

BOOTLEGGERS

SMUGGLING RUN



BOOTLEGGERS: SMUGGLING RUN

Dedicated to Cameo Wood

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GAME DESIGN AND LAYOUT

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Based on *World of Dungeons* (J. Harper).

Inspired by: *Apocalypse World* (V. Baker) and

Gangbusters (R. Krebs, M. Acres, T. Moldvay).

PLAYTESTERS

Keith Anderson, Allison Arth, Mike Standish,
Andrew Farley, Les Hilliard.

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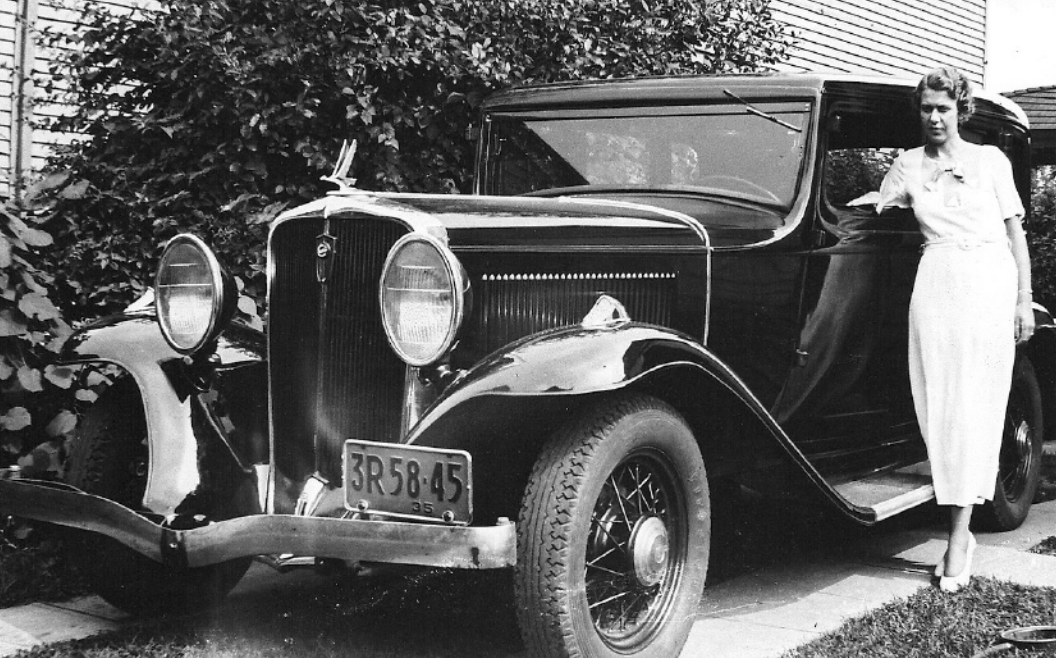


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OVERVIEW

Bootleggers is about a gang of criminals smuggling alcohol during prohibition in Seattle, Washington in 1930. Roy Olmstead, the so-called “good bootlegger” and ex-cop, runs 90% of the city’s illegal alcohol business and has bribed almost every police officer and city official to support his operation. The remaining scraps of booze trafficking, still worth a small fortune, are fought over by independent operators like you.

This first set, *Bootleggers: Smuggling Run*, covers your gang through their first six levels as they establish a reputation as daredevil smugglers supplying the speakeasies of the Emerald City. The follow-up set, *Bootleggers: Turf War*, covers levels seven through twelve as the gang sets up their territory and runs their own smuggling fleets, speakeasies, and stills.

This game is set in history, but don’t let that curtail the types of characters in your game. Characters can be of any gender, sexuality, race, or background that you want. Think of *Bootleggers* as a cool modern TV show about the prohibition era, not an accurate historical document.

WHAT DO THE CHARACTERS DO?

The player characters are members of the same gang of bootleggers. They’ve all served time for various crimes, but now they’re out and ready to start running booze together. Characters scout routes for smuggling, make contacts in the criminal underworld, drive cars and boats full of illegal alcohol and evade police patrols, get in shoot-outs with cops and rival bootleggers, steal alcohol and cash, and bribe law enforcement and officials to look the other way.

WHAT DO THE PLAYERS DO?

The players create a motley crew of scofflaws with interesting quirks and personalities. They put their characters in dangerous situations to experience the thrilling life of the outlaw and to win rewards to help propel their gang of hoods to bigger and bolder crimes.



WHAT DOES THE GM DO?

The GM cultivates a head-full of colorful Prohibition-era detail. (Time to hit your local library and Wikipedia. You'll find all kinds of wonderful details from history that you can adapt for your game.) The GM establishes the ongoing fictional world around the characters, especially the law-abiding civilian world and the violent criminal underworld; their important characters, connections, vulnerabilities, dependencies, opportunities, threats, and challenges. The GM plays all the non-player characters in the world by giving each one a concrete desire and method of action. *Big Al Lang wants to put out the best product on the market and he'll backstab or betray anyone to stay on top. The Dock Hounds gang wants to control the port and they'll kill anyone who stands in their way.* Each NPC and group you introduce offers the PCs a choice: will you align with their desire and become allies, or clash and become enemies? The NPC's desires and the players' choices form a network of possibility and the resulting ripples of consequences drive the action of the game.

WHAT DO WE PLAY TO FIND OUT?

We'll find out if this fledgling gang can make it in the bootlegging business. Will they rise to wealth, notoriety, and power? Will they stay ahead of the law? What will they do to achieve these things? How ruthless will they be? Do they have a moral center, or are they selfish psychopaths willing to do anything to win? Will they be loyal, or will they turn on each other? Will they form alliances or will they destroy those who stand in their way? Is this a story of action and achievement, or a story of tragedy and suffering? We don't know! We'll have to play to find out.



BACKGROUND

In 2012, I wrote a little dungeon-crawling game called *World of Dungeons* to be included as a stretch goal for the *Dungeon World* Kickstarter. *World of Dungeons* grew out of a game I ran for my co-workers at the office, beginning with *Basic Dungeons & Dragons* (Tom Moldvay) and eventually mutating into a simplified version of the core *Apocalypse World* mechanics upon which *Dungeon World* is based. When this game series came to an end, my co-workers wanted to try something new, while still retaining the simplicity of the game system. We were all fans of the HBO TV series, *Boardwalk Empire*, so I threw together some character sheets for 1930s bootleggers and a page of rules based on *World of Dungeons*, and we were off.

This is an expanded version of the game we played at the office, with some expansions and revisions. Thanks to Allison, Keith, Mike, Andrew, and Les for their help.

Designing and playing this game directly lead to the development of my next game, *Blades in the Dark* (also about a gang of criminals). You'll see a lot of *Bootleggers* DNA in that game.

TOUCHSTONES

When you pitch the game to potential players, here are a few pop-culture touchstones you can compare it to: *Boardwalk Empire* (TV series), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967 Film), *Scarface* (1932 and 1983 Films), *White Heat* (1949 Film), *Dillinger* (1973 Film)

THEME SONG

If this game was an HBO TV show, this would be the opening track: "Fire in the Blood / Snake Song" Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, featuring Ralph Stanley and Emmylou Harris. *Lawless* soundtrack (2012).

BOOTLEGGERS

GANG

WANTED LEVEL

SUPPLIERS

ROUTES

BUYERS

VEHICLES

DAMAGE

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

ALLIES

OTHER ASSETS

\$

SCORES

SCORE TYPE

CREATING THE GANG

Your gang starts at **Wanted Level 1**. You have one **Supplier** (a contact that provides alcohol, across the border in Canada), one **Buyer** (usually a speakeasy), and one **Route** (a path you've scouted for smuggling cargo). Choose from the lists provided below.

Choose one starting **Ally** from the list provided. Also choose one starting **Rival** gang.

For a **vehicle**, your gang has a Model T car or a small motorboat for running booze. It has **Speed -1, Cover 1, Ride 0** and **Cargo: 4 Cases**.

Your gang starts with \$100 of **Cash**. Cash can be used for repairs, bribes, and upgrades to vehicles. Your starting **score type** is: *Smuggle 2 cases of booze*. Every time you do that, you earn a **score**. When you earn 6 scores, your gang advances to the next wanted level.

Choose a name for your gang. Some examples are provided below.

GANG NAMES

The Night Owls, The Butchers, Haloran's Boys, The Red Caps, The Snake Road Gang, The Eels, The Lake Gang, The Pioneers, The Hammers, The Bandits, The Jackals, The Aces.

SUPPLIERS

Big Al Lang (*the good stuff, self-preservation*)

The Getty Brothers (*loyal, violent*)

Maggie Kendall (*shrewd, independent*)

Captain Clarke (*straight-laced, connected*)

Whitaker (*honorable, unforgiving*)

Baxter Hill (*generous, impulsive*)

BUYERS

Lucille's (*discrete, impatient*)

Frankie Vito, The Domino Room (*reliable, cautious*)

Minxie Malloy, The Kitten Club (*popular, ambitious*)

"Tuck" Malone, the Sons of Erin (*loyal, connected*)

"Rabbit" Liu, The Red Lamp (*direct, connected*)

Goldie's (*rich, shift*)

ROUTES

Back Roads / Sea Lanes
(Cover +1, Speed 0, Ride -1)

Off-Road / Hug the Coast
(Cover +2, Speed -1, Ride -1)

Open Road / Open Sea
(Cover -2, Speed +1, Ride +1)

The Straight Shot (Cover -2, Speed +2, Ride 0)

ALLIES

O'Hara's Junk Yard (50% vehicle repair costs)

Lucky's Garage (50% upgrade cost)

Officer Frank Olmstead (-1 Heat)

Samantha Gordon (50% attorney cost)

Sal Lombardo (+1 weapons quality)

Councilman Malone (50% bribes cost)

Doctor Malloy (50% hospital cost)

RIVALS

Your rival gang is level 3. Every time your gang levels up, roll 1d to see if your rivals have, too. 1-3: Yes. 4-6: No.

The Dock Hounds (*direct, violent*)

The Marcells (*clever, unorthodox*)

The McBray Family (*ruthless, sentimental*)

The Whidbey Gang (*stronghold, sneaky*)

The 12th Precinct (*cops, connected*)

The Forenzas (*professional, deadly*)

BOOTLEGGERS

NAME

LIFESTYLE

INS

PRE

REF

STA

ARSON
ASSAULT
BURGLARY
EXTORTION
FORGERY
GAMBLING
GRIFT
MURDER
R. DRIVING
SABOTAGE
SMUGGLING

CONNECTED
DAREDEVIL
DEADLY
MECHANIC
SAVVY
SURVIVOR
TOUGH
WHEELMAN

WEAPONS

BASIC

GOOD (1)

SUPERIOR (2)

RARE (3)

OTHER STUFF

NOTES

\$

FATE

WEEKLY CASH
ON HAND

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

To create your bootlegger, first choose one **Talent**. This is the crime for which you're known, and the reason you were recently locked up. You can use a talent for a re-roll once per session. Choose one **Special Ability**. Your special ability gives you moves that you couldn't normally do.

Assign ratings to your **Stats**: Insight, Presence, Reflexes, and Stamina. Your best stat has a rating of +1 (good). Your worst stat has a rating of -1 (poor). The other two stats are rated 0 (average).

You start with access to **basic weapons**. Choose a couple from the weapons list (page 10).

You start with no **Fate** points. (For a more cinematic game, the GM might give everyone 1 Fate to start.)

Your gangster only needs one **name** (first, last, or a nickname). Some suggestions are at the bottom of the page.

Your **Lifestyle** level begins at Poor. Lifestyle level measures the quality of your clothes and residence and determines where you can easily fit in. If you're poor, it's hard to get in to fancy restaurants, or arrange a meeting with a city official. As the game progresses, the gang will grow and your character's Lifestyle will advance. This is the main reason to get into smuggling, after all. Tell the group why your character wants to get richer. Do you have something to prove? Do you crave luxuries or attention? Do you want to make your mark on history, like Capone, Dillinger, or Bonnie and Clyde?

Finally, make a note of one or two **Connections** in your life. These are people who you care about who are not in the smuggling racket and probably don't know about your illegal activities. They wonder where you've been when you're gone for 5 days on a smuggling run.

NAMES

Abbot, Anderson, Aristotle, Baker, Barrow, Bruno, Burke, Buckley, Butcher, Campbell, Casey, Cavallo, Cullen, Cutter, Drake, Donovan, Doyle, Duffy, Flynn, Fox, Griffin, Hart, Hatchet, Hayes, Holly, Hughes, Kane, Kelly, Kurtz, Lynch, MacNamara, Maguire, Malone, Moran, Murphy, Nolan, Ollie, Oskar, Otis, Parker, Peaches, Riley, Robinson, Russo, Scott, Spider, Sweeney, Tanner, Trumbull, Turtle, Walsh, Whistler

TALENTS

Arson, Assault, Burglary, Extortion, Forgery, Gambling, Grift, Murder, Reckless Driving, Sabotage, Smuggling

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Connected: When you meet someone interesting, ask the GM which NPC connection the two of you have in common. You can always think of someone to bribe or otherwise influence to get something you want (though they may be out of your league).

Daredevil: When you attempt an especially dangerous stunt or go up against terrible odds, you take +1 to your rolls.

Deadly: When you do harm, it's one level more serious. You get +1 to Presence rolls when you threaten with deadly force.

Mechanic: Any vehicle you maintain gets a free upgrade (you can swap out what it is every week). You can fix up to 2 vehicle damage out in the field (you still pay for it).

Savvy: When you study a person closely, you can ask the GM any 2 of these questions: What are they really feeling? What do they intend to do? What do they wish I'd do? How could I get them to X? Are they telling the truth?

Survivor: You get +1 Fate point. (You can spend a Fate point to avoid any negative outcome)

Tough: You can ignore harm once per session (you don't need to roll). You get +1 to all harm rolls.

Wheelman: Any vehicle you drive ignores the first point of damage it takes on a run. You do +1 damage when ramming with your vehicle.

BASIC WEAPONS

Light Handgun: .32 automatic, .38 revolver.

Rifle: Bolt-action hunting rifle.

Shotgun: Double-barrel (at distance).

Explosives: Molotov cocktail.

Melee Weapons: knife, baseball bat, crowbar, brass knuckles, straight razor, garotte.

GOOD WEAPONS

Heavy Handgun: .45 automatic, .44 revolver.

Semi-Automatic Rifle: Winchester model 10, Remington model 8.

Shotgun: 12-gauge pump.

Explosives: Dynamite.

Melee Weapons: Switchblade, trench knife.

SUPERIOR WEAPONS

Submachine Gun: Thompson M1A1

Shotgun: Double barrel (up close).

Full Auto Rifle: BAR.

Explosives: Pipe bomb.

RARE WEAPONS

Machine Gun: M1919 Browning.

Explosives: Time bomb.

BRIBES

If you're not sure if a character can be bribed, roll 1d. 1, 2: No. 3-6: Yes.

Patrol Cop: Don't report minor offense: \$40. Serious offense: \$100. Major offense: \$500

Police Officer: Lose paperwork, procure information: \$50. Smuggle something into jail: \$100. Manipulate police deployment: \$250.

City Official to drop charges: Minor: \$100. Major: \$500. Serious: \$1500. Grievous: \$5000.

REPAIRS

Fix one box of vehicle damage for \$50.

UPGRADES

You can add an upgrade to a vehicle (increase its Speed, Cover, or Ride by 1) for \$500. You may also add an extra damage box or increase cargo capacity to 150% as upgrades. A vehicle can be upgraded two times, and no stat can increase beyond +3.

LIFESTYLES

POOR

Two simple outfits. Simple meals cooked on a hotplate. A bed in a communal room on a flophouse, or you sleep in the garage or boathouse where the gang keeps its vehicle. \$10 cash on hand per week.

STANDARD

Four simple outfits and one formal outfit. Decent meals at a diner. A small rented room in the city or a cramped cottage outside of town. A used car (Ford Model T). \$20 cash on hand per week.

FINE

Six nice outfits and two formal outfits. Good meals at restaurants. A nice apartment in the city or a small house outside of town. A new car (Ford Model A). \$50 cash on hand per week.

1930s PRICES

Tools (\$5 each): Crowbar, Hatchet, Lockpicks, Fishing Pole, Shovel, Rope, Grappling Hook, Pickaxe, Wire-cutters, Heavy Drill, Wrenches, Screwdrivers, Block & Tackle.

Used Cars: Model-T or similar (\$250), Truck (\$350), Large Truck (\$800).

New Car: Model-A or similar (\$1,000), Truck (\$1,400), Large Truck (\$3,500).

Luxury Car (\$7,000+): Cadillac, Mercedes, Packard, etc.

Clothing: Simple outfit (\$10), Nice outfit (\$30), Luxury outfit (\$200+). Fine watch, silk tie, simple jewelry (\$50+).

Speakeasies: \$1 to drink, \$2 for the good stuff, \$0.25 beer, \$1 to eat, \$10 to get drunk.

Property: Apartment Rental (\$15/week), House (\$3,500), Mansion (\$50,000), Commercial Lot (\$1,500), Warehouse (\$2,000).

RISKS & DICE

When a PC does something risky, you roll dice to see how it turns out. **Roll 2d6, sum them, and add any relevant modifiers.**

If your result is 10 or higher, it goes as well as we would expect in this situation.

If your result is a 7-9, it's a mixed result. Either you do it to some lesser effect, or you do it but there's a cost of some kind—time, pursuit, damage, a new danger, etc.

If your result is 6 or less, things go as badly as we would expect in this situation.

MODIFIERS

You'll usually add one of your **Stats** to a roll (in the rules, this is written like "roll+Insight"). The GM will tell you which stat to add, depending on what your character is doing.

- If you're taking a risk that involves awareness, knowledge, strategy, or understanding, add **Insight**.
- If you're taking a risk that involves influence, manipulation, charm, or threats, add **Presence**.
- If you're taking a risk that involves coordination, quickness, steady aim, or sudden action, add **Reflexes**.
- If you're taking a risk that involves toughness, endurance, strength, or patience, add **Stamina**.

Other possible modifiers include: your gang's **Heat** level (usually a negative modifier) and the **Speed**, **Cover**, and **Route** ratings of a smuggling route.

The GM has the option to give you an additional +1 modifier if you're in a really good position to attempt your action. You can always ask the GM what you might do to get into better position for the bonus.

TALENTS

If you have a talent that applies to the action at hand, you can use it for a **re-roll** once per game session.

HELP AND INTERFERENCE

If your action would make another character's action easier, give them a +1 to their roll. If your action would make another character's action more difficult, give them a -2 penalty. The GM has the option to count an NPC action as help or interference on a PC roll as well.

THE CHANCE DIE

If the GM needs to establish something and doesn't want to simply decide, roll a die. A low number represents something bad. A high number is something good. Or you might roll a die to determine the magnitude of something. A low number is a little; a high number is a lot. You might roll to establish the weather, find out if any witnesses observed a crime, or to determine if a patrolling cop appears. The GM may also roll the chance die if the PCs take some action for which sheer luck is the only factor in the outcome.

THE STAKES

You go to the dice when a character does something risky. Does this mean a character can attempt anything, as long as they make the roll? Not exactly, no. It's the GM's job to determine the stakes of the action at hand. They'll make a judgment call based on the situation, your character's abilities, and the action you take. The GM will ask you what you hope to **accomplish** with your roll and that will inform what you **risk**.

In general, the more you're trying to accomplish with your action, the more you'll risk. Once the GM tells you the risks, you have the option to revise your action before you roll.

Here's a technique for the GM: Whenever you're tempted to say, "No, you can't do that," instead, break down the action into several steps and tell the player what they need to do first. Like this: "Tossing a molotov through the window won't burn down the police station, but you could start by trying to lure most of the cops out of the building first. Then any fire you set won't be immediately extinguished."

SMUGGLING RUN

A successful smuggling run requires several elements all working together. In play, the player characters take actions and make rolls to achieve each element.

There are two legs to the run: The pickup leg and the delivery leg. Each leg involves several elements (listed at right). If the same character covers more than one element during a leg, they take -1 to their rolls.

EVASION

To avoid contact with enemies on your route (rival bootleggers, police patrols, etc.) roll+**Insight** of the lookout. Add the **Cover** values of the vehicle and chosen **Route**. Subtract the **Heat** level of the gang. *You can take a +1 bonus to this roll in exchange for a -1 penalty to the Damage roll later.*

- **10+:** You avoid contact with enemies or arrange to ambush them.
- **7-9:** It's a chase! They've spotted you and are in pursuit.
- **6-:** You blunder into an ambush. They have you stopped, in their sights. Do what they say or they start shooting.

TIME

To find out how long a leg of the run takes, roll+**Reflexes** of the driver. Add the **Speed** values of the vehicle and the chosen **Route**. *You can take a +1 bonus to this roll in exchange for a -1 penalty to the Damage roll later.*

- **10+:** You make good time. This leg takes 1 day.
- **7-9:** It's an average time. This leg takes 2 days.
- **6-:** It's slow going. This leg takes 3 days.

HAND-OFF

Criminal activities are not very reliable. There's always the danger that your contact senses weakness and tries to take advantage of you. When you do a hand off (either picking up or dropping off) roll+**Presence**.

- **10+:** You make a good impression and everything goes smoothly.
- **7-9:** Choose one: you show some weakness and the contact alters the deal (they keep half the **cash** from this score) or you stand firm and strain the relationship (-2 to your next hand-off roll with that contact).
- **6-:** They sense weakness and make their move. The GM will tell you what they demand (you won't like it). Give in, or make a show of force.

DAMAGE

A smuggling run is hard on the vehicle and its cargo. At the end of the run (before the final hand off) roll+**Stamina** of the co-pilot. Add the **Ride** values of the vehicle and the chosen **Route**.

- **10+:** Only routine damage. Mark 1 box of damage on the vehicle.
- **7-9:** You take routine vehicle damage (1 box) and lose 1/4 of the cargo to breakage.
- **6-:** You take routine vehicle damage (1 box) and lose 1/2 of the cargo to breakage.

PICKUP

Time
Hand-Off

DELIVERY

Evasion
Time
Damage
Hand-Off

Heat, p. 17

Cash, p. 16

CHASES

PURSUE

When you **pursue** someone who's trying to escape, roll+**Reflexes**. Add the **Speed** value of your vehicle and subtract the **Speed** value of the target.

- **10+:** Choose two:
 - Ram their vehicle. Take 1 damage, do 2 damage.
 - Hold steady and give your passengers a chance to shoot with +1 to their rolls.
 - Roll to **catch** your target.
- **7-9:** You may ram, doing 1 damage to both vehicles. Then choose one:
 - Hold steady and give the passengers of both vehicles a chance to shoot.
 - Roll to **catch** your target.
- **6-:** Target chooses one: They ram your vehicle for 2 damage, their passengers shoot, or they escape and end the chase.

CATCH

When you try to **catch** your target and end the chase, roll+**Reflexes**. Add their vehicle damage. Subtract your vehicle damage.

- **10+:** You catch your target and end the chase. At your option, you can also ram them to force them to spin out and crash, but your vehicle takes 1 damage.
- **7-9:** Choose one: You catch your target, but you both spin out and **crash**; or, your target gets away.
- **6-:** You spin out and **crash** and your target gets away.

VEHICLE COMBAT

When you shoot from or at a moving vehicle, roll+**Reflexes**.

- **10+:** You do your weapon level +1 damage to the vehicle, or inflict harm on an occupant.
- **7-9:** You do your weapon level in damage to the vehicle.
- **6-:** You miss.

Model T Car / Small Motorboat

Speed -1, Cover 1, Cargo: 4 cases

Model A Car / Medium Motorboat

Speed 0, Cover 0, Cargo: 6 cases

FLEE

When you **flee** from pursuit, roll+**Reflexes**. Add the **Speed** value of your vehicle and subtract the **Speed** value of the target.

- **10+:** Choose two:
 - Ram their vehicle. Take 1 damage, do 2 damage.
 - Hold steady and give your passengers a chance to shoot with +1 to their rolls.
 - Roll to **escape** your target.
- **7-9:** You may ram, doing 1 damage to both vehicles. Then choose one:
 - Hold steady and give the passengers of both vehicles a chance to shoot.
 - Roll to **escape** your target.
- **6-:** Target chooses one: They ram your vehicle for 2 damage, their passengers shoot, or they catch you and end the chase.

ESCAPE

When you try to **escape** and end the chase, roll+**Reflexes**. Add their vehicle damage. Subtract your vehicle damage.

- **10+:** You escape and end the chase. At your option, you can also ram them to force them to spin out and crash, but your vehicle takes 1 damage.
- **7-9:** Choose one: You escape pursuit, but spin out and **crash** out of sight; or, you get caught.
- **6-:** You spin out and **crash** and you get caught.

A chase gives a -1 penalty to the **damage** roll to determine vehicle and cargo damage at the end of the smuggling run.

If a vehicle **crashes**, it takes 1d vehicle damage and its occupants suffer **harm** (see page 14).

Model A Coupe / Fast Motorboat

Speed 1, Cover -1, Cargo: 4 cases

Model TT Truck / Large Motorboat

Speed -2, Cover -1, Cargo: 12 cases

HARM & HEALING

When you suffer harm, roll+**Stamina**, minus the **Weapon Level**. (Basic=0, Good -1, Superior -2, Rare -3)

- **10+**: You suffer the *least* harm we would expect in this situation.
- **7-9**: You suffer the harm we would expect in this situation.
- **6-**: You suffer the *most* harm we would expect in this situation.

If a rule tells you that the harm you take is “one level worse” consider it as the next lowest result (so a 10+ would become a 7-9).

Minor injuries heal on their own after a day. If you’re injured again before it heals, it becomes **Serious**.

Serious injuries require a doctor visit (\$25) and a week of recovery (you can still do things, but if you’re harmed again during recovery, your injury becomes **Major**).

Major injuries (from car crashes, gunshots) require 1d days of hospital care (see sidebar) and a week of rest with no activity.

When you inflict harm, roll+**Weapon Level**. (Basic=0, Good +1, Superior +2, Rare +3)

- **10+**: You inflict the *most* harm we would expect in this situation.
- **7-9**: You inflict the harm we would expect in this situation.
- **6-**: You inflict the *least* harm we would expect in this situation.

If a rule tells you that the harm you inflict is “one level more serious” (like the special ability **Deadly**) consider it as the next highest result (so a 7-9 would become a 10+).

FATE

If something happens to your character that you don’t want, like death, dismemberment, life imprisonment, or whatever, you can spend a Fate point to avoid it. Once a Fate point is spent, it’s gone forever, but you get more as your gang rises in Wanted Level.

LAYING LOW

When your gang takes a week off and lays low to avoid trouble or wait for members to recuperate or serve jail time, take -1 Heat. **Laying low costs \$100 x your Wanted Level** to pay various expenses and upkeep. If you can’t pay it, you can go into debt. You have to spend any cash you earn to pay down your debt until it’s gone.

HOSPITAL TIME

Major injuries (car crashes, gunshots) require hospital care. A normal hospital room costs \$15 a day. A secure room under a fake name costs \$25 a day.

If your **Lifestyle** level is Fine (or higher) you can arrange for private hospital care in your home for \$15 a day.

You can go into debt to pay for hospital expenses. You have to spend any cash you earn to pay down your debt until it’s gone.

DOING TIME

If your character gets nabbed by the cops, you'll face charges. First, you can attempt to bribe away the offense. If that doesn't work, you can hire an attorney (\$300 per level, up to +4). Then roll +**Attorney Level** to see if you can beat the rap. **10+**: You get away scott free. **7-9**: They nail you for a lesser charge. **6-**: They have you dead to rights. You have to serve the full sentence.

Minor offense: \$1,500 fine or 2 weeks in jail. **Serious Offense**: \$3,000 fine or 10 weeks in jail.

Major offense: \$10,000 fine or 2 years in prison. **Grievous Offense**: 10+ years in prison, or life, or execution.

If you have to serve time, you can: play a new character while your first serves time, or attempt a daring prison break (you'll probably need the rules for **Thugs**, page 16), or spend a **Fate** point to get off on a technicality.

FORTUNES

For each week of fictional time (usually once per session), the GM rolls to see what troubles and opportunities crop up for your gang. Roll a number of dice depending on the **Wanted Level** of the gang: 1 or 2: 1d, 3 or 4: 2d, 5 or 6: 3d, 7+; 4d. A bigger gang means more opportunities, but more potential for trouble, too. Use the dice outcomes to pick fortunes from the table below.

D6	CRIME	LAW	OTHER
1	A higher level gang demands that you turn over 1/2 of each score for the next month, as a show of respect, or face the consequences.	The cops haul your gang in for questioning as "the usual suspects." Roll 1d: 1-3 it's your crime. 4-6: It's not yours. Either way, they try to pin it on you.	A city official demands a large bribe (\$1,000) or a major favor or they'll send the cops after your gang (+1 Heat, for starters).
2	A rival gang demands that you turn over your last score, or face the consequences.	The Sheriff steps up patrols. All routes get -1 Cover for the next week.	Horrible weather gives all routes -1 Ride and -1 Speed for the next week.
3	A rival gang moves in on one of your buyers, suppliers, or allies and forces them to stop working with you. They might threaten a connection for leverage.	The mayor forces the cops to meet quotas, so they start raiding everyone. You get +1 Heat.	Speakeasies have surplus booze. Multiply smuggled booze amount by .75 to determine score values this week. (So, 3 cases = 2 cases.)
4	You get your hands on a gun stash. You have +1 weapons level this week.	Cops are pulled for other duties. All routes have +1 Cover this week.	Perfect conditions give all routes +1 Ride and +1 Speed this week.
5	Someone offers your gang a job roughing some people up and busting up a location. It pays \$500.	A desperate prosecutor offers to clear your excess Heat for a \$200 bribe. You also take -1 Heat this week.	Someone needs a person smuggled out of town. This counts as a regular score, but pays double cash.
6	You've been tipped to a source of quick cash. A level 3 target (bank, betting parlor, high-stakes card game) has \$1000 on hand, ripe for the taking.	You find out about a prisoner transfer. You can attempt a rescue of any incarcerated gang members. The convoy is a level 3 patrol, two cars and a truck.	A recent event has drained the city nearly dry. Speaks are desperate and pay more. Multiply smuggled booze amount by 1.5 to determine score value this week. (So, 2 cases are worth 3 cases.)

SCORES & ADVANCEMENT

You advance the level of your gang (and the player characters in it) by pulling off criminal jobs, called **scores**, usually in the form of smuggling illegal alcohol. The type of scores and the number you need to complete to advance depends on your current **Wanted Level** (see list at right).

An item on the list counts as 1 score at that wanted level. So, at level 3, you earn one score by smuggling six cases of booze or by stealing one case of alcohol from a rival criminal operation. If you smuggled 12 cases of booze in a truck, that run would be worth 2 scores.

CASH

Your **buyers** pay you for doing smuggling runs. Most of the money goes into the coffers of the gang for advancement, but you also end up with some spare **cash** you can spend on repairs, upgrades to your vehicles, and bribes. **A score pays the gang cash equal to its wanted level x 100.**

If the gang pulls off some other criminal job not on the score list, reward them with cash based on the level of the target x 100.

THUGS

Your gang has a number of unnamed thugs on-call to help out with labor and violent jobs. When you use your thugs against another group, roll **+Wanted Level**, minus the **Level** of the group you're up against (max modifier of +4/-4).

Police Patrol: Level 2. **Police Raid:** Level 4.

City Jail: Level 4. **State Prison:** Level 8.

Police Backup: +2 levels per call for backup.

STOLEN ASSETS

Your gang might steal some guns or a car at some point. You can use a stolen asset for one operation (one smuggling run, one robbery, whatever) then it's gone. You don't have the resources to support the extra assets long-term (until you level up and get better stuff). This is a bit artificial, but it's an abstraction that makes the rest of the game work, so try not to worry about it too much. Your characters are the type of people who lose a boat playing poker.

The same goes for suppliers and buyers. You can strong-arm or manipulate one into doing business with you, but it's only good for one transaction. If you want a reliable connection with a new contact, you'll have to level up your gang.

SCORES

Level 1: Smuggle two cases of booze (24 bottles).

Level 2: Smuggle four cases of booze.

Level 3: Smuggle six cases of booze. Steal one case from a rival.

Level 4: Smuggle eight cases of booze. Steal two cases from a rival.

Level 5: Smuggle ten cases of booze. Steal three cases from a rival. Steal the daily profits of a speakeasy or the weekly profits of another criminal enterprise (prostitution, extortion, etc.).

Level 6: Smuggle twelve cases of booze. Steal six cases from a rival. Steal the weekly profits of a speakeasy or the monthly profits of another criminal enterprise (prostitution, extortion, etc.).

ADVANCEMENT

When you successfully complete **6 Scores**, your gang and all the player characters advance to the next **Wanted Level** and get all the benefits of that level (see the tables on the next page). If you want to play a quicker game series, reduce the number of scores required to advance.

GANG ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	SUPPLIERS	ROUTES	VEHICLES	ALLIES	BUYERS	HEAT
1	1	1	1	1	1	0
2		+1			+1	
3	+1		+1			1
4				+1	+1	
5		+1	+1			2
6	+1	+1		+1		

For wanted levels 1-6, your gang is pursued by local law enforcement: The King County Sheriff's office (lead by Sheriff Matt Starwich) and the Seattle Police Department (lead by Police Chief Joe Warren).

When you advance to level 7 and play *Bootleggers: Turf War*, you'll attract the attention of Prohibition Agents and eventually, the newly-founded Federal Bureau of Investigation.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	TALENTS	FATE	STAT RATINGS	ABILITIES	LIFESTYLE	WEAPONS
1	1			1	POOR	BASIC
2		+1				
3			ADD 1 TO A STAT		STANDARD	GOOD
4	+1	+1				
5				+1	FINE	SUPERIOR
6		+1	ADD 1 TO A STAT			

When the gang advances, so do the characters. You automatically get all the rewards listed for that level when your gang's Wanted Level goes up.

HEAT

As your gang increases in level, it attracts more attention from the law and rival gangs. This is represented by your **Heat** level. You can also accrue temporary modifiers to your heat level as the result of certain actions.

- Use of non-lethal violence: +1 Heat.
- Use of lethal violence: +2 Heat.
- Crimes reported by witnesses: +1 Heat.
- Crimes reported by law enforcement: +2 Heat.

Heat modifiers last until you **Lay Low** (page 14). Each week you lay low, your heat level drops by 1 (to a minimum of your gang's default heat for their wanted level). You can also clear your excess heat by **surrendering** to the cops and taking the rap for the gang, or by **ratting out** one of the other gang members. (See **Doing Time** on page 15.)

RUNNING THE GAME

Here's the opening situation:

*You're on your way back down from Canada with a load of booze when you see a brief flash of headlights around the bend of the road ahead. It could be an ambush! Do you want to try to double back and take a different route to evade any trouble (roll **Evasion**, page 12) or charge forward and try to catch them by surprise (roll **Reflexes**)?*

GM, decide if the ambush is a roadblock of cops from the King County Sheriff's office or if it's a group of thugs from the PC's rival gang. Continue on from their initial roll, either evading escape or starting a chase or rushing ahead into a gunfight or whatever. Then follow on with the rolls for the **Time**, **Damage**, and **Hand Off** portions of the run. Then give the PCs their **Score** and **Cash**. This will introduce them to the economies of the game and show them how tough it is to get ahead when you're a small fish in the bootlegging racket.

The actions during the initial run will have consequences. Think about what the NPCs might be doing off-screen as a result. Did the PCs evade the ambush? Then maybe the cops or the rival gangsters are out hunting for them in town, or questioning one of their allies, or setting up another ambush somewhere else. Did the PCs have a fight? Maybe the cops or the gang are gathering reinforcements and looking to settle the score. Also, how did they know the PC's route? Maybe someone ratted them out. Maybe the PCs want to find out who it was. Follow the threads of consequence, ask the players what they want to do, and set the scene at the next point of action.

The game continues on in that fashion. Action, consequences. Action, consequences. Follow the PC's choices, play your NPCs — their desires and methods — let yourself be surprised by what happens. Don't pre-plan outcomes. Instead, give your NPCs plans and set them in motion to collide with the PCs and other NPCs and see how it all turns out.

NPCs

Give each NPC a **desire** and preferred **method** of action. What do they want? What will they do to get it? Describe two visual details about them (*very tall, smokes a pipe. weather-beaten face, scruffy clothes. big eyes, walks with a limp*). I like to write NPCs on index cards and keep them out in the middle of the table where everyone can see them so we remember them. "Oh yeah, we could ask Veronica about this!"

ACTIONS & CHOICES

Whenever possible, offer a player a choice when they take action and make a roll. Instead of just saying, "Okay, so you're beating him up to make him talk... roll Stamina," ask a question with an implied choice so the player can add more texture to the situation. Like: "Okay, so you want to make this guy talk, so what's it like? Are you up in his face, gripping his collar, fist cocked back, ready to pound him? Like you're showing him that you're tougher? Or is it all sinister, threatening him with a switchblade an inch from his eye? Or something else?"

This gives the player an opportunity to flesh out what kind of character they're playing, and the choice will help you determine which stat modifier they should use. You can weight certain choices with +/-1 modifiers to their roll, too (see below). "How vicious are you willing to be here? If you really get nasty, I'll give you a +1 to your roll, but when word of this gets out, you're gonna draw more Heat."

MOMENTUM AND INTERFERENCE

If a PC is in an especially good position to attempt an action, you can give them a +1 bonus to their roll. Likewise, if their position is really horrible, you can give them a -1 to their roll. You can use these modifiers to help negotiate choices for action. Like, "If you manage to get a whole case of Sal's favorite scotch, I'll definitely give you a +1 when you try to talk him into the new deal. But if Connor is there when the meet goes down, he's gonna bad-mouth you to Sal so that'll be a -1."

DESIGNER NOTES

Bootleggers is an example of a game design approach that I've been exploring for the past few years. I call it "develop in play." This game began as nothing but a character sheet, a list of 1930s prices, and a single mechanic (the roll for when you try something risky). That's all we needed to start playing. Everything else in the game was developed as we went along and ran into situations where we needed a new mechanic or procedure. Some of it was written down and eventually codified as "rules", but most things just arose or receded dynamically as we played, used or ignored as we saw fit. The process of "playing *Bootleggers*" was not just the PCs and the NPCs and their collisions of actions and consequences, it was also the process of building and refining the systems we used to play those fictional situations.

One of my goals in presenting this release of the game was to give you only slightly more material to work with than we had when we started. I've included expanded mechanics for smuggling, chases, and growing the gang, so your own *Bootleggers* games have a bit of a head start, development wise. But this game is intentionally still a collection of fragments. It's meant to be a toolkit for you to draw on as needed for your own unique instance of *Bootleggers* in play. I hope the simple presentation and transparency of the mechanics will inspire you to revise, expand, edit, and add-on your own systems when the need arises in your game.

I also hope that the mechanical modules presented here will appeal to game hackers who want to build something else from the parts — a game about space outlaws or cyberpunk data thieves or wild west train robbers or whatever. Just make a new character sheet, do the minimal amount of tweaking you need to, and get started playing. Build the game as you go along and see where the process of development in play takes you.

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PROHIBITION COCKTAILS

Sidecar

Shake well w/ cracked ice:

- 1 ¼ ounce cognac
- ½ ounce Cointreau
- ¾ ounce fresh-squeezed lemon juice.

Strain into chilled, sugar-rimmed cocktail glass

Mary Pickford

- 1 ½ ounce white rum
- 1 ounce unsweetened pineapple juice
- ½ teaspoon grenadine

Strain into chilled cocktail glass and drop in a maraschino cherry.

Bijou

Stir with cracked ice:

- 1 ounce London dry gin
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth
- 1 ounce green Chartreuse
- 1 dash orange bitters

Strain into chilled cocktail glass. Twist a piece of lemon peel for garnish.

Scofflaw

- 1 ounce whiskey
- 1 ounce dry vermouth
- ¾ ounce grenadine
- Dash of Angostura bitters

Stir ingredients over ice. Strain into cocktail glass. Garnish with an orange twist.

One Seven

- 2 ounces rye whiskey
- Serve in a tumbler over one ice cube (optional).