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Award-Winning South Carolina Indie Game “Bugs ’N Boo Hags” Comes to iPhone and iPad Sept. 15

Live, Die, Repaint! New iOS game blends Gullah Geechee folklore, Lowcountry-inspired settings, tower defense and retro arcade action.

BEAUFORT, S.C. — Sept. 11, 2026 — Indie game studio Illustrategy LLC today announced that *Bugs ’N Boo Hags*, a 2D action game inspired by South Carolina Lowcountry folklore, history and scenery, will launch Tuesday, Sept. 15, for iPhone and iPad on Apple’s U.S. App Store. The full game will be free and fully playable with limited in-game ad support and no microtransactions.

Drawing inspiration from both the Gullah Geechee tale of the “Boo Hag” and the legendary “High Sheriff of the Lowcountry” Ed McTeer, *Bugs ’N Boo Hags* puts players in the role of a young “witchdoctor sheriff” of Beaufort County. Armed with “haint blue” paint and other magical items, players must protect regional landmarks from the Boo Hags — supernatural, demonic creatures who resemble normal women by day but slip out of their skin at night to sneak into homes and steal people’s life energy as they sleep.

The game combines tower defense with the fast-paced, single-screen platforming action and retro aesthetic of the early-1980s golden age of arcade video games. Its nearly 30 levels include locations inspired by the Robert Smalls House, a praise house on St. Helena Island’s Eddings Point, the ruins of Old Sheldon Church, the Tidalholm house featured in *The Prince of Tides*, *The Big Chill* and *The Great Santini*, and the Center for the Arts at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB), which appeared as the “Gump Medical Center” in *Forrest Gump*.

Created by Beaufort-area developer Brian Canada, a professor of computational science and chair of the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics at USCB, *Bugs ’N Boo Hags* represents more than a decade of development.

“I wanted to make something that was simultaneously a love letter to the Lowcountry and a tribute to the games I played as a kid,” Canada said. “When I learned about the Boo Hag upon moving to Beaufort County more than 15 years ago, she seemed like a natural antagonist for a video game. From there, the project evolved into an opportunity to draw inspiration from the places, stories and visual character associated with this part of South Carolina that I now call home.”

The Lowcountry is more than a backdrop for *Bugs 'N Boo Hags* — its folklore and scenery are deliberately incorporated into the game's mechanics. Palmetto trees, hanging Spanish moss and the sprawling branches of live oaks form ladders and platforms used to navigate each level. The tradition of painting porch ceilings "haint blue" inspired the action of painting a building's doors and windows to scare off the Boo Hags. Corn brooms and salt shakers temporarily distract and disable the hags. Horseshoe-crab-shell "witchdoctor masks" and health items like cheesy grits, Lowcountry boil and pulled-pork sandwiches help players survive the hags and other enemies like fire ants, mosquitoes and "palmetto bugs." Keep the hags out until they burn up at sunrise, and you'll live to fight another day, with a new location to protect in each 60-second level.

Originally a solo project, *Bugs 'N Boo Hags* grew to include collaborators from South Carolina and Pennsylvania, where Canada grew up. The game features original music by Canada's sister, Amy; music editing by Pennsbury High School classmate James Sauppe, now an assistant professor of music technology and co-creator of the Game Audio Proficiency certificate program at Community College of Philadelphia; environment art by USCB graduate Bethany Felix; and selected level designs inspired by house plans from Beaufort's Allison Ramsey Architects. And one of the game's key magical items — a purple kazoo — is inspired by Beaufort's Kazoobie Kazoos, the only manufacturer of plastic kazoes in the United States.

The game features eight playable characters, handmade pixel art and a chiptune soundtrack with original compositions and arrangements of African American spirituals and other melodies of yesteryear. The new iOS version features thoughtfully designed touchscreen controls, Game Center achievements and support for compatible physical controllers.

Backed by a successful 2019 Kickstarter campaign and originally released as a Steam Early Access title for PCs, *Bugs 'N Boo Hags* has received an honorable mention for Best Indie Game at Playthrough 2025 in Raleigh, North Carolina; the People's Choice award for Best Indie Game at Geekend 2018 in Savannah, Georgia; and selection for the PAX Rising showcase at PAX South 2016 in San Antonio, Texas.

Bugs 'N Boo Hags will be available free through Apple's U.S. App Store beginning Sept. 15. International releases are forthcoming. The launch trailer, App Store download link and more information are all available via the game's official website: bugsnboohags.com

About Illustrategy LLC

Illustrategy LLC is an independent game studio and creative technology consultancy based in Beaufort, South Carolina. Founded by Brian Canada, PhD, Illustrategy creates games, digital experiences and data-driven creative work that blends design, strategy and technology.

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