idea came from a simple question. During the main game, Ada Wong appears and disappears in ways that feel mysterious but can also feel random if you have not played the original Separate Ways campaign. She shows up to help Leon, then vanishes. Why is she even there? The Separate Ways DLC, which Capcom released as a free side story in the original and later remade for modern platforms, fills in those gaps. It tells the story of what Ada and her ally are doing while Leon is rescuing Ashley Graham. So I decided to play both stories in chronological order, switching between them at the logical points. That became my resident evil 4 chronological run.



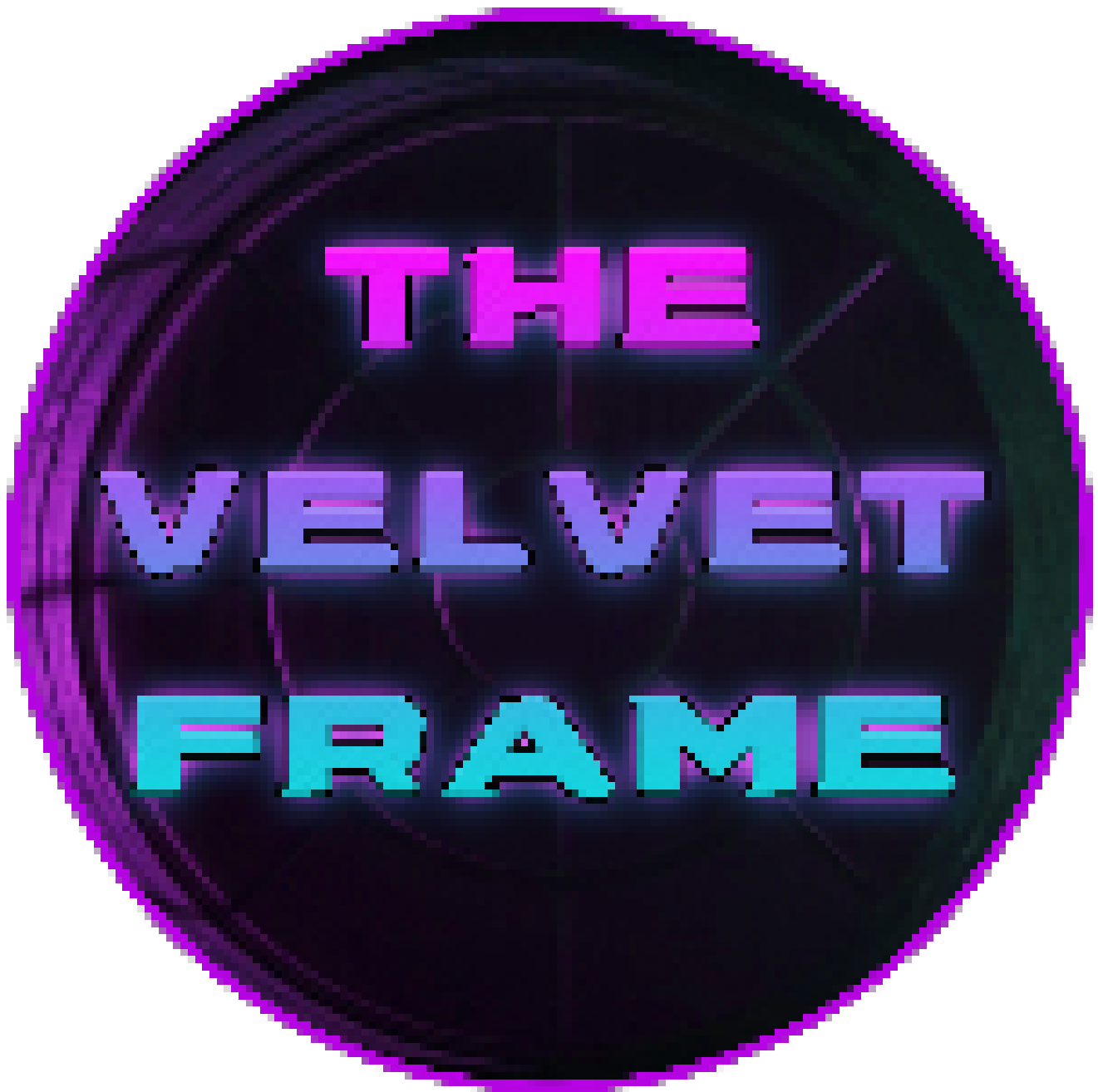
Planning the Order

The first challenge was figuring out the actual timeline. Resident Evil 4 is mostly linear, but Separate Ways overlaps with several chapters. After some research and a few fan edit guides, I mapped out a sequence that keeps both stories moving without spoiling each other. I played the main game up to the point where Leon first encounters Ada in the castle, then switched to Separate Ways up to where Ada leaves the island. Then I went back to the main game, and so on. It required some jumping between save files, but the payoff was worth it.

I also set some rules for myself. I wanted this to be a challenge run, so I played on Professional difficulty, the hardest setting available. Professional difficulty in Resident Evil 4 is no joke - enemies hit harder, ammo is scarcer, and the game punishes mistakes quickly. I also attempted a no-damage run, which meant restarting any chapter where Leon took a single hit. Combined with a no-saves challenge (no manual reloads, only the autosave), every encounter became tense. And to make it feel more cinematic, I turned off the HUD entirely. HUD-less gameplay forces you to rely on visual and audio cues for health, ammo, and enemy positions. It is immersive but brutal.

The Experience of the Run

The run took me about six weeks of regular play sessions. I recorded everything in 4K resolution on a PC gaming rig, aiming for something closer to a cinematic walkthrough than a typical gameplay video. The combination of no-damage and no-saves on Professional difficulty meant I repeated some sections dozens of times. The village fight at the beginning, where you have to survive the initial ambush, took me over forty attempts. Without the HUD, I had to memorise the number of shotgun shells I had fired and count the seconds until a grenade would explode. It sounds tedious, but it forced a level of focus I had not experienced in Resident Evil 4 before.



Switching between Leon's story and Ada's story at the right moments added emotional weight. For example, in the main game, Leon fights through the underground laboratory and then suddenly Ada is there, helping him escape. In my chronological run, I had just finished playing the Separate Ways section where Ada sneaks into that same facility, plants explosives, and sets the escape route. So when Leon met her, it felt like a planned rendezvous rather than a coincidence. The action-adventure pacing improved, and the survival horror elements hit harder because I knew exactly what the other character had been through.

Technical Choices: 4K and HUD-Less

Playing in 4K resolution on a modern PC with the HD mods available for the original GameCube release (or the remaster) makes a huge difference. The game was designed for standard definition, but at 3840x2160 the textures, lighting, and character models hold up surprisingly well. Leon's jacket, the Ganado's weathered skin, the damp stone of the castle - every detail becomes part of the atmosphere. The no-damage requirement also kept me from rushing. I walked slowly through dark corridors, listening for the audio cues that the HUD normally provides. A growl from the right, a footstep behind a door, the click of a Plagaas emerging from a cocoon. HUD-less gameplay turns Resident Evil 4 into a more deliberate, tense experience.

One practical tip if you try something similar: use a playlist system. I created separate save folders for each chapter and labelled them by story position. That way, when the timeline required switching from Leon's chapter 3-2 to Ada's chapter 2-1, I could load the correct file without confusion. A fan edit of the two campaigns into one continuous video would be easier, but playing it yourself gives you the control and the challenge.

What I Learned About Both Stories

Seeing the events from both perspectives highlights how well Capcom designed the original game's narrative. The main campaign works perfectly on its own, but Separate Ways adds context that makes Ada Wong a more sympathetic character. In the main game, she seems cold and manipulative. In Separate Ways, you see her take risks to help Leon, even when she does not have to. The final chapter of Separate Ways, which runs parallel to the last part of the main game, ends with Ada watching Leon escape on the jet ski. In my chronological run, that moment landed with real emotional weight because I had just played through her entire journey.

I also noticed how the difficulty curve changes when you play both stories. The main game gradually introduces tougher enemies. Separate Ways assumes you have already finished the main game, so it starts harder. In a chronological run, you face Separate Ways enemies earlier than intended, which makes the early chapters of the main game feel easier by comparison.

That is not a complaint; it just changes the rhythm. Professional difficulty kept both campaigns challenging regardless.

Is This for Everyone?

No, and I would not recommend it for a first playthrough. The [resident evil 4 chronological run](#) is for players who know the game well and want a new perspective. It requires patience, a tolerance for repetition, and a willingness to manage multiple save files. But if you enjoy speedrun-style thinking or if you want to create a cinematic walkthrough for your own archive, it is one of the most satisfying ways to revisit a classic. The no-damage and no-saves rules push the challenge further, but even without those, playing in story order is a rewarding experience.



I ended up with about twelve hours of footage, edited down to a single continuous narrative that cuts between Leon and Ada at the right moments. Watching it back, the story flows better than either campaign alone. The mystery of Ada's actions is gone, replaced by a deeper understanding of her role. And the gameplay, especially the HUD-less action-adventure sections, feels more like a movie you control. If you have a PlayStation 5 or a capable PC, I encourage you to try it. Just be prepared to die a lot, especially on Professional difficulty.

One final note: the Separate Ways content is not available on every platform in the same form. On PlayStation 5, you can buy the complete edition that includes it. On PC gaming, mods or the original GameCube version with emulation work well. Check your platform before you start.

And remember, the goal is not to finish fast but to experience the story in a new way. My run took weeks, but I enjoyed every restart.