



THE 'HOOD

DIRECTOR'S CUT

JAMES MULLEN

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BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

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The following individuals are considered a menace to the public and should not be approached:
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THE
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YOU ARE HERE

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— GETTING READY — \$

So what's **The 'Hood**? It's an **Apocalypse World** hack about living a life of urban crime, where you and 3 or 4 friends get to act out the lives of some ordinary people trying to make a living on the uncaring streets of a modern city.

Apocalypse World (AW): an **RPG** released by Vincent Baker in 2010 with a post-apocalyptic setting and a system that involves rolling dice, then adding the results together to determine the outcome of an action. The setting has been expanded upon by lots of other creators who have added their own content; the system has been adopted by lots of creators who have made their own settings using the **AW** rules or a variation of them.

RPG: a role-playing game, basically a group storytelling activity where everyone contributes a part to the whole, weaving together a tale at the table. It's a game because there are rules, not a winner: things like dice are used to arbitrate what happens next in the story and also to inject a realistic element of uncertainty into proceedings. It's role-playing because most of the players take on the role of one single view-point character, their avatar in the world of the fiction: the character they play is their main tool for directing the story and influencing what happens in it.

The 'Hood is an adaptation of **AW**'s rules with a new setting: having a copy of **AW** or having played the system before will help you to play this game, but in case you aren't in either of those categories, this chapter will set you straight.

First & foremost, tell some friends about the game and arrange a time and a place for you all to play: you won't want less than 3 hours per session and you'll probably want at least 4 sessions to get the most out of the game. As you'll be sitting down for a long time in each session, make sure you're playing somewhere comfortable, with ready access to essentials and as little interruption or distraction as can be managed.

You're probably going to be the **Master of Ceremonies (MC)** if you're arranging all this, so your job is a little different from everyone else's once you start playing, but that's an in-game thing: you're not responsible for other people's fun, so don't feel pressured to make everything perfect for them. You will need to provide, or arrange for another player to provide, paper, pencils, erasers and some six-sided dice, plus these rules and some printouts. The main things to printout are the

playbooks included in the game: there are 27 of these, but you may not want them all and you certainly won't need them all. There are also some MC aids at the back of the book that you might find useful for organising your notes about the game.

— TALKING ABOUT IT — \$

Imagine you're the creative team behind a hot new TV show: not just the director and the writing team, but also the actors who throw in suggestions about their characters' motivations and how they would deliver their lines. That's what you and your friends are sitting down to do: you're working out the script of that show episode by episode, scene by scene, and acting them out live on-screen at the same time, so there are no rewrites, no reshoots and no re-edits. You're going to do this by talking: lots of talking. The game is a conversation you're having with your friends about hypothetical situations where you always go forward from the consequences of one to the premises of the next.

The **MC** is the producer/director: they secure the budget, cast the supporting actors, oversee the set-building and generally make sure the show has everything it needs before & during broadcast. They're also part of the writing team: they help to come up with the main characters, fleshing them out with relationships, histories and goals, but they don't play one of the main cast, that's left to everybody else.

The main cast are the **Player Characters (PCs)**, the protagonists of the show, the ones whose lives we take the closest interest in: every player besides the MC is both the lead writer and starring actor for their PC. If you're playing a PC, you create your character along guidelines laid down by the whole writing team, then you both write and deliver their lines. Each playbook in the game is the foundation of a different character type, from the respected but troubled Bastion of the community to the sneaky and avaricious Thief: the playbooks give options and suggestions for playing a certain type of character, but it is each player's final decision as to what the PC will be like on screen.

There's a principle: it's called "**Say yes or roll the dice.**" It's a guiding principle of play and you're playing if you're sitting at the table starting a conversation about the game; so, when you're all picking playbooks, making up characters and generally setting up the situation you'll face in the story, remember to say "Yes" to what your friends propose. If it fits, it goes in, and if it's a part of modern urban life, then it fits:

if something's hitting your triggers, then ask if it can be left out-of-sight or have a veil drawn over it when it comes up, but be polite and ready to suggest a way the contribution could be modified to be acceptable to all parties.

Once the story begins, with the first scene on the first day of shooting, the conversation you've been having starts getting mediated by the dice: there will be plenty of places where the story forks in two different directions, depending on how well the PCs do. The dice choose which fork you go down, but it's still up to all of you to write the story around that choice.

— DOING IT — \$

The game's mechanics are built around **moves**: these are the algorithms of play, the tiny pre-set processes that guide you through how to do what you're doing. Sometimes moves are simply consequential, e.g. "When A happens, then B," or "When A happens, then choose B or C," but a lot of moves need you to roll the dice, because life is unpredictable.

When a move says to roll, you pick up two six-sided dice and roll them together, then add up the results on each die, e.g. if you roll a 3 and a 4, then the total result of the dice is 7. Each move also tells you how the dice get modified, because you're not on a level playing-field and different characters in different situations will have different odds of success or failure; most often, you'll be told to roll+your PC's stat. Each PC has 5 stats with scores in each one that range from -1 to +3, so if your Wise stat is -1, then when you roll+wise, you take -1 from the total, turning a result of 7 into a 6, for example.

There are three types of result you can get from your move:

- If the total after modifiers is 10 or more, you got what you wanted at little or no price.
- If the total is from 7 up to 9, you got what you wanted but with a larger price tag attached.
- If the total is 6 or less, you didn't get what you wanted.

Any final result of 7 or more is called a hit, whereas a 6 or less is a miss: after you make a move, the MC will respond with a move of their own, either a soft move (if you got a hit) or a hard one (if you got a miss). Soft moves just move the story forward in new ways, laying out opportunities or challenges for the PCs; hard moves will cost you something important to the character, like their health, freedom or reputation.

Playing your character means defending them and their interests: you want them to be healthy & solvent because that

gives them the freedom to do more of the things they want to do. In addition to being injured and going broke, the characters will also attract the wrong kind of attention from time to time, drawing the retribution of the authorities or their own victims & rivals down on themselves. There are mechanics in the game that track all these factors in a simplified way, so it's easy to check how fit & able your PC is, how much cash they have available to them and how many enemies they're making: you'll accumulate all three as a result of hard moves from the MC, so you'll often have to make a move to deal with one of these problems.

Over time, each PC can grow and change, learning new skills, bettering themselves and expanding their influence over **the 'hood**: a number of moves, especially missed ones, can result in the PC learning a lesson about life, something they can take forward into future interactions. When you get told to **mark experience**, you tick a box in your playbook: when you fill five of these boxes with ticks, you erase all the ticks and choose a little bonus for your character, like raising one of their stats or gaining a new special move.

You can also advance over the backs of your friends: when they do something to piss you off or take advantage of you, you mark a debt with them. This debt works like a bonus to your roll when you help or interfere with what they're doing, but also when it reaches 4+, you erase it and choose a favour, like getting them to do what you say, take the rap for you or show you one of the tricks of their trade.

—— THE STATS —————\$

Name: being respected, being reliable, being connected.

Hush: being discreet, being subtle, being close-mouthed.

Brass: being bold, being determined, being pragmatic.

Wise: being prepared, being cunning, being aware.

Straight: being clean, being lawful, being a citizen.

Debt: how much someone owes you.

Heat: how much attention you're drawing to yourself and your activities. Some moves give you heat; you can also take heat when you miss a roll. Heat is mostly bad but you'll learn faster when the heat is on.



ASK AROUND

When you **ask around**, roll+name. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- What you find isn't quite what you expected.
- You find out where it is, but you'll have to fetch it yourself.
- There are strings attached to acquiring it.
- You owe someone for this; mark them for payback.

This isn't like going up to someone and interrogating them, but about using your reputation amongst the criminal fraternity to find whatever you're looking for. You make it known what you want and you hope that the answer comes back to you; it's a lot like sending out a sonar ping and hoping to get a good strong return signal. You can ask around for any object, place, person or information; if it's an object with the hot tag, you can only get it by asking around.

COVER YOUR TRACKS

When you **cover your tracks**, roll+hush. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+ choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- It takes a long time.
- It can be traced back to you.
- You need someone's help; they take +1 debt with you.

Covering your tracks can mean a lot, like tipping someone a few quid to look the other way while you do what you need to do, picking a lock without damaging it or faking an identity. This is the slow and cautious approach to getting things done; for the fast and messy version, see below.

TAKE THE HARD WAY

When you **take the hard way**, roll+brass. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- Take +1 heat.
- You've made a new enemy; mark them for payback.
- Take -1 forward.

Taking the hard way means getting past an obstruction as quickly as you can and not worrying about how much attention you attract: it's all about getting the job done and getting away before anyone comes to have a look. Pushing a guard out of your way, battering down a door or driving straight through a road block are all examples of doing things the hard way.

TAKE THE HEAT OFF

When you **take the heat off**, roll+brass. On a hit, deflect 1heat to another PC before you take it. On a 7-9, they gain +1 debt with you.

Heat is like lightning: it needs to strike somewhere, so the trick is to guide it to the right target. Let's make things clear though, this isn't a good thing to do to your outfit. **Taking the heat off** redirects some incoming heat from you to someone else in your crew, maybe because you left them in the frame or tipped off an interested party. Whatever it is, you're looking to pin the blame on them when you do this, so they have a right to be pissed with you; on the other hand, maybe they should be grateful, as they get to mark experience for taking the heat instead of you.

ARGUE THE TOSS

When you **argue the toss**, roll+wise. For NPCs, on a 10+ they just do it your way, while on a 7-9, mark them for payback if they do it your way; for PCs, on a 10+, they mark experience if they do it or take +1 heat if they don't, while on a 7-9, they take +1 debt with you if they do it and -1 debt with you if they don't.

This isn't about forcing someone to do what you want, just haggling with them; you can't make someone give you all their money for nothing, but if they've agreed to pay you for something, this is the way to negotiate the price. This move is all about the small details, not the big picture, so you don't get a say in what happens so much as how it happens.

PLAN B

When you go to **Plan B**, roll+wise. On a hit, the MC gives you a way out of whatever trouble you're in; choose options if you take it. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2.

- You have to leave someone behind.
- You don't get what you came for.
- Your livelihood is threatened.

When it hits the fan, you need to be prepared; this move usually follows a hard move after a missed roll, when the outfit are up against the wall and need a way out right now. Not all plans are perfect however and there is always a price to be paid for getting out of trouble.

LIE LOW

When you **lie low**, roll+straight. On a hit, take -1 heat. On a 10+, you may also take an additional -1 heat, but you owe someone for this; mark them for payback. On a 7-9, you do not get the additional -1 heat, but you still owe someone for this; mark them for payback.

Everyone has family, friends and colleagues, ordinary people who aren't of interest to the police (or not as much interest, anyway). When you make this move, you call upon one of these connections to provide you with an alibi, cover up for you or give you a place to hide. Eventually, the heat will die down and you can get back on with things, but it's likely the people who help you out when you're in need will expect you to return the favour some day.

—— PERIPHERAL MOVES ———\$

When you **take heat**, mark experience.

You're in the School of Hard Knocks and you can't afford to miss a single lesson: when things get hot, you have to learn fast what it takes to survive or else end up in permanent detention.

When you **make trouble**, roll+heat. On a hit, friends or family turn their backs on you; on a 12+, take +1 heat; on a 7-9, you can mark them for payback and they don't turn their backs on you. On a miss, your friends and family will help you out, this time.

Sometimes, you're just not wanted around: family, friends and colleagues might turn their backs on you if you keep making life hard for everyone around you. When you turn to them for help or support, or even when you just expect things to carry on as normal, you could be making trouble for them; the more heat you have, the more likely they are to turn their backs on you. This could mean anything like they don't go out for a drink with you, to your girlfriend dumping you or your boss giving you the sack.

When you **cross a partner**, they take +1 debt with you.

If you make a deal with another PC but don't keep your end of it even though they keep theirs, you've crossed them. This is entirely a verbal matter: it's up to the players and the MC to decide when a cross has taken place, but if it's not obviously a cross, then it probably isn't one.

When you **double-cross**, use your special move.

If you make a deal with another PC but neither of you keep up your end of it, it's a double-cross. Both PCs use the special move from their playbooks. As above, it's up to everyone around the table to decide when a double-cross has really taken place, but it should be even more obvious than a cross.

When you **pay cash**, spend dough and take a 10+ on any move right now but with no consequences, e.g. choose none. Money talks and you can get anything you want done if you can afford it; when you pay cash, you pay someone to do the job for you, which costs you as much dough as the MC thinks that service is worth. The dough represents a fee or bribe paid to either get the job done, to get someone to look the other way while you do it or to pay for any damage it causes so it doesn't bring you any trouble.

GET ROUGH

When you **get rough**, roll+edge. On a 10+, take your opponent down. On a 7-9, choose 1.

- They take -1 forward.
- They back off.
- They're down but you take -1 ongoing for this situation.

You can only **get rough** if you've got a weapon that gives you +edge, which are all hand-held, melee weapons, including saps, bludgeons, knuckle-dusters, flick knives, carving knives and swords. If you've got no such weapon, you can't make this move.

OPEN FIRE

When you **open fire**, roll+lead. On a 10+, take your opponent out and take +1 heat. On a 7-9, take your opponent down and choose 1.

- Take +1 heat.
- Dump the weapon you used.
- Leave without getting what you came for.

You can only **open fire** if you've got a weapon that gives you +lead, which are all piercing, ranged weapons, including pistols, rifles, shotguns, long-bows and crossbows. If you've got no such weapon, you can't make this move.

— THE HEAT IS ON — \$

When your life gets loud and messy, it brings the heat down on you; heat can come from the police, who start investigating things you've done, or other authorities who poke their nose into your life, such as the Department of Social Security or the Trading Standards Authority. Heat can also come from the bigger fish in your pond, the real villains who sit at the centre of all the nets and pull on them: upset them and you'll be looking at the daisies from the wrong side.

There are two common ways you can gain heat: by taking it as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you, following a miss. Either way, your heat goes up by +1; when it does, you can try to **take the heat off** right away and deflect that +1 to another PC. They don't have to like this but if you do it, it's done: they can't deflect it back to you or onto someone else.

If you've already got heat, then you can try to lie low with an NPC: you might end up owing them a favour, but that can be a small price to pay for staying out of serious trouble. As long as you're hot, your family, friends and colleagues may be less cooperative, as you'll be **making trouble** for them all the time.

When your heat reaches 5+, you're **burned**: either the authorities have enough evidence on you to send you to prison or the heavy mob have enough reason to take you out of their way for good. Whichever is the case, the PC is permanently taken out of play.

Every time you take heat, you also mark experience; whenever experience reaches 5, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Choose a move from your playbook.
- Take +1 in any stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a move from your playbook.

— DEBT AND PAYBACK — \$

When another PC gets one over on you or makes use of your services without paying for them upfront, they owe you a debt. This hack uses debt instead of Hx to represent the relationships between the player-characters: it's not about how well you know each other but how much you owe to each other.

roll+debt: on a hit, they take +1 or -2 to their roll, your choice. On a 7-9, you expose yourself to the same consequences as they are exposed to.

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.

When you screw an NPC or take advantage of them, you owe them: write their name down in your payback box, along with a note of how & why they want repaying, such as:

My Mum: I borrowed her car to run some errands; she'll want me to drive her somewhere far off.

Mental Mickey: I left him to face the music on that last job we did; he'll be looking for my blood unless I find a way to sweeten him first.

As long as an NPC is still listed in your payback box, you can't make use of them any further; anytime you have to owe someone for something, you have to pick an NPC who is not already awaiting payback, if there are any.

There are two main ways to erase a name from your payback box: either you can seek them out and try to repay the favour they did you (or the trouble you caused them) or you can wait until they come looking for you. In the former case, you get to choose how you'll pay them back; in the latter, the MC chooses what sort of payback they're looking for. Whenever you miss, the MC can use any NPC you owe to interrupt your plans or to make demands upon you. As always, it's a conversation between the players and the MC, so talk it out and see what works; a common method of payback is promising to do a job for the NPC who is owed, but the payback isn't complete until the job is successfully over. If you make a promise and fail to carry it out through no fault of your own, it's up to the MC whether the NPC finds that acceptable or not; if not, they can extract another promise from you and so on.

The names in your payback box are your problem: even if you make a deal with someone else to help you with the demands of an NPC, the NPC in question will still be coming to you if things don't work out, not the people you sub-contracted to handle them.

— DOWN AND OUT — \$

There is no harm in this hack; players don't track how badly hurt their characters are, because there are only three states they can be in. By default, all characters are **fine**: in fact, you won't normally see any reference to being **fine** anywhere else, because it's assumed that's the state the characters are in. Being **fine** makes no difference to how the game works, as PCs can't do much unless they're **fine** and you can be fine even if you're bruised and bleeding, as long as you can walk away from whatever hurt you.

When you can't walk away on your own, that's when you go **down**: this means you're badly injured and really in need of medical attention. When a character goes **down**, they can't influence the current scene any further, which means no making moves of any kind: they're reduced to speaking and moving only, nothing else, and they'll probably need help with the moving.

When you go **down**, your livelihood is threatened and you take -1 ongoing for as long as your injuries or illness persist; to recover from **down** back to **fine** just requires some time, some rest and the proper treatment. If you can't get all those, you'll stay **down** until you can get them; this is one of those areas where there aren't any hard rules for how long you stay **down** for, but it should take at least a few days of time in the game.

***Ongoing:** as long as the current situation continues, unresolved.*

If you're **down** and more bad shit happens, or if you get hit hard enough all in one go, then you're **out**: end of the line, game over, send flowers to the family. **Players:** you're not immune from this happening just because you're playing one of the lead characters in the story. **MCs:** don't pull your punches on this one; if a PC gets taken out, and it makes sense in the story for that to happen, then it happens. There are moves in some of the playbooks which provide a bit of insurance against being taken **down** or **out**, so don't dilute the significance of those by giving everyone a safety net.

The main threat to the player-characters comes from the other player-characters: the only direct way to take someone **down** or **out** is by **getting rough** or **opening fire**, moves that are only open to PCs, not NPCs. That said, if you try one of those moves against an NPC and miss, the MC can respond with a hard move by taking you **down**, if it fits where the conversation is at: failing that, you can certainly expect to take +1 heat just for

trying what you just did.

One of the Feelgood's unique moves, **I can make you feel good**, lets them quickly heal a character from **down** to **fine** or even from **out** to **down**; in the latter case, the move needs to be made without delay and characters can't waste time doing anything else or the opportunity will be lost.

For example, if a shoot-out goes badly and you're lying bleeding on the floor, the other characters need to get you to the Feelgood now: staying here to finish the job is not an option. If some moves are required to get to the Feelgood (ask around, take the hard way) or negotiate his services (argue the toss), that's all part of the drama, but if the characters get held up or diverted, then it's a safe bet that they won't reach their goal in time to save your life.

—— THE SILENT ECONOMY ———\$

All the characters in the 'hood are getting by somehow, whether they're jacking cars, pushing drugs or just taking bribes to look the other way. As long as they're **getting by**, they're keeping their heads above water and they can afford to do ordinary, everyday things, like pay their bills, buy groceries, go out for a drink with their mates and so on. Like everything in a consumer-driven society, it's not a problem as long as you've got the money for it; you're not going to make a fortune that way, but at least you'll have a roof over your head.

In every playbook, there is an entry for Loot that tells you how you **make a living**. As long as you fulfil this condition, your livelihood is safe and you can carry on as normal. The trouble starts when your livelihood is threatened, which can come about in a number of ways:

- When you have to spend a lot of money at once, e.g. buying a car, paying legal costs & fines, etc.
- When someone demands a large sum of money from you as payback.
- When you're unable to protect your livelihood, e.g. when you're down.
- When a move says so, e.g. when the Feelgood's supply of drugs is interrupted.
- When the MC makes a hard move against you.

If your livelihood is threatened, you're **short**: as long as you're **short**, you can't afford to do anything that costs more than a token amount. You can't pay your bills, buy groceries, etc, and you certainly can't afford any major expenses. When you go **short**, that's when the credit on your travelcard runs out,

when your horse doesn't even cross the finish line and when your kids all need new shoes all at once. Being short isn't just about lacking cash, but lacking means: job offers dry up, opportunities slip through your hands and all your accounts are in the red, with the bailiffs hammering on the door and their van ready to take away all your worldly possessions. Being **short** is bad: the longer you let it go on, the worse your situation will get.

Restoring a livelihood is part of the conversation between you and the MC: the fundamental goal of all the PCs is protecting or restoring their livelihoods. Whenever you restore your livelihood, mark experience; how you do that depends on how you make your living and how you ended up **short**, but basically, find the problem and deal with it. If it's the authorities nosing around, making it impossible to do business, then find a way to move them on, even if that means grassing up a mate; if you've had to pay back a big favour and it's left you short, then find someone who needs a favour from you and do it, no questions asked. Whatever makes sense in the fiction, that's what you need to do, and until you've done it, you're going to stay **short**.

As long as you're out there **getting by**, you'll be in a position to make some real money and improve your circumstances; all the extra cash you earn, steal or otherwise acquire, as well as all property you own but don't need to detail (clothes, beds, kitchen utensils, TV, game consoles, etc) is represented by dough. Anytime you do something that earns you cash or credit above and beyond what you get for **getting by**, take dough; the MC will tell you how much you get, but unless you've made an extraordinary effort to earn it, it won't usually be more than +1 dough.

One important way for dough to change hands is when you **argue the toss**: the MC usually sets a value for goods or services which is not favourable to you, so you can make the move to get a better deal, but you can't stray too far from the price the MC has set, e.g. if they've set the value of what you're offering at 1dough, you might get 2 or even 3 dough for it, but not 4 dough or even more. It's a dynamic economy though and what has a value of 1 dough today to one person might have a value of 3 dough tomorrow to someone else, giving you a much better chance to make a deal; in order to really profit, take some time to make your services even more valuable. When people are desperate, they'll pay just about anything at any price: there's time for buyer's remorse later, but what goes around, comes around, and further down the line, someone's going to screw you out of your last buck.

Another way to get dough is to carry out a job: pull off a big heist or hustle and make a killing quickly. Jobs need careful planning and the assistance of others:

- **Heist:** a big robbery, targeting a place (bank, bookies, supermarket, etc) or the van that takes money between them; well suited to the Heavy, Ice, Merchant, Mover and Thief.
- **Hustle:** a big con, targeting a person (investor, politician, executive, etc) or the organisation they represent; well suited to the Blur, Go-Between, Lever, Schemer and Shark.
- **Help** for either of the above might be required from the Bastion and the Fallen, or they might just muscle in on the deal uninvited.

There's no fixed way to pull off a job, but it starts by looking around for an opportunity you can exploit, then getting more details from the MC; using those details, you can start to plan out what your characters are going to do and how they're going to do it. Some of this will require you to make a move, particularly asking around for more information or for the services of a specialist like a safe-cracker; some things will open you up to moves by the MC, like **taking heat** or **threatening your livelihood**.

For example, some of the characters decide to heist the security van that delivers money to the cashpoint at the local supermarket. What follows is a conversation between the players and the MC: the MC suggests or demands things they must do, like finding out when the money is going to be delivered and getting their hands on some guns to stage the heist. Along the way, the MC will state how much dough they're likely to get for this, say 9 or 10 dough in total: getting that dough depends on pulling off the job and getting away with it, with a high likelihood that it will generate heat at any stage.

Dough also provides leverage: enough money can buy just about anything, so a PC with the dough for it can pay cash. This move lets you buy a 10+ result for any move, including a unique move from any playbook, but without any negative consequence, e.g. you choose none on most moves, you can take -2 heat when you lie low without having to mark anyone for payback and so on.

If the PCs want to form a proper gang, then it is dough which holds them together; the gang leader invests an amount of their own dough equal to the number of PCs in their gang (not including themselves.) This dough is not spent, merely held; each PC then changes their Loot statement to read "**You're getting by as long as the boss of your gang is.**" The gang boss

keeps their existing Loot statement, so the whole gang now exists to serve the boss' purpose. If at any time the gang boss has less dough than the number of PCs in their gang, they have to let some of them go; a PC can also leave the gang voluntarily, if they can negotiate it with the boss. When a PC leaves a gang for any reason, their livelihood is threatened. A gang member can also end up short in the usual ways, e.g. by having to pay a large amount of money; the gang boss should be involved in any attempt to restore their livelihood.

— HOT PROPERTY —————\$

Whereas some of the things owned by the characters are of an ordinary, legitimate nature, a number of things aren't. Ordinary items are bought in shops for cash, but unless they're buying something really expensive or splurging out a lot of money at once, this won't cost them any dough or threaten their livelihood. There's no need to list all the ordinary, everyday items your character owns and nor should you worry about having to haggle over buying them: as long as you're not **short**, you can buy pretty much anything that is available on the high-street, though the quality will be a reflection of how much dough you have:

- **Short:** don't even think about buying anything; if you're **short** for too long, you won't even end up owning the things you had.
- **0 dough:** everything you own is second-hand, old, outdated, forged, stolen, fake or a pirate copy; even when you buy new, it's the cheapest and nastiest there is, i.e. burgers that are only 10% beef, shoes whose soles wear out within a month and so on.
- **1 or 2 dough:** it's ok, y'know, not great but not terrible; you buy cheap but not dirt cheap, just bargain cheap. Some of this is probably still fake or pirated, but it'll pass muster on the street.
- **3 or 4 dough:** we're into proper middle-class territory now; you can afford to shop at places that aren't on every high street, you can take a holiday abroad without having to save for years and if your TV or game console breaks down, you can buy a new one the same day.
- **5 or 6 dough:** luxury items are part of your everyday life; they might not be in good taste, but they are expensive. Membership at an exclusive gym, the complete premium channels package legally on your TV and private health insurance are all amongst the assets your dough can represent.
- **7 dough or more:** if you regularly have this much money,

why are you even still in the ‘hood? You own property, you and your partner each have new cars, as do your children when they’re old enough to drive, oh, and their college education? Paid for.

You can assume your character is capable of doing the things represented by the above wealth bands without breaking a sweat; when you want to push above your wealth band, however, that’s when you actually need to spend some of that dough. This won’t magically downgrade everything else you own, so your top-of-the-range 42” plasma screen TV isn’t going to turn into a 14” black-&-white cathode screen overnight just because you needed to buy some new wheels, but if it hasn’t come up before, you can no longer assume you have the former, as it’s more likely to be the latter, and over time, you’ll have to let go of your nicer stuff as you can’t afford the payments anymore.

For example, Guard Dog has done well as the Bastion for his ‘hood and now has 4 dough burning a hole in his expensive, designer jean pockets, but then his ma gets taken ill; the waiting lists aren’t good for someone of her age with no health insurance, so he drops the 2 dough it takes to get her treatment bumped all the way up to ‘right now.’ That also drops Guard Dog a wealth band, so from now on, when he brings his possessions into the fiction, they’re more likely to be cheap than nice; if he stays at 2 dough for a while, then he’s also going to lose most of the stuff he had when he was better off as he replaces it with cheaper models to save money.

If you badly need something, but can’t afford it, because you don’t have the dough or because you’re short, you can go on the black-market to get what you need. When you ask around, you can acquire pretty much anything for a token amount of cash but everything on the black-market has the hot tag: each hot item in your possession adds +1 to your heat, but you cannot lose or shift this heat. As soon as you get rid of the item in question, the +1 heat goes with it.

For example, Slippery Des, the local Go-Between in the ‘hood, needs a car for a deal he is brokering, but he doesn’t have the money for a clean one, so he asks around for a dodgy motor. His result is 8, so he has to pick two options: combining the last two, he has to repossess the motor from someone who’s not paid their outstanding debt on it, making an enemy of that NPC. He can then use the motor for his deal, driving it back to the guy he’s repossessed it for afterwards: once he acquires it, he takes +1 heat, but he can’t take the heat off, as he is stuck with that heat for as long as the motor is in his possession. When he delivers the

car to its final destination, he loses the +1 heat associated with it.

Two things often bought on the black-market are weapons and vehicles: weapons always have the edge (for melee weapons) or lead (for ranged weapons) tag, ranging from +1 to +3.

- **1edge/lead:** small and easily concealable, no-one will know you've got this on you unless they search you or have a very good eye.
- **2edge/lead:** larger and more powerful, these weapons create a distinctive bulge in your clothing that others in your line of business, or anyone in the business of law-enforcement, will notice.
- **3edge/lead:** too big and bulky to be concealed by any ordinary clothing, these must be either carried in a bag or hidden under the type of long, flowing clothing that itself will attract attention.

Weapons with 1edge can be bought anywhere for a negligible amount, so they don't cost dough or threaten your livelihood; anything larger and you're going to have to look on the black-market. The situation with guns depends on the law of the country the 'hood is in: in the UK, anything with 1lead or greater is essentially only available on the black-market and is therefore always hot. In the USA, there is more legitimate access to weapons, but there is often a delay in acquiring them, not to mention that such guns are more easily traceable, so if you're in a hurry, you'll probably be looking to the black-market again.

Vehicles are a little different, as they have a range of tags that can be applied to them: there are good tags, which add +1 dough to the price of the vehicle, and bad tags, which take -1 dough from the price. No vehicle can ever have a price below 0 dough or have tags which have opposite effects, e.g. a car cannot be both fast and slow. The starting price for all vehicles is 3 dough, which is then modified by the number of good and bad tags they have.

GOOD TAGS

- **Fast:** this vehicle can easily catch up with or leave behind any other vehicle which is not fast or faster on the straight. For +1 dough, this can be upgraded to faster, in which case it has this advantage against any other vehicle which is not faster.
- **Tough:** this vehicle can drive away from any one collision,

but it will need repairs before it can do this again.

- **Roomy:** there is space in here for several extra passengers and their baggage.
- **Agile:** this vehicle can make tight turns, enabling it to shake off or pursue any vehicle which is not agile in the city.

BAD TAGS

- **Hot:** this is a stolen vehicle or one which has a history of involvement in traffic offences or criminal acts.
- **Slow:** this vehicle can easily be caught or left behind by any other vehicle which is not slow on the straight.
- **Weak:** this vehicle is a write-off after any collision; it cannot be driven off or repaired.
- **Tiny:** there's no room in this vehicle for passengers or baggage.
- **Stiff:** this vehicle manoeuvres badly, meaning it can't shake off or pursue any vehicle which is not also a stiff in the city.

CAREER CRIMINALS

Living in the 'hood teaches you how to survive, but it changes you too; over time, your character will develop and gain new moves that expand their range of options. Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You take heat.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC (see below)

Some unique moves also let you mark experience; see the playbooks for more details.

When your debt with another PC rises to more than +3, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.

Whenever experience reaches 5, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Choose a move from your playbook.
- Take +1 in any stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a move from your playbook.

THE
'HOOD

PLAYBOOKS

THE BARKIEP CHOOSE YOUR POISON

There's a lot of bars around, but yours is The Bar: everyone in **the 'hood** who's old enough for a drink comes in here and maybe you turn a blind eye to a few who aren't. Not everyone would want to be a barkeep in a place this rough, but you're used to it and tough enough to hold your own.

The thing is, your liquor license is granted by the authorities, so you've got to stay sweet with them or they can close you down, maybe even for good. When they come asking questions, you'd better have answers; if you decide that discretion is the better part of valour, then you're going to have to think of a way to get the police or the local council back on side.

Your gaff is your kingdom; you get to decide who comes in (**My Gaff, My Rules**) and have the keys to the **Back Room** and the **Guest Room**, so everybody's sure to want to stay in your good books if they want access to a safe place to hide and do business. In the bar, the gossip is flying (**Where Everybody Knows Your Name**) especially when you invite the whole neighbourhood in for a **Party Night**, but keep yourself **Tooled Up** in case there's trouble before closing time.

All your strengths are in your gaff, so like the Bastion, you want to stay close to your centre of power: if there's business to be done, get them to come to you. The advantages it provides to other PCs will put it in their sights though, so don't let them ride roughshod over you, show them who's boss and make sure you get a good deal from them just for letting them cross the threshold.



Introducing the **THE BARKIEP**

Alright mate, what you having? Same again? No, I haven't seen him today... yeah, just leave it behind the bar and I'll make sure he gets it; speaking of which, there's a little favour you can do me... drink up, then we'll talk business.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

the Gaffer, the Landlady/Landlord, Half-Pint, Long Drink, Teetotal, AA, Moe, Al, [Name of drink], Hooch.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you co-operate with the authorities.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+2, hush-1, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+2, hush-1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+1
- name+2, hush-1, brass+1, wise=0, straight+1
- name+2, hush=0, brass+1, wise+1, straight-1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **My Gaff, My Rules:** you can bar anyone in **the 'hood** from coming into your gaff, if they give you reason; when someone you've barred enters your gaff, take +1 debt with them or erase their name from your payback box.
- **Back Room:** any moves made in the private function room of your gaff do not attract heat.
- **Where Everybody Knows Your Name:** when anyone **asks around** in your gaff, including you, they take +1 now but you choose their options for them.
- **Guest Room:** any other PC staying in your guest room cannot be found by anyone who is looking for payback from them and cannot be burned.
- **Tooled Up:** you own a weapon with edge+2 or lead+2, +hot; take +1 now when you **get rough** or **open fire** on the grounds of your gaff.
- **Party Night:** when you arrange a special event in your gaff (pool tournament, karaoke night, stripper, stand-up comic, etc), roll+name; on a hit, take +1 dough. On a 7-9, it all gets a bit rowdy and the police or ambulance get called out; you'll have to answer some questions from them.

*When drawing a street plan of **the 'hood**, add your gaff as your home and name at least two bar staff who work for you.*

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- o Mark experience.
- o Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- o Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- o Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- o Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when:

- o You restore your livelihood.
- o You **take heat**.
- o Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- o Get a new move
- o Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- o Advance a basic move.
- o Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They use your gaff as a place to meet clients and make deals: take +2 debt with them.
- There was some trouble in your gaff that would have closed you down, but they made it go away: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- They use their contacts to get you a good deal on your stock, so you let them drink for free: take +1 debt with each other.
- Everyone drinks in your gaff: take +1 debt with everyone else.

Barkeep Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, they're barred from all businesses in the 'hood until you say so.

PAYBACK

	\$
--	----

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES

	\$
--	----

GEAR

	\$
Dough	

THE BASTION HOLDING THE FORT

The **'hood** is your kingdom, but it's a beleaguered one, surrounded by potential foes whilst barely holding together against the tensions within. Everyone looks to you and your crew to keep the streets reasonably safe and clean, but you're not the only player in the game. You have to let a little bit of crime take place, but you're careful about who you allow to operate on your patch and they have to pay you for the privilege.

The residents are paying you for protection too, so they expect to see it; fail them, by letting a tragedy occur on your turf, and you'll have to fight to win their trust again. A good way to show you mean business is to enact revenge on whoever was responsible; if they live in your **'hood** though, you might just have to throw them out.

On your own street, you're all-powerful, so that's likely to be where you hold court; if you want someone, have them brought to you, don't go to them or you'll lose the advantage. Make sure your crib is prominently marked on the street plan, as a lot of the action will revolve around it.

You should name a few extra NPCs as members of your crew; these are most likely family members or friends you grew up with. These provide you with strength, but are also your Achilles' heel: if anyone wants to get at you, they are most likely to target your crew first.

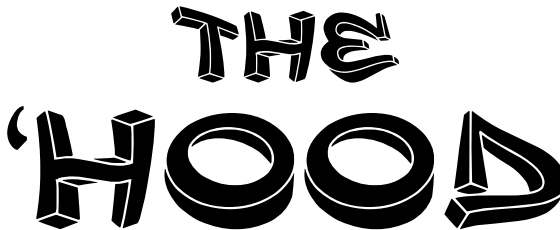
You're there for the people in your **'hood**, but they are there for you too: moves like **Community Spirit** and **Wassup?** show that you're the kind of leader who listens to the people and negotiates solutions. On the other hand, if you take **Fuck Off** and especially **Died in My Arms**, you're just asking for it to turn into a blood opera.



Introducing the **THE BASTION**

There are sharks circling this ‘hood, ready to eat it whole and spit out the bones; you hate them, but you’re forced to deal with them just to hold onto what’s yours. It’s like ‘Neighbourhood Watch’, only more pragmatic and tooled-up and everyone in your ‘hood pays you the little they can afford in return for you keeping the real scum off the streets.

A Character Playbook for



BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Prince/ss, the Boss, Turk, Angel, Vigil, Top Cat, Guard Dog, the Captain, King/Queen [Name], Prez, Duke.

LOOT

You’re **getting by** as long as no-one in your ‘hood is taken down or out by someone other than you.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2
- name+1, hush+1, brass-1, wise=0, straight+2
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2
- name+1, hush-1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+2

MOVES

You get this one:

⌘ **Turf:** when on your home street, take +1 to any basic move.

Then choose one:

- **Fuck Off:** when you evict a non-resident from your **'hood**, roll+brass. On a 10+, they leave. On a 7-9, choose 1.
 - Take them down and take +1 heat.
 - Get them to leave but mark their name in your payback box.
 - Let them stay but get +1 ongoing to deal with them in your 'hood.
- **Community Spirit:** When you **ask around**, roll+straight instead of roll+name.
- **Ordinary Law Abiding Citizen:** you get +1 straight (straight+3).
- **Died in My Arms:** if you are taken out whilst in your **'hood**, you can pick an NPC from your crew who goes out instead of you.
- **Wassup?:** you can question any NPC resident in your 'hood about anything they know, even their darkest secrets; roll+name. On a 10+, they spill their guts to you and tell you everything they know. On a 7-9, choose 1.
 - They tell you everything they know as a favour to you; mark them for payback.
 - They point you towards someone who knows more; take +1 forward to deal with that person.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They're pissing on your patch all the time and you'd love to tell them to fuck off, but you can't because of their connections; take +2 debt with them.
- You grew up together in this **'hood** and stuck up for each other when the going was tough; take +1 debt with them and tell them to take +1 debt with you.
- You saved their ass when everyone else turned their backs on them, 'cos your honour and reputation were on the line; take +2 debt with them.
- This is your **'hood** and everyone else just lives in it; take +1 debt with all the other PCs.

Bastion Special: when you double-cross another PC, make the **Fuck Off** move against them, even if you don't have that move. If you evict them, they may move back onto **the 'hood** after one week, but at a new address.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE BLUR TO SEE THE INVISIBLE MAN

The petty side of your activity is the benefit game: with a couple of fraudulent identities, you can make a tidy living off government handouts. Where you really shine though is in doctoring the pasts of other people: wiping records, creating pasts, stealing identities. With a couple of bank statements stolen out of the trash, you can make anybody be anybody.

The one thing your operation can't stand is close scrutiny; you like police attention the way vampires like sunlight. If the fuzz start knocking on doors in your street, they'll scare away all your customers and you'll have to lay low for a bit. The only way to get things up and running again is to get rid of them; maybe if you find out what they're looking for, you can arrange for it to be dropped in their laps.

The Tipp-Ex of History is an important move for the Blur; to do it, you have to identify exactly where the heat is coming from and deal with it at source. You'll probably have to get out on the street and do some legwork for this, maybe even **ask around** or **cover your tracks** before you're in a position to make the heat go away. Alternatively, this is a good move to pay cash for, especially when selling the service to another PC.

The Blur is persistent and hard to get rid of: with the ways you can avoid heat, get rid of it and even survive being burned, you're a good choice for holding items for other characters. You can walk around with pockets full of hot gear and not worry about it; even if someone catches you red-handed, just give them a false name and walk away free.



Introducing the **THE BLUR**

It can't have been you that did it, because officially, you don't even exist. There are names you use, lots of them, but none of them are really you; sometimes you change identities six times before breakfast. The petty scams you pull keep the wolf from the door but the real money is to be made helping others to escape their pasts.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Echo, Nobody, the Invisible Man/Woman, Ghost, Fade, Camo, Whisper, No-Face, Legion, Hydra, Schizo.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as the police stay off your street.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name=0, hush+2, brass-1, wise+1, straight+1
- name-1, hush+2, brass=0, wise+1, straight+1
- name+1, hush+2, brass-1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+1, hush+2, brass-1, wise=0, straight+1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Obfuscate:** you get +1 hush (hush+3).
- **You Ain't Seen Me:** when you lie low, roll+hush instead of roll+straight.
- **M. Mouse:** when you give a false name roll+hush. On a 10+, no one even checks. On a 7-9, choose one:
 - OK but they need details - hope you're keeping track of all this.
 - Give them an NPC's name; mark them for payback.
- **Identity Theft:** when you steal an identity, roll+hush. On a hit, you forge the documents required. On a 7-9, choose one:
 - The forgeries are perfect; take -1 dough.
 - They won't fool anyone for long; destroy them after a day.
 - They flag up warnings; the forgeries are +hot.
- **The Tipp-Ex of History:** once per day, you can allow any PC (including yourself) to take -1 heat; if someone wants this service from you, **argue the toss** with them.
- **Second Chance:** instead of getting **burned**, you can reset your heat to 1 and all your debts to 0. Choose a new address in **the 'hood** and score through all the names in your payback box: you can never owe payback to any of those NPCs again.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

REMOVED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBT'S

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They've signed papers and sworn statements for you as part of your chain of identities; tell them to take +1 debt with you.
- You erased the record of a shameful deed they did as a juvenile; take +2 debt with them.
- You've helped them fill out official forms; take +1 debt with them.
- No-one else knows the real you all that well; tell everyone else to take -1 debt with you.

Blur Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, hold 1; spend your hold to use a move from their playbook.

PAYBACK

	\$
--	----

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES

	\$
--	----

GEAR

	\$
	Dough

THE BORROWER DEEPER IN DEBT

With no job, no income and no credit, it looks bleak for you: everyday is a struggle just to keep your head above water, looking for ways to scrape up enough money to pay off your crippling debts whilst keeping a roof over your head, clothes on your back and food in your pantry.

The only way you have of **getting by** is to rely on the generosity of your friends: make a deal with another PC to do what they ask and they'll help you out with a bit of spare cash. The catch is that when they go **short**, so do you; even if they restore their livelihood, that doesn't help you straight away, you'll have to make a new deal, with them or someone else. You can have several deals on the go at once, with different PCs, so you won't go short just because one of them does, but each time someone you have a deal with goes short, that deal ends right away, so keep track of who's still able to help you.

Your major weakness is also your major strength: not only do you mark experience when you get out of the hole for a while, you can use it to your advantage. No-one wants you out of the picture when you still owe them money, so prolong your value to them **With Interest**. Then when they come knocking & demanding you pay up, just tell them you **Can't Pay, Won't Pay**; make sure you've got a scheme ready to earn a lot of dough quickly, though. You can get a bit of seed money from your **Welfare Cheque** and count on friends & family to bail you out if you're a **Scrounger**.

Make no mistake, you're a leech and you rely on the goodwill of your mates to survive; the only thing you've got to offer them in return is your limitless free time and your willingness to do any favour they ask of you. While they tend to their obligations, you can do all their dirty little chores for them and maybe pick up some good stuff for yourself while you're out and about.



Introducing the **THE BORROWER**

Got a light? Great, can I bum a smoke too? Cheers, you're a pal; hey, you couldn't loan us £20 until payday? Nah, not my payday, yours. You're a lifesaver mate, anytime you want anything doing, just ask.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

the Sponge, Stony, Worsoff, Handout, Wall Street, Rockefeller, Charity, Gimme, the King/Queen, Pennywise.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as another PC agrees to pay your way.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name-1, hush=0, brass+1, wise+1, straight+2
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+2
- name-1, hush+1, brass+1, wise=0, straight+2
- name=0, hush+1, brass+1, wise-1, straight+2

MOVES

You get this one:

⌘ **Do Me A Favour:** when another character agrees to pay your way, you're getting by as long as they are; mark experience and tell them to take +1 debt with you. If their livelihood is threatened, you're short until you can strike up another deal.

Then choose one:

- **With Interest:** at the end of each session, you can spend heat 1-for-1 to take +1 hole.
- **Can't Pay, Won't Pay:** when anyone comes to you for payback, roll+brass; on a hit, erase their name from your payback box without giving them what they want. On a 7-9, take +1 hole.
- **Welfare Cheque:** whenever you start a session with dough=0, roll+straight; on a hit, take +1 dough. On a 7-9, choose one:
 - You're called in for an interview about your status.
 - They visit your home to make an assessment.
 - They send you on a training course for the day.
- **Scrounger:** when you **make trouble**, on a miss you can take -1 hole and choose one:
 - They turn their back on you.
 - Mark them for payback.
- **Poor & Honest:** you get +1 straight (straight+3).

*Take +1 hole at the start of every session; if your hole ever reaches 5+, you're **burned**. You can spend dough 1-for-1 to take -1 hole.*

NAME: _____

LOOK

HOLE

STATS DEBT

**-NAME**

HUSH



BRASS

**-WISE**

STRAIGHT

Who

How Much

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- o Mark experience.
- o Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- o Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- o Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- o Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

EXPERIENCE

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5,
reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

STATE

FIN

Make some
dough!

DOWN

- - I ongoing
- Livelihood is threatened

OUT

End of the line,
game over,
send flowers
to the family!

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, do the following:

- You've had your hand out to everyone in the 'hood at some time or another: tell everybody else to take +1 debt with you.
- You've got nothing to offer anyone else: ignore what they tell you, you have debt=0 with each of them.

Borrower Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take -1 hole or +1 debt with them.

PAYBACK	s

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND-FOES	s

GEAR	s
Dough	

THE DRONE

HOW TO GET AHEAD IN BUSINESS

Your collar might be white, but your hands are dirty; having a respectable job hasn't made you anymore respectable than your friends in **the 'hood**, so don't get above yourself. Anyway, you'd be the first to admit that your job is a piece of shit that a trained monkey could do, whether you're dealing with clients' calls or just entering figures into a database.

You've got better job security than most others and even a few perks like a health plan and paid leave, but your boss doesn't like it when his nice clean office fills up with dirty layabouts and troublemakers. Anytime you get a visit at work from someone in your neighbourhood, you're going to come under scrutiny from your boss and find yourself **short**: restoring your livelihood means finding a way to show to your boss that it wasn't what he thought it was and that it will never happen again.

Unfortunately, all the advantages you have to offer are firmly rooted in your workplace, so expect your neighbours to be looking for ways to use your assets. You can make a buck flogging **Office Supplies**, but you've still got to find someone who will buy them off you; there's more dough to be made using an **Untraceable Connection** to run a private business from your office, but watch out for disgruntled customers coming to complain in person.

Your workplace is of interest to many other residents of **the 'hood**: it provides a secure, quiet place to discuss matters in private outside **the 'hood** and after hours. It's a great place to plan a heist or exchange goods and services. When you finally go too far, or just get fed up with the constant sucking up to your boss, it's time to **Take This Job And Shove It** before you start a new life.



Introducing the **THE DRONE**

Get up, go to work, come home, sleep. Repeat until dead. No. Enough. You want a taste of life before it goes cold, so it's time to grab what's up for the taking and enjoy yourself before your job becomes your whole existence.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Ratrace, Dilbert, Officeboy/girl, Papercut, Monkey, Seatwarmer, the Wraith, Sellout, [Name of printer/copier brand], the 925.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as the other residents of the 'hood stay out of your workplace.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2
- name+1, hush+1, brass=0, wise-1, straight+2
- name=0, hush-1, brass+1, wise+1, straight+2
- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Store Room:** all goods stored in your workplace are -hot, no matter who they belong to.
- **Office Supplies:** when you steal from work, roll+straight; on a hit, take 1 stock worth 1 dough. On a 10+, your theft goes unnoticed for at least 1 week; on a 7-9, your theft gets noticed that day; on a miss, you are caught red-handed by a co-worker.
- **Untraceable Connection:** when you make a move using the phone or internet in your workplace, treat a 7-9 result as a 10+ instead.
- **Performance Evaluation:** when you **take the heat off** in your workplace, you can target a co-worker instead of a PC; on a 7-9, they get fired, mark them for payback; on a miss, you are caught red-handed by the boss.
- **Temp Work:** when you get another PC a day's work at your workplace, they take -1 heat and you mark experience but your livelihood is not threatened.
- **Take This Job And Shove It:** you can burn down your workplace and start a new life; reset your heat and debts to zero, erase all the names from your payback box and lose all moves from this playbook, then start a new playbook and take 2 dough.

*When drawing a street plan of **the 'hood**, add your workplace to the list of locations outside **the 'hood** and name at least three co-workers and your boss.*

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC; they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -I ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- The last time you did them a favour, it almost got you fired: take +2 debt with them.
- They are closely related to one of your co-workers, who helped you get the job: take +1 debt with them.
- You made use of their unique services in the past but haven't finished paying them off: tell them to take +1 debt with you.
- You tend to be overlooked and underestimated by everyone else in the 'hood; tell them all to take -1 debt with you.

Drone Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, make your next move as if you had paid cash for it.

PAYBACK

- \$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES

- \$

GEAR

- \$

Dough

THE FALLEN

GOOD COP, BAD COP

The main thing you do for your neighbourhood is to let people go about their business without attracting a lot of heat; as the cop on the beat, you take a few bribes to look the other way, lose evidence and tip off your neighbours when the law is onto them. Maybe you're doing this because you've always been bent, but maybe it was something that happened a long time later. A past you'd rather not have widely known could have been the start of the slippery slope, but you could just as easily have been forced into this for 'good' reasons, like making the extra cash you need to help a troubled family member.

The residents of your **'hood** expect you to act as a shield between them and the law, so you've failed them if someone actually gets arrested. If you can't clear their name, you'll have to make a deal with their family or business associates that earns you the trust of **the 'hood** again.

Of course, maybe this is all an act: you might not really be bent, you might be an **Undercover Cop** trying to net a bigger fish than the small fry in your **'hood**. This is a dangerous game to play: there's no such thing as down for you, only alive or dead.

Remember that you're a sworn officer of the law and have the power to arrest people, though in a tense situation you might need your **Warrant Card** to try this without getting the shit kicked out of you. Don't be too free with those arrests though: your livelihood is threatened even when it's you making the arrest. The real trick is avoiding arresting residents in your **'hood** and still keeping your job.



Introducing the **THE FALLEN**

You took an oath to uphold the law, but you had your fingers crossed behind your back. You wear a uniform and carry a badge, but both of them are kind of stained, because you figured out a while ago that organised crime isn't a problem, it's an opportunity.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Blue, the Law, Buzzkill, Filth, Sherlock, Morse, the Bill, Righteous, the Sheriff.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as no-one in your **'hood** gets arrested.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush=0, brass+1, wise-1, straight+3
- name=0, hush+1, brass+1, wise-1, straight+3
- name-1, hush+1, brass+1, wise=0, straight+3
- name+1, hush+1, brass=0, wise-1, straight+3

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Undercover Cop:** instead of getting **burned**, you can arrest an NPC in your payback box, reset your heat to 1. If you have this move, any move that takes you down will take you out instead.
- **Cover Up:** when you provide cover to another character, they take no heat from what they're doing and you take +1 debt with them.
- **Signed Out of the Evidence Room:** you always have access to items that are hot, you don't need to **ask around** for them.
- **Armed Combat Training:** when you get 10+ on a **get rough** or **open fire** move, you can treat it as if you'd rolled 7-9 instead.
- **Warrant Card:** when you hide behind the law, roll+straight. On a hit, no-one will stand in your way. On a 10+, you can arrest somebody and take them with you.
- **Legal Protection:** no-one can ever try to deflect their heat to you.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

1

2

3

4

5

EXPLODED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

>

●

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●

>

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You keep them out of trouble due to the family ties between you; take +2 debt with them.
- You're in their pocket over a few mutually beneficial deals; take +1 debt with each other.
- There was that one time you warned them a bust or raid was coming; take +1 debt with them.
- No-one trusts a copper; ignore what the others tell you, you have debt=0 with the other PCs.

Fallen Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, they take +1 heat.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE FEELGOOD PURPLE HAZE

You're just one local supplier, keeping a few potheads in your **'hood** happy, but in this game, no-one stays independent for long. Your activities are the most likely to attract both the attention of the law and the big fish to your **'hood**, so you probably aren't going to be very popular with anyone who doesn't use. Your named users are just the tip of the iceberg though, the regular customers who rely on you for their supply, but anyone who smokes the odd spliff or needs some non-prescription meds comes to you with their business.

The main threat to your livelihood comes from yourself: trying to expand your customer base or trade drugs for favours can easily leave you **short**. Sometimes the only way to get back in the game is to accept the support (i.e. start working for) a bigger dealer who wants to expand their own operation. The alternative is to get your hands on some new gear, fast; if you don't fancy **Growing Your Own**, then you'll need to **ask around**, followed by **arguing the toss**. Either way, this is likely to upset your regular supplier.

Most of the Feelgood's moves focus on the NPC residents of **the 'hood**, so make sure these are well documented; don't just look at the ones you've added to the street plan though, try hooking a few of the other players' family and associates. By making one of the other players' close contacts one of your users, you gain some leverage over that PC. It's a dangerous game to play, but it might be the only one that saves your neck when you finally bring a shit-storm down on your **'hood**.



Introducing the
THE FEELGOOD

If it can be smoked, sniffed or stuck into a vein, you supply it; there's always a market for dreams and bright skies and it can't be wrong if so many people want it, right? You're just meeting the demand and if you didn't, someone else would be making all that dough.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Doc, the Medic, Nursey, Dude, Gonzo, the Hippy, Sick, the Chemist, Spliff, Magic, the Wizard/Witch.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as there are at least three users in your **'hood** that you are keeping supplied with drugs.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+2, hush+1, brass+1, wise-1, straight=0
- name+2, hush+1, brass-1, wise=0, straight+1
- name+2, hush+1, brass-1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+2, hush=0, brass-1, wise+1, straight+1

MOVES

You get this one:

⌘ **Users:** name any 3 NPCs in your **'hood** that are hooked on your drugs; they are your first users. Take +I now when dealing with any of your users.

USERS

Then choose one:

- **I Can Make You Feel Good:** you can take any PC from **down** to **fine** or from **out** to **down**; take +I debt with them.
- **The First One's Free:** you can try to get any NPC in your **'hood** hooked onto drugs; roll+name. On a hit, they become a user. On a 10+, this doesn't interrupt your supply of drugs. On a miss, they OD on your drugs and go **down**.
- **Customer Loyalty Scheme:** you can payback any of your users by giving them a free hit; roll+name. On a hit, erase them from your payback box. On a 10+, this doesn't interrupt your supply of drugs. On a miss, they OD on your drugs and go **down**; if they've OD'ed before, they go **out**.
- **Grow Your Own:** you make your own drugs at home, so you can take +I heat to avoid having your supply interrupted.
- **Guru:** you can have any of your users go out or get **burned** instead of you; take -I heat and this interrupts your supply of drugs.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT _____ \$

● ● ● ● ● 

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• - I ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$



Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They can't forgive you for bringing drugs into **the 'hood**; they take +2 debt with you.
- You helped their sick relative with the pain; take +1 debt with them.
- You enjoy some social drug uses together; take +1 debt with each other.
- You get smart-mouthed when you're high and piss people off; everyone else takes +1 debt with you.

Feelgood Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, choose a name in their payback box; that NPC becomes one of your users.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE GO-BETWEEN LET'S MAKE A DEAL

It's hard for anyone else to pin down exactly what it is you do; you rarely commit crimes yourself, acting mostly as a consultant to those who plan to break the law. One day, you're collecting a brown envelope from the back of a toilet and dropping it off where you were told; the next day, you're holding court at the corner of the bar, telling people where to go to meet whoever they need to see.

The people who make use of your services expect you to be discreet: no-one wants their name being linked to a crime, even as a rumour. When the truth spills out, you either need to find the source of the leak and shut it down or do a big favour for the people who've been named.

Information is your stock in trade, hence you have two unique moves for when you **ask around**: when you **Hire a Professional**, you're looking for someone with the best skills for the job, so they do a little better than the average thug. You can also put your ear to the ground and listen for rumours with your **Finger on the Pulse**: you won't always get what you were looking for, but you'll get something the MC thinks you'll want to know.

A useful move for the Go-Between is the **Hook-Up**: owing payback to NPCs is less of a burden for you, because you can always kill two birds with one stone. Don't be afraid to build up a lot of names wanting payback if you've got this move, especially if you've got the kind of dough to pay cash instead of rolling.



Introducing the
THE GO-BETWEEN

Everyone's looking for something; you bring together those with a demand and those who can supply. You always know a person who knows a person, so you broker deals between parties who don't want to meet or don't even want to acknowledge that anything ever changed hands.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Know-All, Smooth [Name], Slippery [Name], the Pieman, the Operator, Switch, Swapshop, Seesaw, Mayo.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as all your deals are kept secret.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+2, hush+1, brass-1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+2, hush+1, brass=0, wise+1, straight-1
- name+2, hush=0, brass-1, wise+1, straight+1
- name+2, hush+1, brass+1, wise=0, straight-1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Infamy's Better than Anonymity:** you get +1 name (name+3).
- **Negotiator:** when you **argue the toss**, roll+name instead of roll+wise.
- **Hook-Up:** you can kill two birds with one stone by fixing up two names in your payback box with each other; roll+wise. On a 10+, they each benefit from the deal and you can erase both names from your payback box. On a 7-9 choose 1 or else the deal falls through.
 - You need to make an investment in the deal; take -1 dough.
 - They still need you to do a little job for them.
 - Only one of them benefits from the deal; erase one name but not the other.
- **Hiring a Professional:** when you **ask around** for a person and get a hit, they give +1 ongoing to make a specific move on the job you hire them for.
- **Finger on the Pulse:** you can **ask around** without naming a specific target; if you get a hit, the MC throws a titbit your way and you choose 1 less option.
- **Fence:** all the goods in your possession take -hot when you sell them on.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT _____ \$

PC

PC

PC

PC

HEAT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

>

●

>

●

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You've fixed some friends up with what they needed in the past; choose two other PCs, you all take +2 debt with each other.
- They've gotten their hands dirty doing your business for you; they take +2 debt with you.
- You're a natural networker; take +1 debt with everyone else and tell them all to take +1 debt with you.

Go-Between Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, they take -1 debt with you.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE HACKER ADDRESS NOT FOUND

Despite what everyone in your **'hood** thinks, you're more than just another cybergeek playing MMOs until 3am and living on caffeine, sugar and grease. You are anonymous. You are everywhere. You are everyone. All the pieces move around **the 'hood** as if they are in control, unaware that from your hidden location, you can change or control their lives how you please.

Your anonymity is the key to your success: ideally, your victims should blame bad luck or 'computer error' for their troubles, but it can be fun to let them know they've been hit, as long as they never know who did it. When any of your misdemeanours gets traced back to your name or address, your revenue stream gets cut off, so keep a few patsies around to shift the blame onto and be ready to burn all your drives at a moment's notice.

The easy way to make money is by using a **Stolen Credit Card**, but you'll attract less attention if you charge your neighbours to **Jury Rig** their electronics. Your real strengths are in your on-line manoeuvres: **Black Box** and **Unauthorised Access** is a potent combination for targeting specific individuals, but beware of leaving a trail that points back to you.

Unfortunately, the real world is out there and it keeps intruding on your life, so you can't just hole up in your fortress of nerditude 24 hours a day. When you're away from the 'net, you're weak and vulnerable, so cultivate relationships and do favours for those who can protect you. Be ready to do what they ask in return though and expect it to be nasty and unpleasant, for someone, not necessarily you.



Introducing the **THE HACKER**

*Why live in meatspace when cyberspace offers you so much more? While others sweat and toil to make ends meet, you've arranged things so that the money comes to you, like water flowing downhill on a stream of data. You're the ghost in the machine, the spanner in the works, and no-one in **the 'hood** can guess at the power you hold over them.*

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Suggested by: Tommy Rayburn
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Neo, Cypher, Spark, HAL, Enigma, Data, Byte, Mouse, Brains, Tech Support, Gates, Jobs.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as nothing ever gets traced back to you.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name+1, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight=0
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight+1
- name+1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight-1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Black Box:** when you track someone's activity on-line, you can tag them as *hacked*. Take +1 on-going against *hacked* characters, but you act as if they are *hot* when you are interacting with them.
- **Stolen Credit Card:** when you buy anything or **pay cash**, roll+hush; on a hit, you can pay the full amount without spending any of your own dough. On a 10+, choose one; on 7-9, choose two.
 - It flags up a credit check: take +1 heat.
 - The money doesn't last: whoever you paid will come after you, so mark them for payback or they take +1 debt with you.
 - You trigger a full security check: you can't do this again this session.
- **Photoshop:** when you frame an NPC, roll+wise; on a hit, everyone believes the frame job and you take -1 heat. On a 10+, they think it's a genuine mistake, not a fit-up; on a 7-9, they know they've been framed and go looking for who did it.
- **Unauthorized Access:** take +1 now to any move you perform online or through digital/electronic media.
- **Upgrades:** you always own all common, commercial digital/electronic devices at their maximum quality, regardless of how much dough you have.
- **Jury Rig:** when you tamper with any device, roll+wise; on a hit, you can add or remove any tag or simply get it working. On a 10+, choose one. On a 7-9, choose two:
 - It's temporary: it breaks after a few hours or uses.
 - It's unreliable: take -1 now whenever using it.
 - You have to strip another device for the parts.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They are the only person in your **'hood** who knows who you really are and what you do: take +2 debt with each other.
- You had them gain you physical access to a place for one of your on-line scams: tell them to take +1 debt with you.
- You got someone they had problems with put away: take +1 debt with them.
- Staying under the radar is part of what you do: tell everyone else to take -1 debt with you.

Hacker Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, use their special move against them or take +1 debt with them.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE HEAVY

ASK NO QUESTIONS

You're just the typical cash-in-hand, ask-no-questions hireling: when someone needs a simple job doing right away and doesn't want to get their own hands dirty, well, that's money in the pocket to you. The jobs don't take long and they pay well and if you've got no skills to offer other than your willingness to do as you're told, it's probably the best you're going to get.

The money doesn't last forever though and if you're not working, you're going to be short, so you can never afford to turn a job down. If you do, for whatever reason, then it's up to you to hunt down another job quickly; nobody else is going to hire you if there's another offer on the table, because they might upset the person you've turned down.

The Heavy's attitude is well supported by the **Yeah, Boss** move, so there's further incentive not to go around asking questions about your job and just doing as you're told. Combined with **Unstoppable**, there's very little you can't get done, especially if it involves making a mess.

It's also almost impossible to take you **down** or **out**, once you have the **Hard Bastard** move, so you can be a lot less careful about getting into sticky situations. When the knives are out and the bullets are flying, it's you who'll be walking away in one piece. This makes you a very reliable asset for other characters who can depend on you to come back from any job you've been sent on. The catch is that you can only use it once, then you have to spend an advance to get it back... unless you get into the habit of **double-crossing** your partners, in which case you get it back for just a little bit of trouble.



Introducing the **THE HEAVY**

You provide manual labour on the wrong side of the law: moving crates, guarding doors, breaking arms. It's simple and undemanding, if you don't mind the bruises, the odd hours and the screams.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Knuckles, Muscles, Troll, Big [Name], Little [Name],
Crusher, Psycho, Rocky, Brick, Monster, Tank.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you don't turn down any job you are offered.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush+1, brass+2, wise-1, straight=0
- name+1, hush+1, brass+2, wise=0, straight-1
- name=0, hush+1, brass+2, wise-1, straight+1
- name+1, hush-1, brass+2, wise=0, straight+1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Built like a Brick Shithouse:** you get +1 brass (brass+3).
- **Extreme Persuasion:** when you **argue the toss**, roll+brass instead of roll+wise.
- **Hard Bastard:** erase this move instead of going **down** or **out**.
- **Handy with his Fists:** you don't need a weapon to hurt someone; when you **get rough**, you can roll+brass instead of roll+edge.
- **Unstoppable:** when you **take the hard way** and miss, you may choose all three options to turn it into a hit.
- **Yeah, Boss:** when you take an order without objecting, negotiating or asking questions, take +1 forward to carry out that order.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT _____ \$

●

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●

REMOVED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

●

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✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You helped each other through school when you were growing up together; take +2 debt with each other.
- You had to hurt them once as part of the job you were doing; they take +2 debt with you.
- They got you the sack from a job when you looked the other way for them; take +1 debt with them.
- You don't get involved in anyone else's business; tell everyone else to take -1 debt with you.

Heavy Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, regain the **Hard Bastard** move if you had it and erased it; otherwise, take +1 debt with them.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND-FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE ICE

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER

Unlike most other hirelings, you only do one kind of job, but you do it very well. You charge a lot of money for your services, so you can live quite well off the proceeds of one job for a fairly long time: unlike the rest of your **'hood**, you're not constantly scrabbling for cash, but that in itself can make you a target for crime.

As the Ice, your livelihood is pretty safe; it's assumed that your cash is running low at about the same time as you get offered a new job. The catch is that you have to do that job: no mercy, no mistakes. If your target does get away, the only way to restore your livelihood is to pin the blame on someone else and kill them: maybe the person who hired you for the job set you up, maybe you were betrayed by a partner, but whatever the case, blood must be spilled.

Playing the Ice changes the game for everyone: there will be violence and death if you're in **the 'hood**, so expect a lot of collateral damage amongst the NPCs. You probably don't have many you rely on, but family and associates of other PCs are going to get caught in the crossfire when the consequences of your actions catch up with you.

Luckily, you're ferocious when cornered: **Double Shot** and **Hard to Kill** make you a formidable opponent in a gunfight, whereas **Can't Catch Me** and **I Won't Ask Twice** let you use your lethal abilities as a bargaining chip.



Introducing the
THE ICE

You're a killer.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Reaper, Butcher, Blade, Trigger, the Undertaker, the Grave Digger, the Priest, the Professional, Grim, Crow.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you never let a target live.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush=0, brass+2, wise+1, straight-1
- name=0, hush+1, brass+2, wise+1, straight-1
- name-1, hush+1, brass+2, wise+1, straight=0
- name+1, hush+1, brass+2, wise=0, straight-1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Concealed Weapon:** any weapons are –hot whilst you are carrying them.
- **Pragmatist:** you get +1 brass (brass+3).
- **Can't Catch Me:** when you go to **Plan B**, roll+brass instead of roll+wise.
- **I Won't Ask Twice:** when you **ask around**, you can roll+edge or roll+lead instead of roll+name. If you miss, any NPC you were asking goes **down** and you take +1 heat.
- **Double Shot:** when you **open fire**, you can aim for two opponents at -1 to your roll. The results for taking two opponents **down** or **out** are the same as for one.
- **Hard to Kill:** you can carry on for the remainder of the current scene after being taken **down** or **out** with no penalty. At the end of the scene, go **down** or **out** as normal.

Choose a starting weapon with 1 lead, you may give it +1 lead for each of the following options you choose, to a maximum of 3 lead:

- It has the hot tag.
- You got a good deal on it; mark the dealer for payback.
- It has to be reloaded after every shot.
- It always attracts a lot of attention when fired.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- o Mark experience.
- o Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- o Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- o Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- o Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when:

- o You restore your livelihood.
- o You **take heat**.
- o Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- o Get a new move
- o Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- o Advance a basic move.
- o Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You took out one of their business partners, hurting their income; they take +1 debt with you.
- They hired your services once; take +1 debt with them.
- Everyone else is uneasy around you and steers clear; ignore what anyone else tells you and take debt=0 with everybody else.

Ice Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take them **down**, or take them **out** if they were already **down**.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE LEVER

PUTTING ON THE SQUEEZE

For you, it's all about getting things done, or to be more precise, getting other people to do things for you. When you know the levers that make people work and you don't have any morals, there's pretty much nothing standing in your way. Your basic income is made through insurance, i.e. they pay you insurance or you burn their business down, but when it comes to a big pay day, nothing beats blackmail, even if you have to frame them first.

The one thing your operation needs is fear: if people stop being afraid of you, they'll stop doing what you say. The last thing you want is for people in your **'hood** to turn to the authorities for help, so it's in your interests to keep things quiet and safe; if the police do get called in, you might have to spread a few bribes around or even find a soft target within the force that you can manipulate.

Your strengths lie in getting people to do what you tell them to; **Scary Muthafucka** punishes PCs who stand up to you and **Blackmail** stops them from retaliating. With **Muckraker**, you don't have to worry about owing lots of favours, since you can pay them back simply by keeping your mouth shut, but your ultimate weapon is **Intimidation**. If you can find out what someone is scared of and threaten them with it, you can make them do anything you want, but you have to pay a serious price for this afterwards.



Introducing the **THE LEVER**

Once you know what they're most afraid of, you've got them in the palm of your hand; you're a real craftsman of fear and anxiety, creating bespoke pieces of horror to suit every client. Records of their forged history, photographs of their infidelity, a terrified phone call from their loved ones begging them to pay up... there are many tools at your disposal.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Creepy [Name], Greasy [Name], Eyeball, Stalker, Freak, Shadow, Wolf, Demon, the Fear, Big Brother.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long no-one in your **'hood** goes to the authorities.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush=0, brass+1, wise+2, straight-1
- name-1, hush+1, brass+1, wise+2, straight=0
- name+1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight-1
- name=0, hush+1, brass+1, wise+2, straight-1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Necessary Evil:** when you **take the hard way**, roll+wise instead of roll+brass.
- **Ear to the Ground:** you get +1 wise (wise+3).
- **Scary Muthafucka:** when you **argue the toss** and get a hit, any PC who doesn't do things your way takes -1 forward.
- **Blackmail:** when another PC attempts to make a move against you or choose you as the target of an outcome, you can take -1 debt with them to make them choose somebody or something else.
- **Muck Raker:** when you try to find out an NPC's dark secret, roll+wise. On a 10+, you find something they don't want shared; hold 3. On a 7-9, you manage to make something up about them; hold 1. You can spend hold 1-for-1 to erase their name from your payback box. On a miss, they stand up to you and your livelihood is threatened: you can never make this move against them again, nor can you call upon them for a favour.
- **Intimidation:** when you force an NPC to do something against their will, roll+wise. On a hit, they do it. On a 7-9, choose 1. Mark their name in your payback box no matter what the outcome.
 - They strike back; you go **down** after they've done it.
 - They confess the whole thing; take +1 heat after they've done it.

NAME:

LOOK

\$

STATS DEBT

 NAME  HUSH  BRASS  WISE  STRAIGHT	<table><tr><th>Who</th><th>How Much</th></tr><tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr></table> Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	Who	How Much			\$
Who	How Much					

HEAT

BURNED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You already know their dirtiest secret; take +2 debt with them.
- They stood up to you and drove you away from their family; take +1 debt with each other.
- You know enough about everybody else to make them think twice; take +1 debt with everybody else.

Lever Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, name a move: they can no longer make that move against you or target you with it in any way.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE MATRIARCH

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

Everyone in **the 'hood** knows you and your sprawling clan of delinquents, though they wouldn't call them that to your face: you get respect because you've got a small army at your bidding, ready to close ranks and converge on whatever target you tell them to at a moment's notice.

You've earned the respect of the other residents, but like a gunslinger, you have to keep earning that respect every time it's challenged. The key to this is the way you look after your kids: everyone knows what you'll do to anyone who hurts them, but to maintain your position in the 'hood, you have to prove that you can stand up for your family against all comers. Until you can prove to the **'hood** that they don't cross you or your family, you're going to stay **short**.

All your unique moves are about your kids, so make sure you describe them in more detail than the usual NPCs when populating the **'hood**. You also need to think about the parent-child relationship you have with each of them and what that says about your moves: **Housekeeping** and **Do As You're Told** fit best if the kids haven't flown the nest yet and still live under your wing. If they've got their own lives, you can still count on them when you need to teach someone a lesson about staying out of your business, especially with **Roughhousing**.

To get the maximum advantage out of your brood, position them cunningly within the **'hood**: if there isn't a Fallen, Hacker, or Ice amongst the PCs, then grab that role for one of your kids with **Prodigal Child**. Even without that move, you can still specify that your kids have jobs or reputations that can be of use to you within the fiction: it's good to have blood relatives in important positions. *Now turn away while I have a quick word with the MC... ok, are the players gone? Right: you ever see someone's kids grow up and make trouble for their parents? Like, a lot of trouble? Yeah, do that: these aren't just player assets, they're also your toys.*



Introducing the
THE MATRIARCH

Nothing matters more than family and nothing matters more to your family than you: loved by them and feared by them in equal measure, you have them drilled into obedience, but in return, the family works to protect each of its members. Anyone who crosses one of you crosses all of you and will face the full force of your vengeance upon their heads.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Big Momma/Daddy, the Godfather/Godmother, the Lady/Lord of the Manor, the Chairman/Chairwoman of the Board.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you leave no wrong against your kids unpunished.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush-1, brass=0, wise+2, straight+1
- name+1, hush-1, brass+1, wise+2, straight=0
- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1

MOVES

You get this one:

⌘ **Kids:** name any 3 NPCs in your 'hood that are your children; they are your kids. You can erase one of your kids' names from another PC's payback box and choose one:

- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

KIDS

--

Then choose one:

- **Prodigal Child:** choose a move from another playbook and assign it to one of your kids; when you get them to make that move for you, mark them for payback and take the result as if you had **paid cash**.
- **Housekeeping:** take +1 dough at the end of any session if any of your kids names are in any other PC's payback box.
- **The Greatest Tragedy:** as long as you have one of your kids with you, they can go **down**, **out** or get **burned** instead of you.
- **Do As You're Told:** take +1 now when you **ask around** or **argue the toss** with your own kids; take -1 now when you **make trouble** for them.
- **Roughhousing:** when you **take the hard way** or **get rough**, you may roll+the number of your kids with you instead of roll+brass or roll+edge.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		
Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ○ Mark experience. ○ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ○ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ○ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ○ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.		

HEAT _____ \$

+1

+2

+3

+4

+5

BURNED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

>

○

>

○

V

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

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DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They are another one of your kids, but they're the black sheep of the family: take +2 debt with each other and count them as one of your kids.
- One of your kids is their partner: take +1 debt with each other.
- They gave one of your kids a job and a break: tell them to take +1 debt with you.
- Blood is thicker than water and you don't trust anyone you aren't related to: take +1 debt with everyone else.

Matriarch Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, put all of your kids names in their payback box.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE MECHANIC NERVES OF STEEL

You're the magician of motor vehicles: not only can you bring them back to life, you quite often make them disappear completely. They purr contentedly under your hands, though what happens to them after they leave your workshop isn't your business: anyone who comes back complaining about the lemon you sold them can take it up with the business end of your adjustable wrench.

You make your money from buying and selling: buy in the cheap bangers, overhaul them in your workshop, then sell them on at an inflated price. As long as you can sell at least one motor every week, you're getting by, but if the business dries up, you'd better move some of your surplus stock cheap and fast. The upside is that you can almost always restore your livelihood by flogging another motor, if you've got any to sell; if you haven't, you might have to resort to desperate measures to restock

Your garage holds a lot of tools and supplies for your work, which are vital if you're going to give a car that **Custom Job** it needs and as long as you've got vehicles sitting there, why not open a **Dealership**? Take **Motor Mouth** if you want to get your stock honestly or **Driveaway Bargain** if you don't care how you acquire it. As a last resort, you can always indulge in a bit of **Crash & Burn** to wipe the slate clean with fire.

There's a lot of wheeling and dealing for the Mechanic: you have to get out there, find the vehicles, then sell them, hopefully at a profit. The dough you earn (or lose) through selling cars is separate from **getting by** but they both rely on you making sales: you might easily have more dough than most of your neighbours, but if it's all locked up in investments in your business you could be as short as they are. You've got a couple of short cuts to protecting your livelihood, but beware of pissing on your own patch too much.



Introducing the **THE MECHANIC**

You're better with machines than with people: you can understand machines, open them up, see what makes them tick. Machines are a lot easier to fix too, while people are just a lot easier to break.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Iron Man/the Iron Lady, Turbo, Gearhead, Metal [first name beginning with 'M'], Doughnut, [Name of racing driver].

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you've sold a vehicle this week.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush+1, brass+2, wise-1, straight=0
- name+1, hush+1, brass+2, wise=0, straight-1
- name+1, hush=0, brass+2, wise+1, straight-1
- name=0, hush+1, brass+2, wise-1, straight+1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Custom Job:** when you work on any vehicle for a day, roll+brass; on a hit, you can add or remove any tag or simply get it working again. On a 10+, you can add or remove an additional tag; on a miss, the vehicle is a write off and is worth 2 less dough as scrap.
- **Motor Mouth:** take +1 when you **ask around** or **argue the toss** about any vehicle.
- **Driveaway Bargain:** when you steal a car, roll+brass; on a hit, you drive off with it but it is +hot. On a 7-9, the theft is reported immediately, so it is +hot twice.
- **Dealership:** you can trade a vehicle in your possession for any of the following:
 - Another vehicle worth 1 dough more.
 - To **pay cash** at a value of 1 dough more than the vehicle is worth.
 - To erase someone's name from your payback box.
- **"Come On, Baby!":** while you are driving any vehicle, it is +tough and -weak. As soon as you step out of the vehicle, it reverts to its normal tags and status.
- **Crash & Burn:** when you stage an accident with any vehicle, roll+brass; on a hit, the owner of the vehicle takes -2 heat. On a 10+, choose one; on a 7-9, choose two:
 - There's enough evidence to prove this was staged.
 - Whoever was driving goes down.
 - You have to involve someone else's vehicle: mark them for payback.

When drawing a street plan of the 'hood, add your workshop to a street other than the one you live in and name an NPC who works there alongside you.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

1

2

3

4

5

EXPLODED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

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●

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EXPLODED

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You sold them their first motor and it was a heap of shit: take +1 debt with each other.
- You provide free car maintenance to members of their family: take +2 debt with them.
- They can't prove it, but they know you fenced a car that was nicked off them: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- You're the only mechanic locally who'll touch their dodgy gear: take +1 debt with everyone else.

Mechanic Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, a vehicle they own or are riding in is wrecked.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE MERCHANT

WHAT'S IT WORTH?

Buy it, sell it, the game's getting hard and someone's dealing you a losing card; whatever the commodity or service is, you've got the skill & determination to provide it, at the right price. You look for opportunities, any gaps in the market, and make a quick buck on them before the heat comes down.

All you need to keep your head above water is something to trade in; as long as you have a commodity to sell, people will buy it from you and you'll be in the money. When you're out of stock though, or just don't have the time to sell it, the money dries up and you need to make a deal fast. Unfortunately, everyone has their hand out to the one with all the money and it's easy to let your advantage slip away by a thousand small cuts: a little bribe here, a round of drinks there and before you know it, you're as broke as everyone else.

As long as you have stock, you are king of **the 'hood**, with moves like **Payment in Kind** and **Loss Leader** making you more popular, or at least less hated. Your most important optional move though is **Wheeler Dealer**, which works in partnership with **Lockup** to keep your livelihood secure.

You're also good to have around, because money talks and you have the most to say; you've got the option of having a little extra cash, not to mention being more likely to get your own way, so the rest of the outfit will be looking to you to throw cash at their problems and make them go away.



Introducing the
THE MERCHANT

It's all about buying low and selling high; the commodity doesn't matter, only the money. Every week it's something different; flogging fruit and veg without a license, trading stolen TVs from a van at the back of the pub or taking bets at a dog fight: the money's there to be made if you know where to find it.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Delboy, Trotter, Flash Harry, the Geezer, Diamond [Name], Good Deal, [Name] the Shop, Spiv, the Genie.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you have stock to trade.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name+1, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight=0
- name+1, hush-1, brass=0, wise+2, straight+1
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1

MOVES

You get this one:

✗ **Lockup:** you start with 1 stock to trade in, such as tinned food, pirate DVDs, fake designer watches, etc. You also have a lockup which can hold up to 3 stock: mark it on your street plan. Take -1 stock at the end of every session.

Then choose one:

- **Wheeler Dealer:** when you **ask around** for stock, take +1 now and add this to your list of options.
 - The stock you find is +hot.
- **Payment in Kind:** when you trade stock, roll+wise. On a hit, take -1 stock. On a 10+, erase their name from your payback box; on a 7-9, it gets them off your back for now.
- **The Smart Money:** when you **argue the toss** and get a hit, take +1 debt with any PC who chooses not to do things your way.
- **Clearance Sale:** when you liquidate your stock, take -3 stock and roll+wise. On a hit, take +2 dough; on a 10+, you may also take +1 dough and choose one; on a 7-9, choose one:
 - Take +1 heat if any of the stock was +hot.
 - Get help doing this; if it's a PC who helps, they take +1 debt with you. If it's an NPC, mark them for payback.
- **Loss Leader:** if you take -1 stock at the start of a session, you take +1 ongoing against all NPCs in your 'hood.

STOCK

\$

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ○ Mark experience. ○ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ○ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ○ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ○ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT _____ \$








Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• - I ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$







Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You ripped them off badly on a big deal; they take +2 debt with you.
- You got them the goods they needed when they couldn't get it any other way; take +2 debt with them.
- You helped them raise cash by selling their possessions; take +1 debt with each other.
- Everyone else has been burned by your dodgy deals in the past; tell everyone else to take +1 debt with you.

Merchant Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take +1 stock.

PAYBACK

	\$
--	----

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND-FOES

	\$
--	----

GEAR

	\$
	Dough

THE MOVER YOU JUST MISSED HIM

It's all about speed, the right speed: fast enough to meet your deadlines but not so fast as to attract the law's attention. You've got to get in under the radar, even when everybody wants to get their hands on whatever it is you're delivering. Knowing the backstreets of your 'hood is only the beginning: more important is knowing who you can trust on those streets.

Your livelihood depends on your transport: without the wheels, you can't get into motion, so looking after your vehicle is your number one priority. Your first motor is a bit clapped out though, so start looking to save up for something better as soon as you can. When your current motor does let you down, your only option is to fix it or borrow someone else's and pay them back later.

Your most valuable assets, after the wheels, are your speed and discretion: **Duck & Dive** and **Backstreet Knowledge** will make it hard for others to get one over on you, while **Search Me** allows you to keep important items out of their reach if they do catch you.

As you have a fairly stable income, you're one of the more reliable residents of **the 'hood**, with no real day to day worries: that all changes when your motor gets trashed or when your latest package is very hot. You're going to need lots of friends then, so keep 'em sweet and help them out when they need it, then hope that they'll remember to return the favour.



Introducing the **THE MOVER**

When it positively, absolutely has to fucking get there tomorrow. You might just be a cog in the machine, but you've got marketable skills and no conscience: you don't ask what's in the bag, you just pick it up and drop it off, quickly, quietly and cleanly.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Slick, Swifty, Houdini, Wheels, Gears, the Bolt, the Jet, the Postman, Wings, Fast [Name], Slow [Name].

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you have a functioning vehicle.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush+2, brass-1, wise+1, straight=0
- name=0, hush+2, brass-1, wise+1, straight+1
- name+1, hush+2, brass-1, wise=0, straight+1
- name-1, hush+2, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0

MOVES

Take this one:

✕ **Pimp My Ride:** you start with one functioning vehicle worth 2 dough.

Then choose one:

- **Low Profile:** you get +1 hush (hush+3).
- **Escape Route:** When you go to **Plan B**, roll+hush instead of roll+wise.
- **Duck & Dive:** When anyone **gets rough** or **opens fire** on you, they take -1 now.
- **Backstreet Knowledge:** when you overtake others on the move, roll+wise. On a 10+, you end up minutes ahead of them. On a 7-9, you are seconds ahead. On a miss, you stay behind them all the way.
- **Search Me:** when you smuggle gear, roll+hush. On a 10+, no-one finds it on you. On a 7-9, you have to stash it and come back for it later. On a miss, it gets found and taken from you.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT _____ \$

1

2

3

4

5

6

DEBT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -I ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

1

2

3

4

5

6

DEBT

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You run illicit goods for them from time to time; take +1 debt with each other.
- You borrowed their motor and wrecked it; tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- Only your fast reflexes got you out of the trouble they made for you when they ratted you out; take +2 debt with them.

Mover Special: when you double-cross another PC, you may dump them in any location of your choice.

PAYBACK

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND-FOES

GEAR

Dough

THE NEIGHBOR

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Really, you're not that special, just another everyday citizen trying to get by in the big city: you have a mundane but legitimate job, you mostly try to stay within the law and you don't get involved in other people's business, so long as they stay out of yours. On the other hand, if you can make a little bit extra on the side, without going to too much effort, well, you'd be a fool not to and if you don't, somebody else will.

Of course, you still have to keep your day job: you're no good as a reference or upstanding member of the community if you're just another jobless troublemaker. You've got to make the effort to go into work every day, no matter what else is going on in your life: with the kind of places you work in, even missing one day can be a big problem. Miss a whole week and you'll be looking for a new job in no time, so keep your references up to date.

The big thing working in your favour is that you're clean: neither the authorities nor the criminal underworld have any interest in you, if they even know you exist. That respectable front is an asset that the other PCs can get a lot of use from, so make the most of it: **Cover Story** and **Mi Casa** let you take the heat off almost anyone and anything, so don't forget to negotiate a good price for those little favours. On the other hand, maybe you aren't as innocent as you look: **Look Casual** and **Clean Record** mean that you have a good chance of literally getting away with murder, because nobody ever suspects you.

There is another, far riskier path for the Neighbour: if you think all those criminals should get what they deserve, why not be the one to make it happen? You can go a long way by pointing the finger at other PCs, through both **Pass the Buck** and **Informer**, but don't expect everyone else to take it lying down...



Introducing the **THE NEIGHBOR**

Let's make this clear: you're not a criminal. You don't steal (though you do watch pirate movies and buy cheap gear at the market), you're not a druggie (but you like the odd social spliff) and you've never hurt anybody (except when they really pissed you off and were just begging for a slap.) You just keep your head down and get by, but you're certainly not a criminal.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

[Descriptor][Name], e.g. Old Meg, Tall Dave, Irish Paul, Blonde Rita, etc.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you go to work every day.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name=0, hush+1, brass+1, wise-1, straight+2
- name-1, hush=0, brass+1, wise+1, straight+2
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+2

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Look Casual:** when you **cover your tracks**, roll+straight instead of roll+hush.
- **Clean Record:** you get +1 straight (straight+3).
- **Cover Story:** when you help another PC to **lie low**, they take +2 now; on a hit, you take +1 debt with them instead of them marking someone for payback. On a miss, you're drawn into whatever trouble they're in.
- **Mi Casa:** all goods stored at your home are -hot, no matter who they belong to.
- **Pass the Buck:** when someone comes to you for payback, you can send them to another PC; roll+wise. On a hit, erase that name from your payback box and mark it in the target's: they take +1 debt with you. On a 7-9, take +1 heat.
- **Informer:** when you grass on someone in your 'hood, roll+straight. On a hit, take -1 heat; if your heat=0, take +1 dough instead. On a 10+, it's not widely known that you've grassed, though it can be found out if anyone **asks around**. On a 7-9, everyone knows it was you who grassed on them; if they're a PC, they take +1 debt with you.

*When drawing a street plan of **the 'hood**, mark your address next door to or in the same building as another PC's: that PC is your neighbour.*

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT _____ \$

1

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3

4

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7

8

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10

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

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Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- o You and your neighbour see & hear all of each other's comings and goings: take +l debt with each other.
- o You had to ask them for their help outside the law once and you hate yourself for it: tell them to take +l debt with you.
- o You reported them to the authorities for how they were making their living: tell them to take +l debt with you.
- o You never have anything to do with the criminals in your **'hood** so long as you can avoid it: take -l debt with everyone else.

Neighbour Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take -1 heat.

PAYBACK

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND-FOES

GEAR

Dough

THE PIMP

A LIFE OF EASY VIRTUE

As a representative of the oldest profession, you might almost claim some respectability to your work, but let's face facts: you get men and women to sell their bodies, taking cash for sex. It's not nice and neither are most of the customers you service, so anyone who knows you doesn't like you very much and anyone who doesn't still knows enough not to ask any questions.

You can live very well off the proceeds of your hoes, as long as the streets are safe for them to walk, so keeping in with the Bastion and the Fallen is a necessity for your work. The catch comes when your entire stable feels that you aren't looking after their interests and start pocketing the money that rightly belongs to you; in that case, it's time to settle scores and show them who's boss, quick.

Your great strength is your ability to use your hoes in place of other costs and penalties; **Stress Relief**, **Pimped Out** and **Posse** all let you mark a hoe for payback in place of another outcome, while **Weekend Promotion** settles all your debts with them, at the price of a little heat. It all works beautifully, keeping you out of trouble and letting you mark experience for restoring your livelihood, but keep an eye on all the extra heat you're gaining.

The Pimp can be a difficult character to play seriously, but don't be in any doubt about them: they can be just as nasty and serious as the Lever or Ice, given a chance. If you avoid playing them for light relief and steer clear of double-entendres, they can be one of the most disturbing characters in the game.



Introducing the **THE PIMP**

Everyone has needs, so like all good businesses, you provide an essential service and fill a gap in the marketplace. It's all customer-focused and you need a lot of people skills, as well as a well-placed flick knife.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Suggested by: Charles Perez

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

[Town] [Name], Venus, Whitehouse, Hugh, Sleazy [Name], Dirty [Name], Sugardaddy, Huggy, Madam [Name], the Stargazer.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you don't owe payback to all your hoes.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name=0, hush+1, brass+1, wise+2, straight-1
- name+1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight-1
- name+1, hush=0, brass+1, wise+2, straight-1
- name+1, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight=0

MOVES

You get this one:

⊗ **Stable of Hoes:** name any 3 NPCs in your **'hood** that sell their bodies for you; they are your first hoes. Whenever you do something that causes another PC to take +1 debt with you, you may mark the name of one of your hoes in your payback box instead.

HOES	\$

Then choose one:

- **Stress Relief:** you can hook up an NPC with one of your hoes for free; erase the target's name from your payback box and replace it with that of the hoe's.
- **Pimped Out:** when you **ask around**, you can mark one of your hoes for payback instead of choosing options.
- **Weekend Promotion:** once per session, you may erase all your hoes' names from your payback box and take +1 heat.
- **Smack My Bitch Up:** when you **take the hard way** or get rough against any of your hoes, roll+wise instead of roll+brass or roll+edge.
- **Posse:** when you **take the heat off**, you can target one of your hoes instead of a PC. On a hit, avoid taking +1 heat. On a 7-9, mark them for payback.

NAME:

LOOK

\$

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

EXHAUSTED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They hate you for what you've done to their brother/sister; tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- You've given them a discount in return for preferential treatment; take +1 debt with each other.
- You've sworn not to tell another soul about their sexual preferences; take +2 debt with them.
- Other's shun your business; tell everyone else to ignore what their playbook says, they all take debt=0 with you.

Pimp Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, erase a hoe's name from your payback box.

PAYBACK	\$
FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$
GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE QUACK MAKING HOUSE CALLS

The good news for your **'hood** is that it's got a doctor on call; the bad news is, it's you. You're a genuinely qualified and practicing medical doctor, but **the 'hood** keeps dragging you into all sorts of moral grey areas, so your sense of right and wrong is maybe a little skewed. Still, you're smart, respected and needed, so enjoy life a little.

The thing with being the doc is that you can't turn away a patient: when someone comes to you for help, you have to treat them, no matter what's happening in their life or yours. When you can't or won't help someone, your livelihood gets threatened and it won't be easy to win back the trust of **the 'hood** without doing a few unpleasant favours for those who run the place.

Your medical training comes in pretty handy with moves that let you help others, like **ER** and **Angel of Mercy**: add **Well Educated** into the mix and you become a reliable person in a crisis. On the other hand, you can get deep into the seedy underbelly of **the 'hood** with **Prescription Pad** and **Doctor's Letter**: if you want to go the whole hog, then equip your **Backstreet Surgery** and start practicing medicine off the books.

Being the Quack is a little like being the Fallen: you have a respectable job, it's just you who's a little tarnished. Make the most of your reputation and don't forget to remind your neighbours about all the things you've done for them. Some of them will see you as an asset to be controlled, so you'll have to walk the tightrope between helping others and being their doormat.



Introducing the
THE QUACK

The 'hood hurts and the 'hood kills, so the residents need someone to patch them up and let them go on fighting for another day. That's your job, but it goes deeper than that: you're one of them, someone they can show their old scars and bleeding wounds to. You'd better return the trust they've shown you or it might be you who needs patching up.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Suggested by: Tommy Rayburn
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Doc [Surname]

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you never turn away a patient.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight=0
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight+1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **ER:** when you examine someone within one hour of them going **down** or **out**, roll+wise; on a hit, they improve from **out** to **down** or from **down** to **fine**. On a 10+, choose two; on a 7-9, choose one:

- This settles the score: erase their name from your payback box or they take -1 debt with you.
- It doesn't take you a long time to examine them and improve their condition.
- You aren't drawn any further into their problems.

- **Prescription Pad:** you always have access to controlled or prescription drugs, you don't need to **ask around** for them.

- **Doctor's Letter:** when you sign off on a fraudulent benefit or insurance claim, roll+straight; on a hit, the target gets their claim approved and you take +1 dough; on a 7-9, take +1 heat.

- **Angel of Mercy:** when you stand up for someone in danger of harm, take +1 forward.

- **Backstreet Surgery:** you have an illegal, out-of-hours surgery where you can practice medicine discreetly; mark it on the streetplan. When you operate here and take heat, you may transfer that heat to the backstreet surgery instead; when it reaches 5 heat, it gets burned. You may remove heat from your surgery by **lying low**, but if it gets burned, you must find a new site for it before you can use this move again.

- **Well Educated:** you get +1 wise (wise+3).

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		
Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ○ Mark experience. ○ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ○ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ○ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ○ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.		

HEAT _____ \$

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

1

2

3

4

5

6

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You couldn't do anything to save the life of their loved one: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- You've signed off on disability assessments for one of their family: take +2 debt with them.
- You know the medical history of everyone in **the 'hood**: take +1 debt with everyone else.

Quack Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, choose whether they go down or you do.

PAYBACK

	\$
--	----

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES

	\$
--	----

GEAR

	\$
	Dough

THE RADAR

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

Information is your stock-in-trade, so the more you know, the better off you are... well, not exactly. No-one in your **'hood** likes a snitch, so you have to be careful about who you sell your information to: money's no good in the graveyard. Being the Radar means betraying trusts on a daily basis, so the trick is knowing when the value of the information you have outweighs the consequences of selling it.

If someone comes to you looking for answers and you don't cough up, however, then you're going to find yourself short for a while: if you're not profiting from what you know, then you're not **getting by**. If you end up being asked to tell-all about a subject you'd rather keep to yourself, then your best bet to restore your livelihood is to find another way to please your customer, even if it means throwing someone else to the lions.

As the Radar, you're going to be pissing off the other PCs like clockwork: **Cash for Questions** and a **Word to the Wise** all let you sell them out for some debt with you, earning you dough and getting NPCs off your back. You're going to want to watch your own back if you're using those moves regularly, so take **Lookout** and **Roll With the Punches** when you can: the former not only lets you avoid trouble, but you can sell your services as a lookout to the other PCs, which might keep them from burying you in wet concrete for a while longer.

The Radar is the joker in the pack and the fly in the ointment: you'll be right in everyone's sights from the off if you have **I Know What You Did**, as the only way they can guarantee privacy in their affairs is by getting rid of you. You can either creep, crawl and generally make yourself indispensable, in the hope that they'll think twice before putting a bullet between your eyes; or you can play it fast and hard, screw everyone over and burn through **the 'hood** in a brilliant blaze of betrayal & blood.



Introducing the **THE RADAR**

The ‘hood has a voice, but not everyone can understand it: you do though and you know well enough that there are times when it pays to shut up and listen. It pays again when you sell what you know to those with an interest, even if you aren’t always too fussy about who you sell out.

A Character Playbook for

THE ‘HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

Dedicated to Matt Schillinger

HANDLE

Snoop, Snitch, [Name of news channel],[Name of newspaper], the Whisper, Newsflash, the Oracle, Blind [Name], Wiki, X-Ray.

LOOT

You’re **getting by** as long as you always sell what you know when asked.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+1, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight=0
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name=0, hush-1, brass+1, wise+2, straight+1
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight+1

MOVES

Choose two:

- **I Know What You Did:** you can turn all your out-of-character knowledge about another PC into in-character knowledge at any time; they take +1 debt with you.
- **Know It All:** when you **ask around**, roll+wise instead of roll+name.
- **Roll With the Punches:** when anyone **gets rough** or **opens fire** on you, on a 7-9, you choose the outcome instead of them.
- **Lookout:** when you stay on the lookout, roll+wise; on a hit, you get a warning that someone is coming long enough before they arrive for you to get away. On a 7-9, you don't have time to do everything: if you stay to warn your friends, you are all here when they arrive, but you get +1 forward to face them; if you leave without your friends, you get away but your friends take -1 forward to face them.
- **Cash for Questions:** when you go to the authorities with information about illegal activities, take +1 dough and +1 heat; if this is about another PC's illegal activities, they take +1 debt with you.
- **A Word to the Wise:** when you point the finger at another PC, roll+wise; on a hit, an NPC in their payback box goes and seeks payback from them right now and you may erase that name from your payback box; on a 7-9, the PC you just fingered takes +1 debt with you.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT

PC

PC

PC

PC

DEBT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

>

●

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●

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You were always grassing on them and they were always beating you up for it when you were kids: take +1 debt with each other.
- They hold you responsible for helping the authorities put them away for a short stretch: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- Your testimony helped catch the real criminal when they were in the frame: take +2 debt with them.
- Everyone else thinks you're an unreliable snitch and steers clear of you: tell them all to take -1 debt with you.

Radar Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, spread a rumour about them and put the name of any NPC in their payback box.

PAYBACK

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FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND-FOES

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GEAR

Dough

THE REBEL

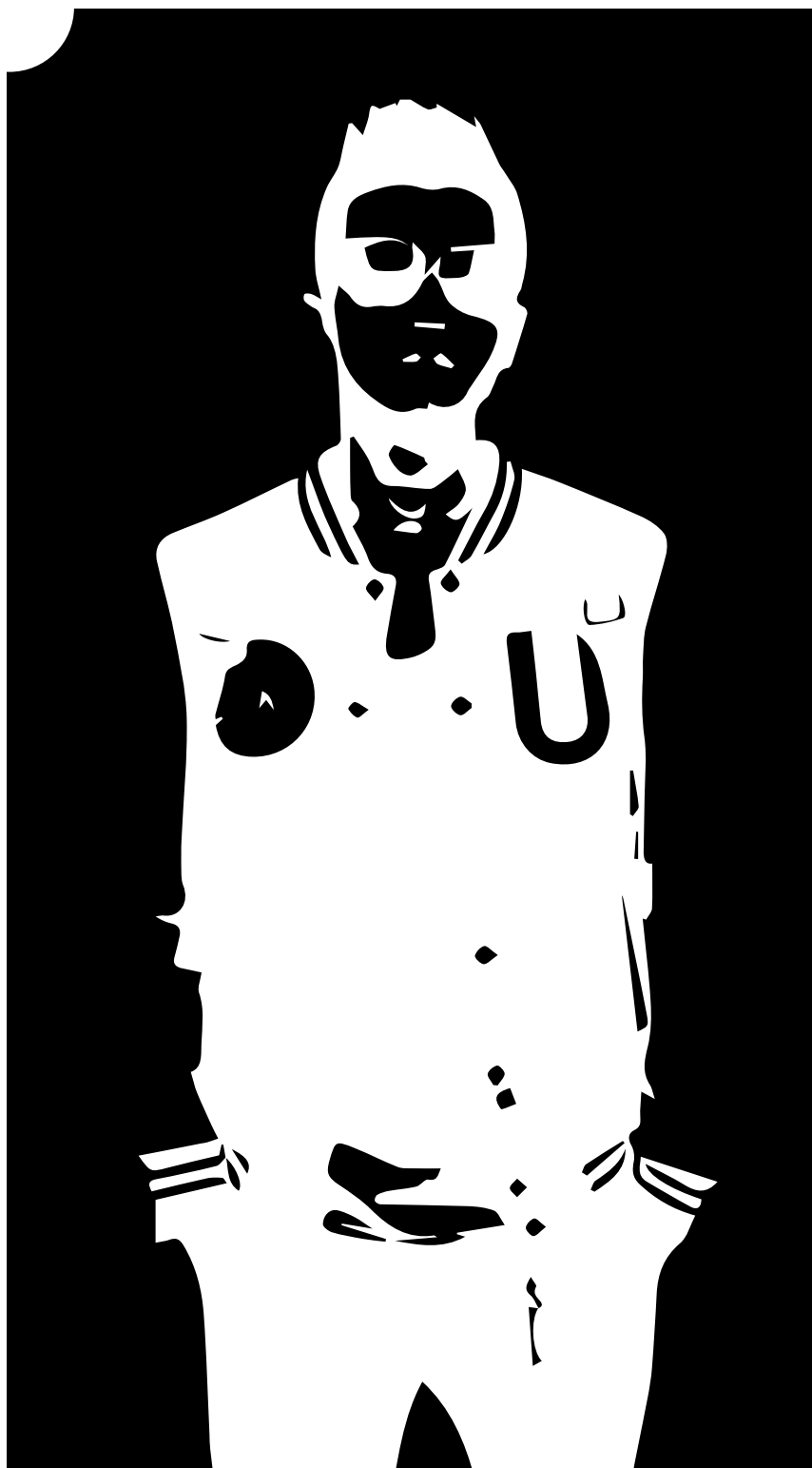
NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

The 'hood is full of kids with no hopes, no prospects and no imagination: you don't want that to be your world. You've seen what it takes to get by and you're not afraid to get your hands dirty looking after you and yours.

Your parents just don't understand: every time they catch you bunking off school or hanging out with the people they look down on, they give you a hard time over it. They can't throw you out, but they can take away your stuff, so if you want to keep them sweet, keep them in the dark. If you do get into a row with them, find a way to make it up to them, even if you have to get one of your older mates to lie and cover up for you.

You start off with a few disadvantages compared to the other PCs, but you are full of potential; the problem is that realising that potential will bring a shitstorm down on your head. It's not just **Fuck Up**, but your special move: making trouble is your fast track to the big leagues and along the way, **Tough Kid**, **Diss** and **Get Away** will help you watch your back.

Change is the destiny of the Rebel: either they'll grow up to be something more than they are now or they'll never get the chance to grow up at all. Don't pull your punches with this playbook: play them loud, fast and in your face, make bad decisions, then learn from your mistakes... then go ahead and make them again.



Introducing the **THE REBEL**

Shit man, school is for losers, y'know? Your school is the streets and you're learning all you need to know about life on them. There ain't nothing waiting for you when you're older, if you want anything in this life you've got to take it for yourself and you're starting right the fuck now!

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Ratboy/Ratgirl, Young [Name], the Kid, Babyface, Schoolie, Brat, the Menace/Minx, Junior, [Name of character from children's TV/books/films]

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as your parents or carers don't find out what you're up to.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name-1, hush=0, brass+1, wise+1, straight+1
- name=0, hush-1, brass+1, wise+1, straight+1
- name-1, hush+1, brass+1, wise=0, straight+1
- name-1, hush+1, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0

MOVES

Choose two:

- **Parental Guidance:** write your primary parent's or carer's name in your payback box; take -1 heat every time you pay them back.
- **Graduation:** when you get **burned**, reset your heat to zero then choose a new playbook and carry on playing this character, but you lose all moves from this playbook.
- **Fuck Up:** when you **cover your tracks** or **take the hard way**, you can mark experience and miss instead of rolling.
- **Tough Kid:** you don't take -1 ongoing when you're **down** and you recover from **down** to **fine** in hours rather than days.
- **Diss:** when you diss anyone loudly, to their face, roll+brass; on a hit, they back-off and don't hassle you; on a 7-9, mark them for payback or they take +1 debt with you.
- **Get Away:** when you lose your pursuers, roll+brass; on a hit, you leave them far behind; on a 7-9, choose one:
 - It's a near miss: go **down** after you get away.
 - You only buy a little time: they'll catch back up soon. You run back to your carer: explaining the situation to them threatens your livelihood.

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- *Mark experience.*
- *Choose a move from that PC's playbook.*

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.

HEAT

OVERHEATED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- o They are close family and they look out for you: take +1 debt with each other.
- o They did you a really big favour one time, but only because they respected your carer: tell them to take +1 debt with you.
- o You're a street rat who'll do almost anything you're asked to, as long as there's something in it for you: take +1 debt with everyone else.

Rebel Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take any stat+1 [max:2].

PAYBACK

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FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES

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GEAR

Dough

THE SCHEMER

WOULD I LIE TO YOU?

For whatever reason, you appear trustworthy and honest: it's a God given gift that you exploit at every opportunity. Even people who've been stung by you before will believe that it was down to circumstances beyond your control, that you lost your money too but if they give you a little bit more, you can make it all back for them. You're the worm in the apple, feeding off the tasty flesh all around you and making the whole thing rotten to the core.

Money just falls into your pockets: with your looks, charm and willingness to lie, you persuade your marks to part with their cash on the flimsiest of pretexts. After a while though, they get wise to your scheme and you need to move on before you attract too much attention, so the Schemer's life is constantly on the go. Your livelihood will get threatened on a regular basis as you are forced to come up with new schemes, but it's all a great learning experience.

Your moves are geared to giving you a big social advantage: you're wiser than most, so **Face in the Crowd** and **Untouchable** let you take full advantage of that. You're also a master of manipulating the other PCs, even when they know you for what you really are: **Give 'em Enough Rope** and **Friendly Face** will keep them in your debt if they don't back off and leave you alone.

If you're going to be the Schemer, you've got to be prepared to make shit up: it's not just about playing the character, but also coming up with their latest get rich quick scheme. Think fast and talk faster, always be ready with a plausible excuse and never, ever admit to anything when you can lay the blame elsewhere.



Introducing the
THE SCHEMER

Getting rich quick is the name of the game; find the loophole, look for the shortcut, then exploit it fast & hard. You've got to spend money to make money, sure, but nobody said it had to be your own.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Face, Anansi, Slim, the Barracuda, Smiling [Name], Tricky [Name], Fast Talk, Motormouth, the Preacher.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you have at least one scam on the go.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name-1, hush+1, brass+1, wise+2, straight+0
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+2, straight+1
- name-1, hush=0, brass+1, wise+2, straight+1
- name=0, hush-1, brass+1, wise+2, straight+1

MOVES

You get this one:

✕ **Scam:** you start with one scam on the go, such as a pyramid investment scheme, fake charity collection, home improvement sales, etc. At the end of every session, you either have to drop your current scam or take +1 heat. Starting up a new scam is part of the conversation for your character.

SCAM COLLECTION	\$

Then choose one:

- **Been There, Done That:** you get +1 wise (wise+3).
- **Face in the Crowd:** when you **cover your tracks**, roll+wise instead of roll+hush.
- **Untouchable:** when you **take the heat off**, roll+wise instead of roll+brass.
- **Give ‘em Enough Rope:** whenever another PC **argues the toss** with you, take +1 debt with them in addition to whatever else happens.
- **Payoff:** when you keep one scam going for more than two sessions, take +1 dough for every additional session it runs.
- **Friendly Face:** when you payback an NPC in someone else’s payback box, take +1 debt with that PC.

NAME:

LOOK

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT		

Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

HEAT

1

2

3

4

5

EXPLODED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

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●

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●

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✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You ripped-off their family in a past scheme; tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- They watched your back when you were both kids; take +2 debt with them.
- Everyone else has learned the hard way not to trust you; take +1 debt with everyone else and tell them all to take +1 debt with you.

Schemer Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, nullify their double-cross move. Whatever it is, it just doesn't happen.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE SHARK

THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL.

It's all about the money, nothing else matters; you measure your success by the size of your wallet and the bling you carry. You've taken the little bit of cash you had and gradually leveraged it into a bigger and bigger stash, by loaning it out at extortionate rates of interest. Everyone hates you and everyone needs you.

As long as there are people who owe you money, there's a source of income open to you, but you have to collect what you're owed on a regular basis or else your livelihood is threatened. Finding ways to get more people into your debt is essential, especially as debtors are unreliable at the best of times and even manage to pay of all that they owe you on some occasions. Do favours when you're asked, then come back later with the full asking price for your services.

Unlike other playbooks, the unique moves you start with are fixed and you get no choice in it, but once you earn an advance, you can start thinking about your career path. If you want to make a lot of money fast, **Final Demand** and **Long Term Investments** will keep the money rolling in; on the other hand, if you like having an army of debtors who owe you, **Outsourcing** will put them to work for you and **Easy Terms** will make sure you never run out of them.

The Shark tends to swim in their own pool: they have their own secure way of getting by, regardless of what others in their 'hood are up to. The catch is that your debtors are probably also their friends and relatives, so you're more likely to come into direct conflict with another PC than almost anyone else. If there's a Heavy or Ice in your circle, put them on your books as soon as you can and think about becoming the gang boss to ensure the loyalty of the rest.



Introducing the
THE SHARK

Money isn't just a means to an end, it's an end in itself; people chase it, hoard it, dream of it and count it. When they're desperate enough for some more of it, they come to you.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**
BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

[Bank Name], Uncle, Midas, Moneybags, Jackpot, the Lottery, Payday, Cashpoint, the Mint.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you collect a payment from at least 1 debtor every session.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+2, hush=0, brass+1, wise+1, straight-1
- name+2, hush-1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+1
- name+2, hush-1, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+2, hush-1, brass+1, wise=0, straight+1

MOVES

You get these two:

⊗ **Bankroll:** name any 3 NPCs in your **'hood** that have taken out a loan with you; they are your first debtors. You can erase a debtor's name from your payback box at any time, but you can't also collect a payment from them in that session.

DEBTORS

- ⊗ **Payment:** when you collect a payment from a debtor, roll+wise. On a hit, they pay you. On a 7-9, choose one. On a miss, they pay off their loan and cease to be a debtor.
 - You have to rough them up to get your payment; they go **down**.
 - You take their last penny; they can't pay you again unless their situation changes.
 - It takes you all day to get their money, if you can spare the time.
 - If they're a PC, threaten their livelihood.

You can choose these when you advance:

- **Final Demand:** when you collect the final payment from any debtor, take 1 dough and they cease to be a debtor.
- **Long Term Investments:** take 1 dough each time you earn an advance.
- **Outsourcing:** take +1 ongoing to all help they give you when you recruit a debtor for a job; mark them for payback.
- **Easy Terms:** when you **argue the toss** with someone who wants money from you, on a 10+ you can give in to their demands but they become one of your debtors.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT _____ \$

PC

PC

PC

PC

REMOVED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

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●

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●

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They blame you for not helping their family when you could have done; they take +2 debt with you.
- Without you, they'd have lost everything; take +2 debt with them.
- Everyone else has come to you for a loan sometime; take +1 debt with everybody else.

Shark Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, they take -1 dough or their livelihood is threatened.

PAYBACK

• \$

FAMILY,-FRIENDS AND-FOES

• \$

GEAR

• \$

Dough

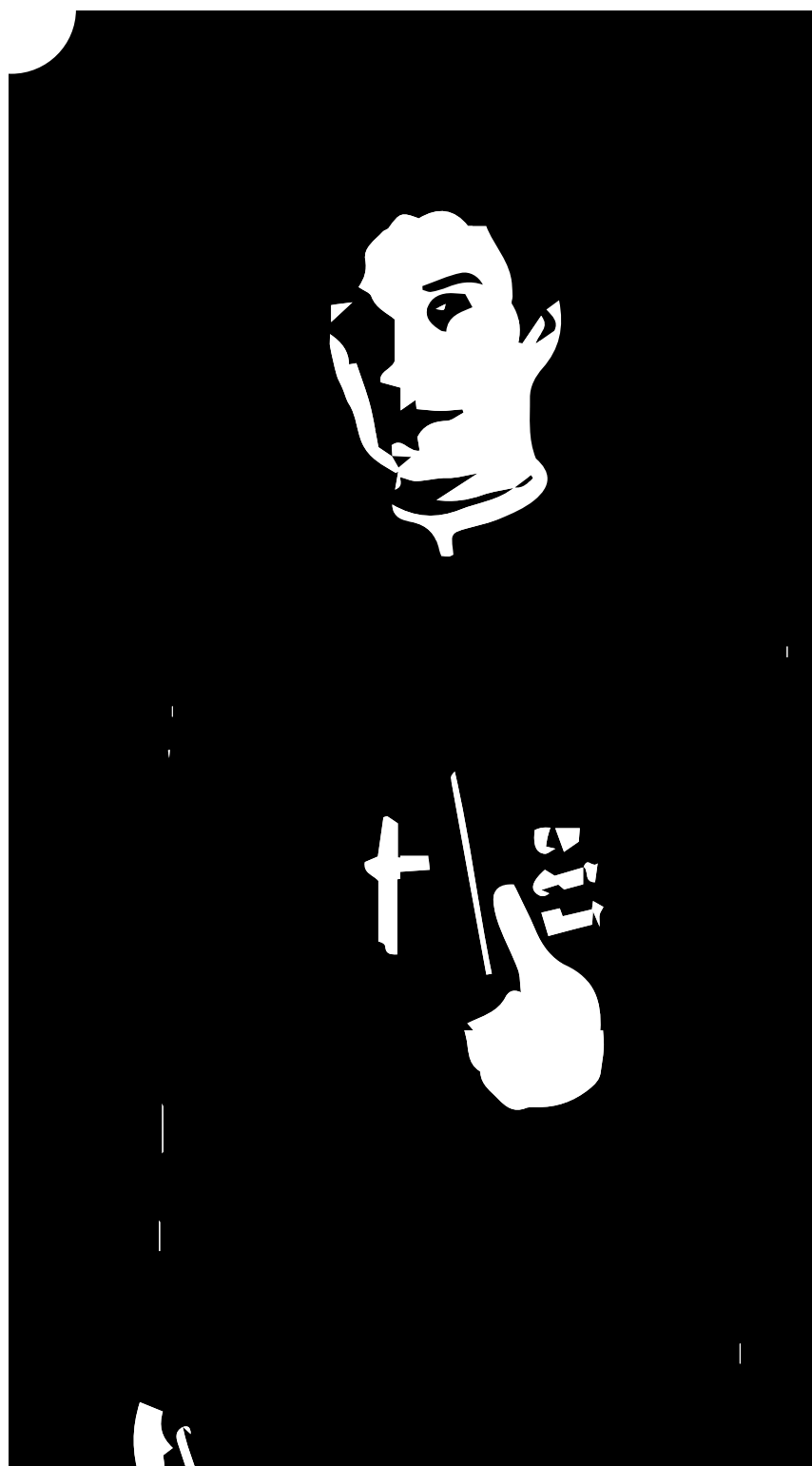
THE SHEPHERD DELIVER US FROM EVIL

You're meant to be a moral compass to the residents of **the 'hood**, steering them onto the right path and away from temptation... but in the real world, people aren't that perfect, so you're really there to forgive them for their sins and help them to make amends for their wrongdoing. Sometimes, to help them you have to shield them from the authorities or the bigger fish who won't give them a second chance, which draws you into the seedy underbelly of the city time and time again.

The residents come to you with the weight of the world on their shoulders and expect you to lighten the load for them; you're supposed to keep their secrets, not share them around, but if the proper moral course of action involves betraying that trust, you'll do it in order to save them from a worse fate. You might find that church/synagogue/temple attendances fall off when word gets out that you're a snitch, so you're going to have to do something spectacular to earn their trust again and restore your livelihood.

Most of your moves rely on your clean reputation, so keeping your heat=0 is a key strategy for you; to compensate for the potential loss of experience this results in, you get to mark experience whenever you save a member of your **Flock** from big trouble, including any other PCs. When you **Balance the Books**, you can kill two birds with one stone, reducing your own heat and saving a PC from being burned by confronting those who have them in their sights.

It's in your interests to push against the flow and try to get the other PCs to do the right thing, at least occasionally: those who are in your flock are nominally on your side, so get all up in their business and save them from themselves... again and again and again.



Introducing the **THE SHEPHERD**

*When the residents of **the ‘hood** don’t know what is the right thing to do, they can turn to you and seek your guidance. Even if you can’t persuade them to stay within the law, you can at least be there to hear their confession and to say the Last Rites for them.*

A Character Playbook for

THE ‘HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Use the name and title your flock addresses you by.

LOOT

You’re **getting by** as long as you never betray a trust.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2
- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+1, straight+2
- name=0, hush+1, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1
- name+1, hush=0, brass-1, wise+2, straight+1

MOVES

You get this one:

⌘ **Flock:** for each NPC in **the 'hood**, toss a coin; on a head, they are part of your flock. Whenever you save a member of your flock from going out or getting burned, mark experience.

Then choose one:

- **Divine Calling:** when your heat=0, take +1 now when you roll+wise or roll+straight.
- **Confessor:** no member of your flock can keep a secret from you if you ask them about it; if your heat>0, you have to promise to help them with it in return and mark them for payback or they take +1 debt with you.
- **Balance the Books:** when you go to confront the big fish who have your 'hood in their sights, roll+straight; on a hit, you and each member of your flock take -1 heat but they will ask for something in return. On a 10+, you can argue the toss about the details; on a 7-9, you have to do it or else. You can save a PC member of your flock from being burned if you act immediately to make this move when they reach 5+ heat.
- **Street Preacher:** when your heat=0, you can preach the truth in public, roll+name; on a hit, the MC chooses one of the listeners who becomes a member of your flock. On a 7-9, you upset someone else who is listening: choose who and mark them for payback.
- **Condemnation:** when your heat=0, you can condemn a single resident of your **'hood**; if they are a PC, they **make trouble** when they deal with members of your flock; if they are an NPC, they can't get payback from anyone, but can still be marked for it. If they want you to withdraw your condemnation, they have deal with you in person and reach a deal you agree to; they also cease to be condemned if your heat>0.

NAME:

LOOK

\$

STATS DEBT

 NAME  HUSH  BRASS  WISE  STRAIGHT	<table><tr><th>Who</th><th>How Much</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table> Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	Who	How Much		
Who	How Much				

HEAT

●

●

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●

●

●

●

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE	DOWN	OUT
⊗	○	●
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE

●

●

●

●

●

●

●

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBT'S

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, ask each other PC if they are a member of your flock or not: if they are, take +1 debt with each other. For those who aren't, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You tried to help them once but they rejected it aggressively: take +1 debt with them.
- They came through for a member of your flock who was in need of their services: tell them to take +1 debt with you.

Shepherd Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, they make trouble whenever they deal with your flock for the rest of the session.

PAYBACK

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FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES

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GEAR

Dough

THE THIEF

WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE

One step up from a mugger, your preference is for breaking and entering; find the valuables, nick 'em and flog 'em, that's your motto. A word to the wise though: don't piss on your own patch. Nicking stuff from your neighbours in **the 'hood** will only make trouble for you, so make sure you operate somewhere else, ok?

The thing is, all those stolen goods have to sit somewhere until you can move them on, so that's going to be in your 'hood somewhere; the last thing you want then is for a bunch of flat-footed plods sticking their noses in everywhere. Your livelihood is threatened anytime the police are in your **'hood** (except for the Fallen, 'cos you've got a deal with him, right?) as even a clever thief like you struggles to move stolen goods right under their noses. Burn the evidence, flog it for a fraction of what it's worth or pin it on someone else, just don't get caught with it.

The Thief's moves are particularly archetypal and are all geared around finding, stealing and selling stuff; you can even use your skills to steal a weapon right out of your enemy's hands if you've got **Disarm**. Partner this with **Search for Traps & Secret Doors** and you've got the making of an action movie-style jewel thief, but you can also be more down to Earth with **Seller's Market** and just concentrate on making your living.

The Thief gets along well with most other residents of **the 'hood**, as long as you stay off their patch: you've got vital services to offer to just about everyone else, plus you have a shared interest in keeping the police away. Stay valuable and you'll stay healthy, but don't assume that past favours done make you invulnerable now and never even think about stealing from your own **'hood**, no matter what the temptation...



Introducing the **THE THIEF**

All property is theft, so on balance you're not really doing anything wrong. Anyway, sometimes it's barely a crime, like when people are so careless with the way they leave stuff lying around, you're actually, like, tidying up and being all environmental, innit? Don't matter whether it's in a pocket, bag, locker, car, house or bank vault, you'll take it if you can.

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Fingers, Raffles, Dipper, Marx, the Cat, the Magpie, the Phantom, Weasel, Ratboy, Shifty, [Shop Name], the VIP.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as the police stay out of your **'hood**.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name-1, hush+2, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+1, hush+2, brass-1, wise+1, straight=0
- name=0, hush+2, brass+1, wise+1, straight-1
- name+1, hush+2, brass+1, wise=0, straight-1

MOVES

You get this one:

- ⊗ **Nick It:** when you steal gear, roll+hush. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1. All goods you steal are +hot.
 - You leave no evidence you were there.
 - You can get out the same way you got in.
 - You don't set off any alarms.

STOLEN-GEAR

Then choose one:

- **Stealthy:** you get +1 hush (hush+3).
- **In & Out:** when you **cover your tracks** and get a hit, choose one less option from those available.
- **Seller's Market:** when you sell hot gear on the black-market, roll+wise. On a hit, you can sell it for its normal value. On a 7-9, choose 1.
 - There's little interest; take -1 dough off the value of that gear.
 - Everyone knows it's hot; take +1 heat.
 - You know someone who'll take it off your hands; mark them for payoff.
- **Search for Traps & Secret Doors:** when you search a location, roll+hush. On a hit, you find anything that is hidden there. On a 10+, no-one else knows what you've found.
- **Disarm:** if you enter a situation without a weapon, you may take the weapon with the lowest edge or lead value from those around you.

NAME:

LOOK _____ \$

STATS DEBT _____ \$

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT _____ \$

PC

PC

PC

PC

DEBT

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE _____ \$

FINE	DOWN	OUT
		
Make some dough!	• -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!

EXPERIENCE _____ \$

>

●

>

●

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You both went stealing from shops as kids; take +1 debt with each other.
- They're pretty sure you've stolen from them but they can't prove it; tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- If it wasn't for you, they would've been caught red-handed by the police; take +2 debt with them.

Thief Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, steal one gear from them.

PAYBACK

FAMILY,-FRIENDS AND-FOES

GEAR

Dough

THE TOURIST

LIVE LIKE COMMON PEOPLE

You're not from **the 'hood** and it's not your home, it's just somewhere you're visiting. You grew up in a life of privilege, never knowing real hardship... you still don't. Your family keeps hoping this is a phase you'll grow out of and until you do, they'll keep supporting you.

The parent who controls the purse strings is losing patience though and beginning to use more persuasive techniques to entice you back home, like threatening to cut you off. You have to use a combination of promises, small favours and emotional blackmail to keep the money coming in.

The money's there whenever you want it, because your family is **Loaded**, so you can almost always afford anything you want. You can enjoy living life to the full with **Dance and Drink and Screw** and exploit your sense of entitlement with **They're Laughing At You** by treating it all as a game. Keep your family's number on speed-dial with **If You Called Your Dad** and you can get them to pull strings with the authorities, at a price. Take **Never Get It Right** and you can flip back and forth between owing payback and going short in the time it takes to change your mind.

Your family is a big deal to you: they most likely live a long way from **the 'hood**, but they have their ways of keeping tabs on you: your parental provider in particular always seems to know what you're doing and how to find you. When naming this NPC, don't forget the rest of your family, by blood or marriage, and the people who work for them, e.g. solicitors, security, PAs and so on.

Play the Tourist like you were watching a big 3D blockbuster at the cinema: enjoy the experience, then leave it behind you and go off to seek another one. Let the other residents take advantage of you however they like, because you've always got the ultimate escape route just waiting to welcome you home.



Introducing the
THE TOURIST

It's, like, so real on the streets, y'know? It's just, like, more honest here, yeah? People here are really living their lives and, like, having to struggle; it's made you so much more grateful for everything your family has given you.

A Character Playbook for

**THE
'HOOD**

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen
Layout: Tommy Rayburn
Dedicated to Jarvis Cocker

HANDLE

Golden Boy/Girl, Rich Kid, Moneybags, Her/His Majesty,
[Name] Hilton, Cashpoint, Platinum, the Snob.

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you're not cut off by your parental provider.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name-1, hush=0, brass=0, wise+1, straight+1
- name-1, hush+1, brass=0, wise+1, straight=0
- name=0, hush-1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+1
- name=0, hush-1, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0

MOVES

You get this one:

⌘ **Loaded:** when you take money from your parental provider, roll+the amount of dough you ask for. On a miss, they give it to you with no strings; on a hit, they give it to you but there are strings attached. On a 7-9, choose one; on a 10-11, choose two; on a 12+, all three:

- They give you what you told them you wanted the money for, instead of the money.
- They want you to do something in return: mark your parental provider for payback.
- They cut you off.

You can't make this move while you are cut off or they are marked for payback.

Then choose one:

○ **If You Called Your Dad:** when any PC (including you) gets **burned**, you can **argue the toss** with your parental provider. On a hit, the target PC takes -1 heat and doesn't get **burned**; take +1 debt with them.

○ **Dance and Drink and Screw:** when you have sex with a resident of **the 'hood** whom you haven't had sex with before, mark experience; if they are another PC, take +1 debt with them.

○ **They're Laughing At You:** when another PC makes a move against you, you may take +1 debt with them and they make that move as if they had **paid cash**.

○ **Never Get It Right:** You can restore your livelihood by marking your parental provider for payback but you don't mark experience when you do so; you can erase your parental provider's name from your payback box by going **short**.

○ **A Thirst for Knowledge:** when your debt with any other PC rises to more than +3, you may choose two different options instead of one.

NAME:

LOOK

\$

STATS DEBT

	Who	How Much
 NAME		
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT EXPERIENCE

● ● ● ● ● REMOVED Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.			● ● ● ● ● ✓ Mark experience when: ◦ You restore your livelihood. ◦ You take heat. ◦ Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.		
STATE \$			When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one: ◦ Get a new move ◦ Take +1 stat (max:+2) ◦ Advance a basic move. ◦ Advance a playbook move		
FINE ⊗ Make some dough!	DOWN ○ • -1 ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	OUT ● End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!			

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- They introduced you to the 'hood after a one night stand you had together: take +1 debt with each other.
- It's your family's fault that their family is short of money: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- They're your 'street friend', even though you know deep down they only stick with you for your money: take +2 debt with them.
- Your ignorance and naiveté has made trouble for everyone else: tell them all to take +1 debt with you.

Tourist Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take +1 debt with them.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE VOICE MAKE GOOD ART

You were born with a talent and you can't hide it: whether you sing, dance or paint, **the 'hood** is your stage and the streets are your canvas. Every day you are out there, making your name and creating art from the life all around you. Without you, things would be less colourful, but quieter too, so maybe not everyone appreciates your creations.

Fame is fleeting and no matter what you achieve, the same question comes up: what have you done lately? You risk losing your fame if you're not out there creating new art and your livelihood depends on your fame: when its gone, the fast way to get back on top is to betray another PC and tell the story of that mutual betrayal through your art.

If constantly double-crossing your friends is a tall-order, then take **Bad Reputation** or **Tortured Artist** with your first advance and start mixing it up, so you can turn your troubles into inspiration. To be taken seriously as an artist, you need to be able to sway the masses, which is exactly what **Spread the Word** lets you do. Once you can reliably build-up your fame, **Share the Spotlight** and **The Golden Goose** let you put it to work for you, getting you out of trouble when you need it the most.

As the Voice of **the 'hood**, it's down to you speak up and make a noise about the things the residents feel strongly about or to alert them to what they need to know; as this isn't always in everyone's interests, cultivate a close relationship with a stronger PC who can protect you from the fallout your art creates. This might mean selling out once in a while and saying what they tell you to say, but it's a small price to pay for still having the breath to speak with and you'll probably end up getting the last word anyway.



Introducing the **THE VOICE**

*Someone must speak for those who have no voice; someone must teach those who won't learn; someone must show the truth to a world with its eyes closed. You dare to speak for **the 'hood**, using your art to inspire, to protest and to expose.*

A Character Playbook for

THE 'HOOD

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

Game Mechanics: James Mullen

Layout: Tommy Rayburn

Dedicated to Tommy Rayburn

HANDLE

Sketch, Doodle, Splash, the Siren, Famous, Rockstar, Vincent, Elvis, the Idol, [Celebrity Name].

LOOT

You're **getting by** as long as you have at least 1 fame.

STATS

Choose one set:

- name+2, hush-1, brass=0, wise+1, straight+1
- name+2, hush=0, brass-1, wise+1, straight+1
- name+2, hush-1, brass+1, wise+1, straight=0
- name+2, hush-1, brass+1, wise=0, straight+1

MOVES

You get this one:

✖ **Local Celebrity:** you begin with 1 fame, but you take -1 fame every day (min=0); when you perform your art in **the 'hood**, roll+name. On a hit, you don't lose fame that day; on a 7-9, choose one:

- Your art upsets someone: mark them for payback.
- It takes a lot longer than you expected.
- You create a disturbance and get drawn into the centre of the trouble.

FAME		\$
-------------	--	----

When you pay cash to someone else in **the 'hood**, you can take -1 fame and pay 1 less dough.

Then choose one:

- **Bad Reputation:** when you **take the hard way** and take heat, take +1 fame and incorporate it into your art.
- **Share the Spotlight:** when an NPC comes to you for payback, you may take -1 fame and remove their name from your payback box instead of doing what they want.
- **Tortured Artist:** when you **make trouble**, you may take +1 fame if they turn their back on you or take -1 fame to turn a hit into a miss.
- **Spread the Word:** when you use your art to spread news through **the 'hood**, roll+fame: on a hit, word spreads and **the 'hood** responds. On a 10+, choose one; on a 7-9, choose two:
 - You have no control over the response you've started.
 - It gets traced back to you: take +1 heat.
 - You have to stake your reputation on this: reset your fame to zero.
- **The Golden Goose:** when your heat reaches 5+, you can take -1 fame and -1 heat instead of getting burned.

NAME:

LOOK

\$

STATS DEBT

 NAME	Who	How Much
 HUSH		
 BRASS		
 WISE		
 STRAIGHT	Debt can never rise to more than +3; anytime it does so, reset it to zero and choose one: ◦ Mark experience. ◦ Choose a move from that PC's playbook. ◦ Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs. ◦ Swap all of your heat for all of theirs. ◦ Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can argue the toss over the precise terms.	

HEAT

RESTORED

Gain Heat as the price of a move or when the MC makes a hard move against you.

STATE

FINE ⊗ Make some dough!	DOWN ○ • - I ongoing • Livelihood is threatened	OUT ● End of the line, game over, send flowers to the family!
--	--	--

EXPERIENCE

✓

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC.

When ever your experience reaches 5, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Get a new move
- Take +1 stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a playbook move

DEBTS

After everyone has shared the details of their characters, choose a different PC for each of the following:

- You used to collaborate artistically with them when you were both young: take +2 debt with each other.
- You told their lifestory through your art without their permission: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- They sheltered you when you were still trying to make your name: tell them to take +2 debt with you.
- Everyone else knows who you are and what you do: tell them all to take +1 debt with you

Voice Special: when you **double-cross** another PC, take +1 fame and turn it into a story through your art.

PAYBACK	\$

FAMILY, -FRIENDS AND -FOES	\$

GEAR	\$
Dough	

THE
'HOOD

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

That's you, the Master of Ceremonies, the 'hood's GM.

MAKING A MOVE

The moves given in Apocalypse World are still a pretty good fit for the 'hood and you should be able to quickly spot the ones that aren't (like, for example, there's no harm in this hack, so it can't be traded or inflicted). Here's a quick rundown on what you can do with those moves in the 'hood:

- Separate them: *"OK, so the cops are prowling the 'hood and you all scatter; Weasel, there's a bunch of stuff you could take while nobody's looking..."*
- Capture someone: *"The enforcers have moved into position around your market stall and their boss is coming over to have a word with you about the trouble you've been causing him; what do you do?"*
- Put someone in a spot: *"That chair under the door won't hold them for long and the only other way out of the room is the window, but you're on the third floor; what do you do?"*
- Announce off-screen badness: *"You're staggering home when you see flashing blue and red lights reflecting off the buildings a couple of streets away, where Ben and his family live; what do you do?"*
- Announce future badness: *"It's not going to be long before they open up your garage and find the drugs; what are you gonna do?"*
- Take away their stuff: *"As you enter the VIP room, the bouncer frisks you and finds your knife; he says if you want to come in, you'll have to leave this here and pick it up later. What do you do?"*
- Make them buy: *"You stop to let the cops say their piece; they've clocked you speeding and want to give you an on the spot fine of 1dough."*
- Activate their stuff's downside: *"Firing on full-auto makes them think twice about following you, but now your clip's empty; are you gonna run or bluff it out?"*
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask: *"If you make this deal with Diamond Dave, you know it's gonna piss off Guard Dog, 'cos he's been trying to keep Dave off the 'hood; do you still go ahead?"*
- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost: *"So Chantelle's really pissed off with Troll, she's crying on your shoulder, you've got your arm around her... you could easily move this to the bedroom; do you?"*
- Turn their move back on them: *"You try asking around but*

you blow it; you still find out where Grim and his gang are, but you're walking into a trap 'cos he's paid your informants to set you up."

There are also some additional moves to consider which are tailored to the rules and setting of 'hood: use these as you would any other MC move.

Turn up the heat: make them take +1 heat. This is a good, common move to use if it's not clear what the consequences of a miss could be: when the PCs mess things up, they attract attention from the authorities or they lose the trust of other villains, both of which are represented by heat. Giving heat might seem harsh, but it's easy enough for the PCs to lose heat and they should be encouraged to take off the heat by laying the blame squarely at the feet of one of their friends: not only does this reduce their heat, but it creates debt, which is useful to the victim.

Payback: push an NPC from their payback box into the spotlight and make them deal with it right now. All the PCs should have a little list of plot threads in their payback box: pick one of those threads and pull on it, hard. The NPC they owe a debt to comes demanding payback right now: the PC has to either find a way to meet that demand as soon as possible or convince the NPC that now is not the best time. Whatever way it goes, it further complicates the situation the PC is in and raises the tension as well.

Threaten their livelihood: if they've made some risky investments or been too long away from their patch dealing with personal matters, they're leaving themselves open to going short. This is a good move to make to shake things up a bit and to show the long term consequences of both their actions and their adversaries: a rival in the same profession, muscling in on their territory, is a good way to threaten their livelihood that doesn't have an easy, quick solution.

Take them down: this is a serious response and should only be made when the character tries to get rough or open fire and misses; remember that being down has an immediate effect (you can take no further moves in the current situation) and two lasting ones (your livelihood is threatened and you take -1 ongoing until you recover.) If a character has gotten into a fight way over their head, then the natural response from their enemies could be to take them down, hard and fast, but in many cases it's more appropriate to just turn up the heat: it's another score to be settled and if the PC can't settle it quickly, they'll end up getting burned.

Make trouble: when it feels like they're pushing their luck with the NPCs, it's time to check to see if they make trouble; you don't have to wait until name is in their payback box before an NPC gets pissed off with them. If they've asked someone for a favour and the answer was a solid no, making trouble can make a bad situation worse. If a miss means the NPC doesn't want to answer their questions, cut a deal with them or help them to hide out, then making trouble can answer why that is the case: remember that hits are bad and misses are good when a player makes this move, so the higher their heat is, the more likely they are to be rejected by friends, family, lovers and colleagues.

— MOVES LIKE JAGGER — \$

Let's pop the hood on all the basic & peripheral moves: the game is built on top of these foundations, so what can you do with them? In addition to dissecting them, you'll see there are suggestions for ways to advance the basic moves: typically, almost any move can be advanced so that you always get the benefit of **paying cash** when you make it, but the alternatives presented here should make life in the 'hood a little more interesting.

BASIC MOVES

First off, the PCs may be dishonest, but the game shouldn't be: play honestly and remember that to do it, you have to do it. All the basic moves are situational, in that they reflect or trigger a situation within the story. For example, in order to **ask around**, a PC has to start by actually asking someone about the thing they want, so they need to explain who they are asking and how they contact them. You can ask around for anything: people, tools, information, whatever you're looking for, but there's no guarantee that you can afford the price.

What you find isn't quite what you expected: you're looking for a vehicle and you get a reconditioned bus; you want to know who stole your stash and it turns out it was your sister; you're in the market for a safe cracker but the one who gets recommended is trying to reform. Caveat emptor: be careful what you wish for.

You find out where it is, but you'll have to fetch it yourself: you get the information from your contact but not the thing itself, so you still have to do all the legwork. This almost certainly means having to deal with a third party who has their own price for turning it over to you, unless you're just going to take it from their cold, dead hand.

There are strings attached to acquiring it: "Here it is, but..." It couldn't be that easy and of course it hardly ever is: before

they'll give you what you want, you'll have to do something for them, whether that's parting with your hard earned dough or running a little errand for them.

You owe someone for this; mark them for payback: either your contact is putting themselves in danger by telling you this or you're pissing someone else off by swiping what they had an eye on from under their nose. Either way, you owe them for the trouble you've caused them, so watch out for when they come to get you.

Advance: On a 12+, you get more than you bargained for: if looking for gear, then it is of better value but with no extra costs; if looking for information, your contact throws in another juicy little tit-bit you'd want to know; if looking for a person, you get +1 forward on whatever move you first make upon meeting them.

There are two general tools in your kit for getting things done, these being **cover your tracks** and **take the hard way**. The move you make is determined by what your PC does, not the way that they do it: you can't break down a door discreetly and you can't bribe someone violently.

When you **cover your tracks**, you're doing something stealthy, taking your time to avoid attracting attention and leaving as little trace of your presence as you can. On a hit, you get the job at hand complete without immediately ending up in anyone's sights, but they might be coming for you later when they discover what you've done.

It takes a long time: you can't rush this job if you want to do it right, so forget any other pressing business you might have had, it'll have to wait.

It can be traced back to you: whoever looks into this later will find a trail that leads back to your door; they might not be coming for you right away, but they will be coming.

You need someone's help; they take +1 debt with you: you can't do it alone and at the very least you need someone you trust to act as lookout or help you clear up the mess, but they're keeping track of all these little favours and one day they'll present you with the bill.

Advance: On a 12+, you're like a ghost, leaving no trace you were ever here: even witnesses whom you've bribed will swear they never saw you or can't give a description of you, so there's no chance of this ever coming back on you.

When you **take the hard way**, you're being fast, direct and aggressive, not letting anything stand between you and what you came for. One of the most typical uses of this move is to push aside barriers and obstructions, whether those are doors, vehicles or people: you can rough someone up a lot without having to **get rough** with them, because the residents of the 'hood are tough and get worse from their own families & friends.

Take +1 heat: you just smashed down a door, kicked a bouncer in the nuts and drove through a red light, so what did you expect? You're trouble and you know it.

You've made a new enemy; mark them for payback: there must be someone you haven't pissed off so far... well, you have now. You can re-use someone you've owed payback to before, but this is a golden opportunity to introduce a new threat to your existence.

Take -1 forward: you're not made of iron and some of this stuff will hurt you, so once in a while you're going have the bruises to show for it. Just hope there's nothing urgent & important coming up soon...

Advance: On a 12+, you feel invincible and unstoppable, so take +1 ongoing when you **take the hard way**, until you miss or make any other basic move.

When the shit hits the fan, you can take it on the chin or you can try to **take the heat off** and lay the blame squarely at the feet of one of your mates. This is all about your immediate response to what happens and whether you own up or throw someone else under the bus: you don't have time to set-up the perfect frame job, you're just thinking on your feet and passing the buck elsewhere. You can only make this move when you're going to take heat and it diverts that heat to another PC: on a hit, the heat misses you, so you don't get the experience for it, they do instead.

This is a really good deal for them on a 7-9, as they get to mark experience *and* take +1 debt with you, but if it tips them over to 5 heat, they probably won't be around long enough to write you a thank you card. Don't make a habit of doing this: not only will you miss out on all that experience, but you'll be drawing a target on your PC's forehead and asking everyone else to take their best shot.

Advance: On a 12+, you even impress yourself with the story you come up with; your mate takes the heat but you mark experience for it as well as them.

Prospering in the 'hood depends on getting the best deal and never giving up your advantage: when you **argue the toss**, it's basically your character saying "Yeah, but..." So someone wants money from you? Then you say, "Yeah, but it'll have to be £50, not £100 like we said." They tell you to get your arse over there? You say, "Yeah, but you'll have to wait a few hours, I can't get there right now." They're going to make the trade with you at their house? You say, "Yeah, but I want us to meet at the bar, not your place." When you **argue the toss**, you're saying that things *are* going to happen, but only the way *you* want them to, not the way anyone else says. Whether haggling over time, money or any other details, the way to stay in control is to make them accept your terms, don't get railroaded into accepting theirs.

The best result is a 10+, which almost always results in them doing it your way (why lose debt with you for saying no, when they get some debt on you for saying yes?) On a 7-9, they get a little bit of a say in it, enough to hold you up for a while or make you accept less than you wanted, but if they take the deal, the rest of it is still on your terms.

Advance: On a 12+, you're not just paying the piper, you're conducting the whole fucking orchestra: if they say no, they reset their debt with you to zero or you erase their name from your payback box. If they're an NPC whose name is not already in your payback box, then they owe you a favour if they say no: the next time you end up owing them payback, erase their name straight away.

You don't have to have a plan for everything, not when you can make the MC do it for you: when you go to **Plan B**, the MC has to give you a way out of the trouble you're in, whether that's an open window you can slip out through or knowing just what someone is scared of so you can threaten them with it if they don't stand back. Whatever plan the MC provides is guaranteed to work, they can't sell you a dummy, but that doesn't mean it's guaranteed to work smoothly.

You have to leave someone behind: the best way out is to leave someone behind to cover your escape; you might have to persuade them it's for the best, better that one of the gang should fall than all of them get taken down, but don't expect them to be grateful.

You don't get what you came for: if you give up on your goal, there's nothing stopping you from walking away scot free, but then what was the point in the first place? Of course, you can always come back for another try later, once you're better prepared.

Your livelihood is threatened: you save your skin, but you're flat broke as a result, maybe because it costs you so much to get out of this, but maybe because it takes long enough to untangle this mess that business goes to hell in your absence.

Advance: On a 12+, you come up with a plan of such genius that it puts your whole scheme back on track; you're not just getting out in one piece, you can carry on with what you were doing before it all went pear shaped.

Sooner or later, you'll need to lose some heat, so that's when it's time to **lie low** and wait for the aggrieved parties to forget all about you, for now. You'll almost certainly need a bit of help to pull this off: someone has to divert attention and pretend they haven't seen you when you're hiding in the boot of their car. Figure out how you're doing this and who's helping you out before you make this move: who is it you're hiding from? Why do they want you? How are they coming after you? The answers to these questions will determine who's best placed to help you hide out until the heat dies down.

On any hit, you always get to take -1 heat, but think about how that happens: how long does it take for the heat to die down and what's been happening while you've been keeping a low profile? On a 7-9, whoever's been helping you will want something from you in return for their help, but on a 10+ you can skip that... unless you want to get greedy and take -2 heat, in which case you're back to owing them some payback.

Advance: On a 12+, you're out of the picture long enough for someone else to lose interest in you, so you can erase one name from your payback box.

PERIPHERAL MOVES

When a PC seeks help from an NPC, honesty demands that you think about what the PC is asking for and what the relationship is between them: if the NPC's name is already in their payback box, then they might not be inclined to listen, so that's when to see if they're **making trouble**. This is especially true if the PC has just taken heat from something violent and public: if you knew the police were throwing everything they had into finding the person on your doorstep, would you let them into your house to hide? How much trouble are they worth? Sometimes the PC won't be in a position to **make trouble** until they've tried and failed to do something else: for example, if they've just tried to rip off a mate by **arguing the toss** with them, that mate might not be inclined to give them the time of day afterwards. Patching up a damaged relationship is part of the conversation that is the game:

just because someone isn't in your payback box doesn't mean you can't do them a favour to keep them sweet and get back into their good books.

It's not uncommon for other residents of the 'hood to turn their backs on someone who's dragging trouble in their wake like a gathering storm cloud: no one wants to get struck by lightning when the storm breaks. The worst that can happen is that the person you're turning to for help won't just turn away from you, they'll grass you up to the people who are after you: that's one way you can take heat on a 12+. On a 7-9, if you're desperate for their help, promise to pay them back whatever they want in return and they'll do you a favour now, but they aren't going to forget your promise in a hurry.

When you deal with other PCs, there's an expectation of fair-play... no, who are we kidding? When the chips are down, it's everyone for themselves: whether you're sticking your snout in the trough or dropping them in the shit, you won't hesitate to climb over their back to the top of the pile. This is where **crosses** and **double-crosses** come in: if you break a deal with another PC or grass them up to the people who are after them, you've crossed them and they take +1 debt with you. If you end up doing that to each other at the same time, then you both trigger your unique moves.

Fitting **double-crosses** into the fiction can be tricky as they won't always immediately suit what is taking place: sometimes it's better to wait for a later scene and have the move trigger when it makes sense for it to do so, or better yet have it happen off-screen, a perfect time to announce future or off-screen badness.

Let's say the Feelgood and the Mover are trying to smuggle some drugs so that they can split the proceeds between them, but they both try to swap the valuable cargo out for a packet of harmless white powder. If there's no name in the Mover's payback box, the Feelgood might have to wait until later, but the actual depiction of an NPC becoming a user can happen off-screen, with the drugs they delivered possibly ending up in the NPC's hands. The Mover might also have to wait until later, when the Feelgood gets in a taxi to keep an important appointment, only to find the taxi driver is someone the Mover knows and has paid to make sure the Feelgood doesn't keep their appointment.

Ultimately, everyone in the 'hood dreams of waving goodbye to all their problems and imagines that if only they were rich, they could do so. Well, guess what: they're right! At least as far as the 'hood goes, money can buy you happiness, or a successful move when you **pay cash** for it anyway. Having a lot of dough isn't like

magic though, you can't just wish on a handful of notes and *poof*, all your problems disappear: like any other move, you have to be in a position in the fiction to make this one.

Ask around: walk into your boozier and start spreading cash around like there was no tomorrow: buy everyone a round or two of drinks and watch how their tongues loosen in front of you. This will probably only cost 1 or 2 dough.

Cover your tracks: the classic bribe works wonders on giving the witnesses a strong dose of amnesia, but you can get retroactive with this move and pull out just the right tool for the job, which you bought earlier off-screen. Again, 1 or 2 dough will covers this in most cases.

Take the hard way: you really need to be prepared in advance for this, it's not something you can do spontaneously. If you're expecting trouble ahead, hire a goon to follow you around for the day and deal with it for you: it'll cost you 1 dough up front whether you end up making use of his services or not. Of course if you hit more than one bit of trouble, you might need to have more than one goon in your posse, so the costs for this can really mount up.

Take the heat off: and who do you think you're paying that dough to? Yeah, that's right, the mate you're sticking the blame for this on: it's up to them how much they want for taking your heat, but you can **argue the toss** over it.

Argue the toss: it's not always a good idea to do this because you'll be spending money to avoid spending money, but when the issue is one of time, location or other details, it can make economic sense to pay the other party to do things your way. You have to pay up front though and if it's a big deal to the other party, this could cost even 3 or 4 dough.

Plan B: money can't always solve everything and this is the move where it's least likely to work on the spot, but as with hiring goons who can **take the hard way** for you, a little insurance taken out in advance will solve your problems later. If you want to look really clever, you can **pay cash** retroactively so that your getaway driver crashes through the shop window at *exactly* the right time, but this should cost you a lot more than usual, from 2 to 3 dough.

Lie low: there are two ways to do this; first, you can bribe someone to hide you; second, you can buy off the people who are after you. Either way isn't going to be cheap and you're probably looking at 2 or 3 dough to get someone to cover for you, 3 or 4 dough to pay the people chasing you to forget the whole thing.

You're not confined to the basic moves when you **pay cash**, but it gets more complicated when you try to buy peripheral moves or moves from playbooks: firstly, you can only **pay cash** to replace a dice roll, so if the move doesn't involve that, you can't buy a 10+ for it. Secondly, it's meant to make your life easier, not harder, so you only ignore the negative consequences of the 10+ result, not the positive ones. Thirdly, though paying retroactively makes sense for a lot of moves, not all of them can be triggered that way: in other words, not every move is suitable for paying cash for, e.g. unless you carry your dough around in the form of a gold plated cricket bat, it's hard to see how you can use it to **get rough**. Generally, if a move involves dough already, it's not going to be worth spending dough on it; if it involves immediate action & conflict, it's also unlikely that you can bribe anyone to 'lose'.

On the subject of action and conflict, it's time to **get rough**: a proper weapon might cost you some dough because it's designed to be carried discreetly, but almost anything can be picked up and used to hit someone over the head with. Chairs, vases, umbrellas, laptops, briefcases, all these and more make good improvised weapons: if they've got a good swing and some weight on them, then they have edge+1, but if they are too soft or awkward to really cause damage, they can have edge+0 or even edge-1, as seems appropriate.

The same does not hold for firearms: there's no way to improvise when you want to **open fire**, unless your name happens to be MacGyver. The bigger the bonus the weapon provides, the bigger the weapon is and therefore the harder it is to conceal, but firearms aren't the upper-limit of the firepower available: when you really want to leave your mark, it's time to reach for the explosives. First off, if you think guns are hard to get hold of, don't even think about going shopping for grenades and semtex: at every step in the process of **asking around** and **arguing the toss** for them, you risk taking heat on a miss and yes, they are +hot as well. Second, lots of big cities now employ bomb detecting technology and the police are specially trained to be on the lookout for anyone carrying weapons of this nature, so even just having them on you requires you to **cover your tracks** and on a miss, that'll be more heat plus likely losing the item in question.

If you really, *really* want to toss explosives around, they are +lead just like firearms, but they are also +bang: when you use a weapon with bang, it effects *everyone* standing close to the target and causes collateral damage too. On a miss, *you* are the target. When choosing options on a 7-9 result, you only choose one no matter how many targets were caught in the blast, but obviously the 'dump the weapon you used' option isn't applicable.

What drives the PCs forward is the desire to better themselves, which means they need situations where they can **mark experience**.

Restore your livelihood: a lot of the things that you do, that other PCs do or that other NPCs in your 'hood do, will threaten your livelihood. Anytime you go from being **short** back to **getting by**, you also mark experience for that: this process is at the heart of the game, it is the centre around which much of the action revolves. There's a double incentive, as being short should not be pleasant, encouraging PCs to deal with their issue as rapidly as possible; they then get rewarded for dealing with their business and putting it back on track.

Take heat: this should be the most common way to gain experience, but it's also the riskiest: the amount of experience you need to earn an advance is also the amount of heat it takes to get you burned. It does mean the system rewards failure, so it's in the players' best interests to attempt risky strategies that are more likely to fail, since that is how their characters learn and get better. Once your heat reaches 3 though, you need to look for ways to lose it fast: it doesn't take much to pick up another 1 heat and if you're carrying something that is +hot at the time, it's game over for you.

Debt reaches more than +3: there are multiple debt advances you can choose from (see below) and many of them are significantly better than this option, but this is one of the few that won't piss your mates off with you. If you have your eye on a bigger prize, using the favours of your friends to advance your criminal career isn't a bad way to go: sometimes they can just give you that little leg up you needed to learn a new trick.

Debt is another big driver of play, particularly because this hack provides you with a second set of advances to choose from that aren't earned by experience. Since most of these can only be triggered through debt, if you want to benefit from them, you have to get those other PCs indebted to you.

Mark experience: the vanilla option, but as stated above, one of the few that won't annoy your mates.

Choose a move from that PC's playbook: now you know how to do something you've learned from them. This doesn't have to be a move that they have, just one they have access to, so this is actually a good way of diversifying the team's capabilities. Of course, if you take a move that really treads on their toes and steals their livelihood from them, they won't be happy with you.

Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs: now you're really being a dick, but if someone is causing you trouble, why not make it their problem? This has to be handled properly in the narrative: if you can't come up with any good reason why you could direct the NPC to your mate to get the payback they want, then you can't choose this option.

Swap all of your heat for all of theirs: this is a frame job: when you want to stick a mate for the blame for the things you've done, work out the scheme you need, carry it out and blam, they take the heat for you. This works best when you have 2 or 3 more heat than them.

Make a deal with that PC: once in a while, you can say to a mate, "Hey, you owe me," and they have to do what you ask. You can't make them point a gun at their own head, but you could ask them to point it at your worst enemy, if that's the kind of thing your crew is into. Whatever favour you ask, it needs to be something they can discharge quickly: you can't ask them to make a permanent commitment, like coming to work for you.

Finally, here's a bonus move you can offer to the PCs if the players want a sense of closure on their characters, instead of playing them until they go out or get burned: it offers a chance to retire a character safely, but there may be a steep price for leaving your old criminal ways behind you.

When you **cash out**, roll+heat: on a miss, reset your heat to zero and retire your character peacefully somewhere out of the 'hood; on a hit, you're not out of the 'hood yet. On a 7-9, choose 1; on a 10+, choose 2;

- Take -2 dough.
- You have to clear your payback box this session.
- You have to reduce your heat to zero this session.
- You have to ask someone for help: you must do whatever they demand in return.

On a 12+, you get burned instead of retiring; if you somehow survive that, you're still in the 'hood but you can try **cashing out** again in a later session. If you fail to meet the requirements of a 7-9 result, e.g. you don't reduce your heat to zero or erase all the names you owe payback too, you also fail to leave the 'hood but can try again in a later session.

When you **cash out** successfully, your lifestyle is locked into the level of wealth indicated by your remaining dough, e.g. if you have 7 or more dough, then you are reasonably well-off and can enjoy a few luxuries, but if you have 0 dough, then you'll always just be clinging on and making do.

DECISION-MAKING

In order to play to find out what happens, you'll need to pass decision making off sometimes. Whenever something comes up that you'd prefer not to decide by personal whim and will, don't. The game gives you four key tools you can use to disclaim responsibility: you can put it in your NPCs' hands, you can put it in the players' hands, you can create a countdown, or you can make it a stakes question.

NPC'S

Turk, Angel, Vigil, Top Cat, Guard Dog, the Captain, Prez, Duke, Echo, Ghost, Fade, Camo, Whisper, No-Face, Legion, Hydra, Schizo, Blue, the Law, Buzzkill, Filth, Sherlock, Morse, Doc, Dude, Gonzo, the Hippy, Sick, the Chemist, Spliff, Magic, Switch, Swapshop, Seesaw, Mayo, Rocky, Brick, Monster, Tank, Reaper, Butcher, Blade, Trigger, the Undertaker, the Grave Digger, the Priest, the Professional, Grim, Crow, Eyeball, Stalker, Freak, Shadow, Wolf, Demon, the Fear, Big Brother, Delboy, Trotter, Flash Harry, the Geezer, Slick, Swifty, Houdini, Wheels, Gears, the Bolt, Fast Talk, Motormouth, the Preacher, Uncle, Midas, Moneybags, Jackpot, the Lottery, Payday, Fingers, Raffles, Dipper, Marx, the Cat, Tum Tum, Gnarly, Fleece, White, Lala, Bill, Crine, Mercer, Preen, Ik, Shan, Isle, Ula, Joe's Girl, Dremmer, Balls, Mice, Dog head, Hugo, Roark, Monk, Pierre, Norvell, H, Omie Wise, Corbett, Jeanette, Rum, Pepperling, Brain, Matilda, Rothschild, Wisher, race Win, Bar, Krin, Parcher, Millions, Grome, Foster, Mill, Dustwich, Newton, Princy, East Harrow, Kettle, Putrid, Last, Twice, Clarion, Abondo, Mimi, Fianelly, Pellet, Li, Harridan, Rice, Do, Winkle, Fuse, Visage, Enough-to-eat, Barker, Imam, Bowdy, Daff, Exit, Chin, Look, Shazza, Fauna, Sun, Chack, Ricarra, Prim

Cross them off as you use them. Scavenge unused names from the character playbooks, too.

Make your NPCs human by giving them straightforward, sensible selfinterests. They're just not that complicated. They do what they want to do, when they want to do it, and if something gets in their way, well, they deal with that now. What they do in life is follow their parts around – their noses, their stomachs, their hearts, their clits & dicks, their guts, their ears, their inner children, their visions. Then, you can make PC-NPC-PC triangles just by making sure that their uncomplicated self-interests involve the players' characters individually, not as a group. Show different sides of their personalities to the players' different characters.

STREET PLANNING

The ‘hood the characters live in is the heart and centre of your game: important business might often take place someplace else, but what we care about is how all of that stuff affects the ‘hood. So before you can even think about starting the game, you need to see your ‘hood. Start by getting everybody sat down around a large sheet of paper and then write a road name slanting across that clean white sheet. If you’re feeling confident, then you can write the road name in a curve or a wave, but don’t just write it in a straight line from side to side or top to bottom.

Now, go around the table: everyone playing a character in the ‘hood takes it in turn to add a street name to the plan; every new street name has to start or end along the side of a name already on the plan. Whenever two names intersect (e.g. the start or end of one is alongside another), draw in a couple of corners framing that intersection. All names should be written big & bold, but leave enough room to add more streets and locations later. The street each player adds to the plan is their character’s home street, so think carefully about what it’s called and where it is in relation to everyone else’s street. Every player marks their character’s home on the streetplan as well, clearly labelling it, e.g. ‘Creepy Sue’s place.’ Ask players about their homes when they add them:

- o Whose house is it? Who do you pay the rent to?
- o Who lives there with you? Family, friends, other tenants or just you?
- o How long have you lived there? Is it the house you grew up in or have you just moved in?

If it fits where you’re going with the fiction, player characters can share homes, but make sure both characters’ names are clearly written down.

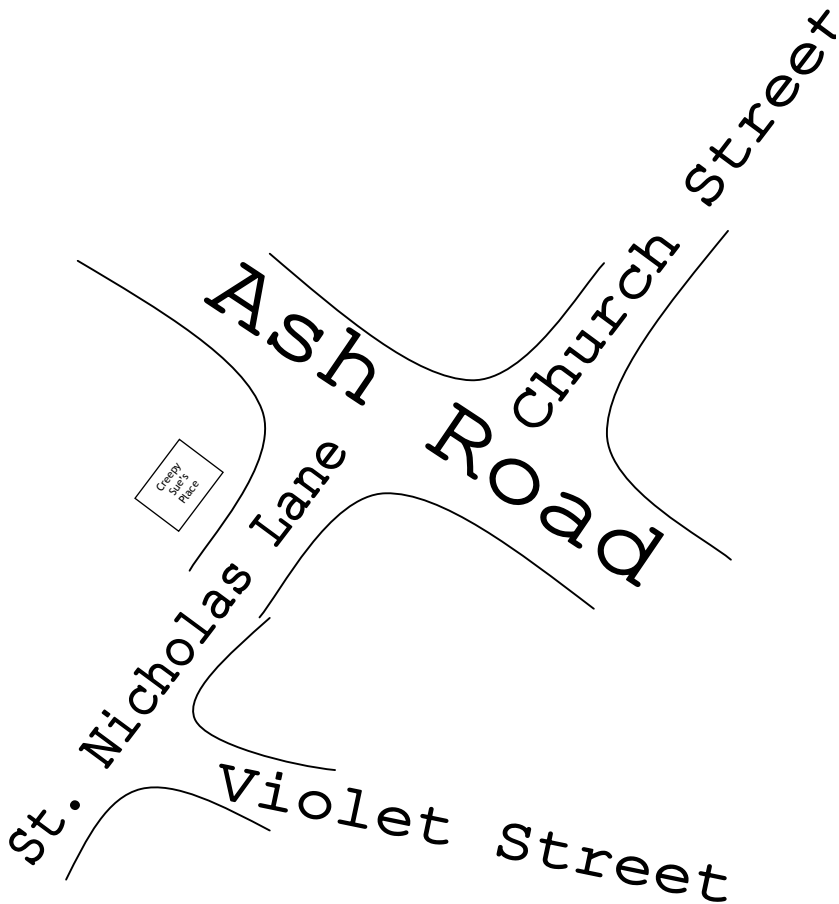
Once everyone has added their home street, go around again; everyone now puts a location on any street except their home street. Think of public locations that anyone can go to: the local shop, the church, the pub, the health centre, the book-makers, the take-away, etc. Mark it on the streetplan and, as you do so, consider this question for your character: what ties me to that location? Write that down on the streetplan too, like:

Kebab Shop - the owner is Turk’s uncle.

The Three Crowns - Big Dave is on the pub darts team.

Go around again: this time, everyone looks at the streetplan to see what isn’t there; in a column down one side, each write down an important location that isn’t part of the ‘hood, so the PCs

will have to leave their home turf to go there. Some important locations might be the police station, the hospital, the building site where a PC has their day job, a warehouse where they store



Your street plan might be a bit like this:

dodgy gear, etc. Again, link the location to your character. Finally, populate your ‘hood: everyone sketches in a house or two on any streets, adding new streets if they wish, and says who lives there. Keep descriptions short and to the point and don’t be afraid to have several characters all living at the same address, including the PCs’ homes.

Every player should add at least one of these to the ‘hood:

- o A family member (loved or hated)
- o A friend (socially or through business)
- o A foe (because you hate them or they hate you)
- o An ex (can also be either of the above)

Some of the PCs might need to put extra NPCs in the **'hood**: the Bastion needs to fill out his crew, whilst the Feelgood, Pimp and Shark have their users, hoes and debtors respectively. A number of NPCs can be shared by having different relationships to different PCs: for example, if two PCs are brothers, then they can share many of the same family members (but not all the same: families tend to be complicated in the **'hood**). Maybe your ex is now going out with one of the other PCs, but he's also a user, or perhaps you've got a secret thing going on with their sister who owes the Shark some debts; whatever, make it interesting and make it real.

Any of the locations in the **'hood** or outside it can have their own moves, which PCs can use (or be subject to) when they are in those locations. As MC, it's up to you which locations have moves and what they are, but here are some suggestions:

Benefit Office: when you **claim benefits**, roll+straight. On a hit, take +1 dough; on a 7-9, they pass your details on to the proper authorities and you take +1 heat. You may not **claim benefits** more than once per session.

Local Pub: when you **buy a round**, roll+name. On a hit, you may erase someone's name from your payback box, if you just bought them a drink. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- o It turns into a piss-up: you waste the rest of the day or night here.
- o They have expensive tastes: take -1 dough.

You may not buy a round whilst you are short.

Docks/Warehouse/Building Site: when you do an **honest day's work**, roll+brass. On a 10+, you aren't too tired to do anything that night; on a 7-9, take -1 ongoing for that night. If you complete a week of honest work, take +1 dough.

Taxi Rank: when you hail a cab, roll+wise. On a 10+, choose 1; on a 7-9, choose 2:

- o You're delayed getting to your destination.
- o You get overcharged: take -1 dough.
- o You argue with the driver: take -1 forward.

Bus/Train Station: when you **take a short break**, take -1 dough and -1 heat, but you are out of touch with everything that happens in the **'hood** for one day.

Port/Airport: when you **take a long break**, take -3 dough and -3 heat, but you are out of touch with everything that happens in the **'hood** for one week.

BEING THE MC OF THE ‘HOOD

I’ve been asked a few times what the inspirations of **The ‘Hood** are and people have pointed to various sources such as the films of Michael Mann or TV shows like *Breaking Bad* and *The Sopranos* but to be honest, I haven’t watched a lot of those and I think you have to scale down your expectations quite a lot to get the most out of the game.

There are quite a few sources of influence on the creation of **The ‘Hood**, but there’s no one thing which is a perfect model of it, so I can’t point you to a particular film or TV show and say “Do it like that.” The premise has been stitched together from bits of British TV programs such as *East Enders*, *The Bill*, *Misfits* and *Minder* (the latter mostly remembered as the original series from my childhood) as well as a few films like *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*. Mostly though, the game is an attempt to model real life, not fiction, and a lot of it comes from newspapers, documentaries and my own experiences of living in some pretty rough areas where drug use, prostitution and the black market were right there on my doorstep.

The motto of **The ‘Hood** is ‘*Big Fish in a Small Pond*’ and that’s the way to play it: the PCs, like real people, are the stars of their own personal dramas, but pretty much no-one else gives a shit about them. You don’t have to go too many streets away before you come to a place where nobody has even heard of them and some other chumps are doing the exact same things to different people. In **The Writer’s Tale**, Russell T. Davies talks about techniques for getting the audience to care about the characters but sums it up with this profound thought: *the audience will care because that’s the character you’re choosing to show them*. Watching a TV show is an investment of the audience’s time, so they come to it ready to care about the characters; so with an RPG, we care for the characters we create because we’ve invested our time and effort in creating them. They don’t need to be important, powerful or influential, as long as we are sufficiently interested in exploring their life and seeing the world from their perspective for a time.

The ‘Hood is like a microscope that places a drop of pond water under its lens and shows the teeming, myriad life within: take a moment to look at your streetplan and think of it from that perspective before getting down into it. Whatever is on there is what the players and the characters care about; if someone cares about something, they need to put it on the streetplan. **Say what**

your prep demands. The streetplan is almost a storyboard for your game and it tells you what needs to be threatened in order to motivate the characters; fronts follow from the streetplan, so it also tells you who is doing the threatening. Don't be afraid to have threats that start out small, even inconsequential, just trust that they will get bigger as soon as one of the PCs really screws things up (hint: they will.)

An understanding of the game's assumptions will assist you in making decisions as the MC: first & foremost, what holds true for **Apocalypse World** mostly holds true for **The 'Hood** as well, with just a few tweaks here and there. The agenda remains the same, so make **The 'Hood** seem real, make the PCs' lives not boring and play to find out what happens. The streetplan of **the 'hood** is your best tool for making it seem real: you've got a map right there with everything important on it, as well as a list of important things that aren't on it but exist outside its boundaries. Make that plan the centrepiece of the table and when anyone does anything, ask them to point out where they are when they do it; better still, get them to show you how they get from A to B and fill in the alleys and shortcuts of **the 'hood** as you play. The streetplan shouldn't be a static document, it needs to grow organically as the group discovers what it needs and adds it to the map; once in a while, ask the players a directed question, like "Who do you pass coming out of the bookmakers?" or "You bump into your cousin; where's he headed to?" Add further locations to the map or the list of places that are beyond it when they come up in the fiction.

Another tool you can use is a contacts list: ask each of the players to keep a list of who's on their character's phone and make sure you have copies of those lists. The contacts list is a double-edged sword: it establishes in the fiction who the PCs can quickly and easily get in touch with, but of course those same people can easily get hold of them. Making calls on the mobile/cell is a great way to frame moves like **ask around**, **plan B**, **take the heat off** and **lie low**, but also a great way to bring up the PC's payback box at the absolute worst possible time. Add some fun details to this technique by asking them what the ringtone is on their phone and whether they have different ringtones for different contacts: if you can have those tones queued up and ready to play, it's a great way to instantly foreshadow the badness that is about to come down on their heads.

The characters lives won't be boring if you're handing them opportunities and problems, so do both: better still, hand them opportunities that will create problems and problems that can be exploited as opportunities. Creating PCs and NPCs should have resulted in a bunch of potential triangles, so stir them together:

look for ways the NPC's genuine agendas can trigger situations which threaten the PCs' livelihoods. It doesn't take much to bring the authorities down onto the 'hood or put an NPC in the cross-hairs of some of the bigger gangs that surround it; the ways different PCs are getting by are designed to overlap, so that the action one PC takes to protect their livelihood is liable to threaten someone else's. The default assumption of play is that someone is always going to be short and looking for a way to make ends meet again, so a major aspect of the conversation at the table will concern what it takes to restore a livelihood. If that isn't happening enough, look at the payback boxes of the PCs and see if there is a way someone can demand a favour from them that puts them into conflict with one of the other PCs:

- The Heavy and The Ice put their reputations on the line and swear they will get the job done, but carrying through on that promise to an NPC can put them in direct conflict with The Bastion and The Fallen.
- The Blur, The Go-Between, The Hacker and The Rebel all need some degree of secrecy to go about their work, so the last thing any of them wants is for an ex-customer to spill the beans: if an NPC starts telling tales in public, they'll have to deal with them, one way or another.
- The Feelgood, The Merchant, The Pimp, The Schemer and The Shark all have a business model that needs customers who want what they're selling: an unhappy customer might get one of their mates to make a complaint on their behalf, especially if their mate has the muscle or power to back-it up, like The Bastion or The Heavy.

Just like **AW**, everything follows from the moves, so keep things moving: learn to love the sound of dice hitting the table and make sure the players are rolling them when they should be. There are two big catch-all moves you can always turn to if the PCs want to try something uncertain and those are **cover your tracks** and **take the hard way**. I don't advocate making the players roll for everything they want to do, but any plan they embark on should certainly need at least one of those moves, especially if there are obvious ways it could go wrong: most times it's clear which move to use (burying a body in the woods is covering your tracks) but don't be afraid to ask "How are you doing this?"

Asking questions also saves you a lot of effort when you're responding to what the PCs do: there are questions implicit in the outcomes and consequences of every move already, mostly relating to who they've pissed off and how, but it's also a good way of checking that you and the players are on the same page. If they mess up, ask them "How does this go wrong?" but if they achieve what they set out to do, ask them "What does this get you?" You can think about the story as being the thing that gets

you from move to move: the story follows from each move but it also sets up the next one. It matters what happens in the story, but you have to let the moves decide the direction for you and not be tempted to lead the story where you believe it should go. Talk, create, suggest, *have a conversation*, but use the extelligence around you (the **AW** rule book, **The ‘Hood** rule book, the other players, your own prep) as well as your own intelligence and creativity.

—— PRINCIPLES ——— \$

You can play **the ‘Hood** straight out of the principles in **Apocalypse World**, you just need to add that grungy, contemporary urban twist.

BARF FORTH BRITANNICA

Thanks to Gregor Vuga for that phrase: to be clear, **The ‘Hood** is not set in Britain, but I am, so that’s what I wrote about, the situation I’ve been familiar with all my life. Throughout the text, I’ve made a deliberate effort to not to refer to specific locations, currencies or national figures, but ultimately my own identity bleeds through in the text and informs some of the assumptions. You can substitute any national identity and create a game with its own highly distinctive feel, as long as you commit to communicating that essential difference to the players: every major city in the world has a set of hot issues that are as unique to it as a fingerprint, so wherever your **‘hood** is, you have to fill the characters senses with the experience of living there. Grab a soundtrack, some authentic snacks and drinks, create a stock of photos of the places, the people and the products which define that area & culture, then barf that all forth at the table (please, not literally when it comes to the snacks & drinks.)

ADDRESS YOURSELF TO THE CHARACTERS, NOT THE PLAYERS

Stay in the fiction: when you’ve got something to say about it, communicate that information to the characters, through what they can see & hear or what they know. The characters have lived in **the ‘hood** most of their lives, so they already know all the ins & outs of it: you don’t need to describe things to them as if they were fresh and new, just tell them what’s what. “Look out Slick, that’s Turk crossing the road coming your way with a couple of his crew; he probably wants a word with you about bringing Mint onto his patch. Maybe you should have stayed off his street today? Too late now though, here they are.”

As with **Never to Die**, the progenitor of **The ‘Hood**, you’re playing the whole environment the PCs live in: you’re not just their

mates, relatives and rivals, you're also the bars, the shops, the houses, the streets and even the traffic on them. When you're MCing, you're being **the 'hood** in the same way that someone else is being the Fallen, the Schemer or the Voice, so own that identity and speak through it: "The traffic is shit, like every car in **the 'hood** is going the opposite way to you, almost as if they know what you're planning and want to get the fuck away from it."

MAKE YOUR MOVE, BUT MISDIRECT; MAKE YOUR MOVE, BUT NEVER SPEAK ITS NAME

Tell the story through the moves you make, not the mechanics that demand them: the moves are just the middle-men, allowing an easy passage from one situation to the next. Moves only happen for a reason and what they do should be told through the fiction, not as hits and misses: keep all that behind the curtain when you're narrating what happens. When you turn up the heat, it's because the story demands it, not because the dice do: there are choices open at any point, the dice just decide which path the story goes down, they aren't the reason for it going down that path. If the Mint decides not to give you a break on the money you owe him, it's because he's had trouble with some other non-payers today and he doesn't have time for your shit, not because you rolled a 4: the dice will decide what the fiction is, even retroactively.

LOOK THROUGH CROSSHAIRS

The PCs lives are their own, but everything else? That's all yours. Take all those NPCs and the streetplan and find ways to burn them: users, hoes and debtors are a good place to start, but everybody in **the 'hood** has an agenda and they aren't all going to get what they want. A good first session kicker is to take something the players have put on the map and wreck it: close it, burn it, demolish it and salt the earth where it stood. An even better kicker is to turn an NPC on them: have their own sister turn them into the police, let their best friend try shooting them because the PC is getting in the way of the NPC's business. Make the players deal with this shit and show them that when they give you something to play with, you'll light the fuse on it and throw it back at them.

NAME EVERYONE, MAKE EVERYONE SEEM HUMAN.

Look at the streetplan, look at who lives there, look at how they relate to the PCs, but think about what they do when the PCs aren't around. *Everyone* in **the 'hood** wants something, even if it's as simple as being left alone in peace to make it through another day, so use that when the PCs want them for their own

business. It's fine to say things like "You're just rocking up to Mo in the middle of the day, while he's working at the supermarket, and asking him to hold the package for you? Yeah, he's this close to losing his shit with you and regretting all the favours he's done for you in the past, so he's not in the mood to listen right now." If they push it, they can make trouble and if they don't blow that, then they can make the move they came to make, but don't let them assume that the NPCs are always there for them whenever they want them.

ASK PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS AND BUILD ON THE ANSWERS

You've been doing this since the start of the game, so keep doing it: the Debts PCs start with creates a whole history between the PCs, which is then built on via the streetplanning. Whose houses are those? Who lives there? How long have they been there for? What's nearby? What isn't? Keep asking the PCs questions about the day they're having and the history behind it:

- "Who's that in front of you in the queue at the checkout? What was it you wanted to ask them?"
- "Can you remember the first time you kissed Puppy? It was just after he'd broken up with his boyfriend, but whose fault was that?"
- "Your normal boozer is The Three Lions, but today you're propping up the bar in The Mermaid; even the barkeep, Hooch, seems surprised to see you and says 'What brings you in 'ere then?' There's a puzzled frown on his face as he asks."

RESPOND WITH FUCKERY AND INTERMITTENT REWARDS

Give the PCs what they've worked for: which isn't to say that you should always reward them, but their effort should always pay off, including the times they totally balls everything up and bring a metric fuckton of trouble down on top of themselves. When they mess up badly, remember it, then throw it back at them at the worst possible time: keep an eye on who they owe payback to and why, then hit them full in the face with both barrels. Even when they get what they wanted, they're living in the real world, so there are always strings attached and it won't last forever anyway. It's fine for things to work out in their favour once in a while, but mostly they're like the frog thrashing away in the jug of cream trying to stay afloat: maybe if they keep at it long enough, they'll be in butter, but only if they get the chance to keep kicking.

BE A FAN OF THE PLAYERS

If the player's work hard at something their characters are doing, then respect that and respond enthusiastically: don't shut them down, don't cock block them and don't take away what makes them cool. The Fallen is a bent cop and they'll stay a bent cop until they go down or get burned, even if their own force starts investigating them: it's good that they come under the spotlight like this, but it's up to the player how this plays out for their character. Are they going to lose some heat? How? Maybe split their takings with a colleague who suspects them? Maybe frame someone else for what they've done? Whatever course of action they take, be a fan of that plot-line and commit to it as much as the player does: play the NPCs who get involved and portray their reaction fairly, but don't use them to just say no to it. Even if the players come up with the dumbest, least workable plan in the world, let their characters play it through and portray the outcome fairly: be supportive and enable their schemes, don't dismiss what the players are contributing.

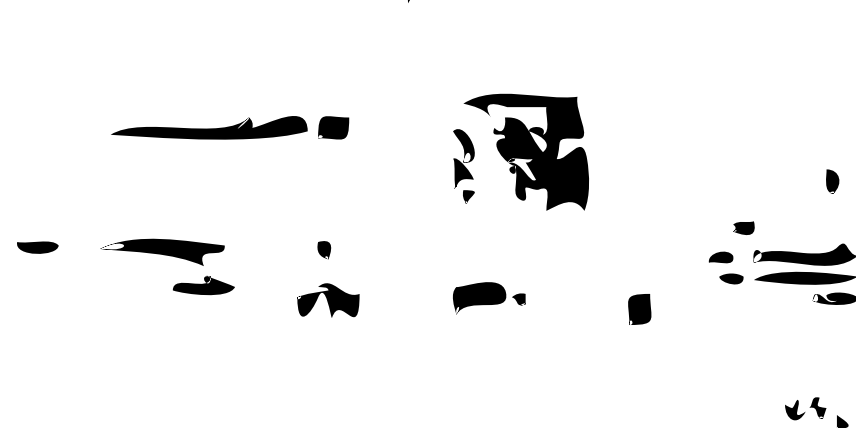
THINK OFFSCREEN TOO

Stuck for what to do next? Take a look at the streetplan and the cast of NPCs: what are they going to do now? The 'hood and the PCs' lives are just one tiny slice through the rich variety that's taking place in their city every minute of every day: remember that you're playing the 'hood as if it were a character of its own, so make it real, make it move, make it hungry and then see what it gobbles up and spits out. Flip back and forth between big picture and small picture, create a dynamic between what happens on the streets and what happens in the world at large.

SOMETIMES, DISCLAIM DECISION MAKING

When it's your call what happens next, don't always make the decision based on what you want to see or what you believe ought to happen next, try one of these:

- *What would an NPC do?* Check through the cast of supporting characters and ask yourself how they would react to this situation; when you get an interesting answer, you've got what happens next.
- *What do the players want to happen?* Just come out and ask them what they think should happen next as a result of what the characters have done: why did they just do what they did? What did they expect to get out of it? How do they think the NPCs are going to react?
- *What were the stakes?* What did you say would happen in this situation? If you set stakes for a move, then honesty demands that you apply those stakes as agreed.



THE
'HOOD

THE HOME FRONT

Once you've got the streetplan ready, you can start looking at the fronts for the game, which is where a big difference between *Apocalypse World* and 'hood kicks in, so sit up and pay attention right now: unlike *AW*, this is not a lawless time. If someone wants something in this game, they can't go and take it without bringing down a lot of unwelcome attention on themselves; if war breaks out on the streets of the 'hood, then The Man will come and stamp on the whole anthill, until peace is restored. You're not carving out a new territory for yourself or keeping the lantern of civilisation lit against the encroaching darkness, you're just trying to pick up the crumbs that fall down from the big boys' table and hoping there's the occasional diamond in there.

OK, now we've got that sorted, let's create a front; we'll make it quick and dirty:

- Pick a place in the 'hood that makes a good target.
- Pick a place outside the 'hood that serves as someone's base of operations.
- Draw an arrow between them; hey, you just created a front! Well done!

You're probably looking for a bit more depth than that though, so here's how it goes:

TARGETS

Every location marked in the 'hood has the potential to be a target; think about what it offers and why someone outside the 'hood would be interested in that. The players should already have given you a lot of choices here, so use them; some assets that places might have include:

- Income: it makes money, like a market or pub.
- Security: it's well protected, like the Bastion's home or the Merchant's lock-up.
- Land: it's got potential to be redeveloped, like a playground or allotments.
- Cover: it provides a front for criminal activity, like a betting shop or pawnbroker.
- Opportunity: it's a new market ripe for exploitation, like a high school or youth club.

Not everywhere has to be an asset in order to be a target though: some places which serve a purpose in the 'hood could be seen as liabilities or even threats to those outside it. The police might put undercover officers in the pub that serves as a front for the drug trade; racist thugs might try to shut down a cultural centre or

mosque; and of course rival gangs might start to muscle in on the PC's turf by burning down any of their assets. Pick a place on the streetplan that the PCs care about, then put it in your sights.

METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE

The Met, as they are known, operates a number of different departments, in both Specialist Crime Division and Central Operations:

SCD1 - Homicide & Serious Crime: includes all actual or attempted murder.

SCD2 - Rape & Serious Sexual Offences.

SCD4 - Forensic Services Command Unit: including Scene of Crime Officers (SOCOs) and other forensic services.

SCD5 - Child Abuse Investigation Command.

SCD6 - Economic & Specialist Crime Command: dealing with fraud, vehicle theft, antiquities, money laundering, wildlife crime, etc, etc. Each of these has its own specialist team (sometimes only one or two officers dealing with the whole of London).

SCD7 - Trident & Trafalgar Operational Command Unit: investigates gun related crime in the black community.

SCD10 - Serious & Organised Crime Squad: deals with organised crime, hostage situations, kidnapping, etc.

SCDI - Covert Policing/Intelligence: provides undercover surveillance services to the rest of the Met.

CO1 - Central Operations HQ

CO3 - Emergency Preparedness Operational Command Unit

CO5 - Firearms Command Unit

CO10 - Central Communications Command

CO11 - Public Order Operational Command Unit

CO14 - Clubs & Vice Unit

CO15 - Traffic Operational Command Unit

CO16 - Traffic Criminal Justice Unit

SCO19 - Specialist Firearms Command

CO20 - Territorial Support Group

BASES

Every location listed outside **the 'hood** has an interest in what goes on in it, for whatever reasons; almost all the motivation for the threats comes down to a handful of factors:

- *Greed*: when they see what they want, they just have to have it and won't take no for answer.
- *Fear*: they can't abide anything they see as a threat to themselves to exist.
- *Envy*: the success of others is a thorn in their side, so they always have to be on top.
- *Hate*: they have a grudge against certain others and will always act to put them on the bottom of the heap.
- *Desire*: they will go to extreme measures to win the hearts and minds of those they are obsessed with.
- *Obedience*: there are ways things must be done, no deviation from law or custom can be tolerated.
- *Ambition*: they'll change the world to be the way they want, no matter who stands in their way.

THREATS

So you know where the threat and the target are, but who is the threat? Knowing who's got **the 'hood** in their sights will help you decide what they want and how they act to get it:

AUTHORITY

The police, social services, customs & immigration, housing associations and many others are all the face of authority; their most common motivation is *obedience*, but their individual agents may feel *hate* or *ambition*. Some moves they can make are:

- Cut off benefits (threaten their livelihood)
- Enter and search property
- Call residents in for an interview
- Be visible in **the 'hood**
- Take the vulnerable into custody

SYNDICATE

Any type of organised crime, be it mafia, yardies, triads, East End gangsters or Eastern European troublemakers; their most common motivation is *greed*, but their individual agents may feel *fear* or *envy*. Some moves they can make are:

- Make an offer to go into business
- Take down a resident of **the 'hood**

- Threaten to cause pain
- Operate in **the ‘hood**
- Provide what’s needed, at a price

CAMPAIGN

A political or social movement with specific short and long term goals, such as a Neighbourhood Watch, anti-immigration movement or local political party; their most common motivation is *ambition*, but their individual agents may feel *desire* or *obedience*. Some moves they can make are:

- Rent or buy property in **the ‘hood**
- Report to the authorities
- Show how they could make things better
- Pressure residents into giving support
- Show a resident the consequences of their actions

BUSINESS

A company or industry that sees potential in **the ‘hood**, such as a letting agency, supermarket chain, group of investors or industrial unit; their most common motivation is *greed*, but their individual agents may feel *envy* or *ambition*. Some moves they can make are:

- Take away customers from a local business
- Evict residents from their property
- Raise prices
- Lower property values
- Begin construction/demolition

CLAN

An extended family engaged in a feud with residents of **the ‘hood**; their most common motivation is *hate*, but their individual agents may feel *fear* or *desire*. Some moves they can make are:

- Attack friends of their rivals
- Spread rumours and gossip
- Engage in clandestine romance with the enemy
- Take residents to court
- Reveal secrets in public

A front doesn’t always have to seem like a threat: a single wolf in sheep’s clothing can do more harm in less time than a whole pack of wolves nipping at your heels. So, when someone asks the Bastion if they can lay low in their crib for a few days, or if the Merchant minds holding something in their lock-up

for a little while, it might seem like the small favour is worth the price they can ask for it later, but we all know there's more to the story than that. The guy you've let into your house? Yeah, turns out the police want to question him over the whereabouts of his missing girlfriend. That crate you're holding in your lock-up? It'd better not still be there when the Russian mobsters turn up looking for their stolen property. A threat doesn't have to want to take away what the PCs have, it can be happy to use what they've got, but that just drags them further into the murky world of favours, debts and fragile alliances.

Even though bases are outside **the 'hood**, agents of the threat can live in it: they can even be amongst the NPCs that the players have named as friends and family. Living in **the 'hood** doesn't mean liking it and a number of residents will feel they might be better off if the outsiders had their way, whether that's getting that one bad family evicted from their house or having a whole street demolished to make way for a new shopping mall. Look closely at all those NPCs and think about their motivations: when the chips are down, whose side will they really be on? A resident whose home is marked on the streetplan can provide the outsiders with a toehold in **the 'hood** from which to further spread their influence.



THE
'HOOD

THE SCORE

A Quickstart Playset for The ‘Hood

WHAT’S THE SCORE?

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“Smiling” Seth Waterman has a plan, as always, but this one’s different: he’s going to stick up a security van loaded with cash. He’s got his older brother Greg to provide muscle and a couple of mates he owes favours to are going to help steal the cash and getaway. All he needs to do is plan the perfect heist with them: nothing can go wrong.

The truth is that things have already gone wrong the moment he started planning the heist, he just hasn’t found that out yet...

This is a condensed version of **The ‘Hood** that allows a group of 4 or 5 people to get down to playing as quickly as possible, by presenting a set of pre-created characters facing a pre-written situation. That means there aren’t all the options present in the complete game, but the characters here could easily be carried over into the full version of **The ‘Hood**.

I’ve saved a lot of heavy-lifting here by presenting a game that is simple and ready to play, but in order to do so I’ve had to strip things down a little, by hiding some rules, altering or ignoring others and skipping some processes a new group would normally go through.

In writing this, I’ve put the rules at the point where they are needed; for example, in the opening scene where they plan their heist, there are rules for the characters to scope things out and get the materials they need for the job. No plan survives contact with the players however, so it’s best to have a copy of **The ‘Hood** standing by for when the game goes in unexpected directions.



GREG “MONSTER” WATERMAN

You're used to providing manual labour for your younger brother Seth: this can involve moving crates, guarding doors or breaking arms. It's simple and undemanding, and you don't mind the bruises, the odd hours or the screams.

STATS



NAME



HUSH



BRASS



WISE



STRAIGHT

● **Handy with his Fists:** you don't need a weapon to hurt someone; when you **get rough**, you can roll+brass instead of roll+edge.

● **Hard Bastard:** erase this move instead of going down or out.

When you advance, you can take one of these moves:

○ **Extreme Persuasion:** when you **argue the toss**, roll+brass instead of roll+wise.

○ **Unstoppable:** When you take the **hard way** and miss, you may choose all three options to turn it into a hit.

Heat: *this is how much trouble you're in and if it reaches 5, you're **burned**. You can get rid of it by shifting the blame to another PC or getting an NPC to provide you with an alibi.*

Experience: *this is how much you've learned and you advance when it reaches 5: reset it to zero and take +1 on any stat (max.+3) or take a new move.*

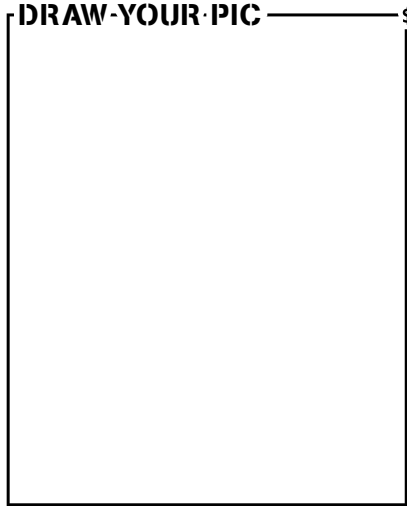


Mark 1 heat and 2 experience at the start of play.

When you and another PC **double-cross** each other, take the **Hard Bastard** move if you had it and have erased it; otherwise take +1 debt with them.

Debt: *this is what the other characters owe you; you can roll+debt to help (they take +1 on their next roll) or hinder them (they take -2.) When your debt with another PC goes over +3, reset it to zero and choose one: mark 1 experience, swap all your heat with theirs or make a deal where they have to do what you say but they can **argue the toss** over the details.*

DRAW-YOUR-PIC



"Smiling" Seth Waterman:

Your little brother, you've been a team since school, when you were the brawn to his brains; sticking up the security van is his idea. *Start with +2 debt with him.*

Chris "the Magpie" Cole: The thieving little shit who got you the sack from your security work at the shopping mall when you looked the other way for him one night. *Start with +3 debt with him.*

Penny "Wheels" Winchester: She still hasn't forgiven you for the time you rammed the car she was driving off the road because you were being paid to nick a package she was delivering.

Payback: *these are people in your 'hood who might do you a favour or have a score to settle with you.*

○ "Hot" Lauren Winchester: Penny's half-sister, there's a thing between you but it's complicated.

○ "Uncle" Heston Malahide: A bent money-lender who sometimes pays you to rough non-paying clients up.

○ Claire "the Godmother" Waterman: Your mum, who you still live with.

○ Brian "the Brick" Edwards: Just a mate in the same line of work as you, but less reliable due to his fondness for nose-candy.

"SMILING" SETH WATERMAN

Everyone's looking for something; you bring together those with a demand and those who can supply. You're always concocting schemes to make money, but what you mostly make is trouble.

STATS



NAME



HUSH



BRASS



WISE



STRAIGHT

● **Negotiator:** when you argue the toss, roll+name instead of roll+wise.

● **Hiring a Professional:** when you ask around for a person and get a hit, they give +1 ongoing to make a specific move on the job you hire them for.

When you advance, you can take one of these moves:

○ **Fence:** all goods in your possession take -hot when you sell them on.

○ **Infamy's Better than Anonymity:** you get +1 name (name+3).

Heat: *this is how much trouble you're in and if it reaches 5, you're **burned**. You can get rid of it by shifting the blame to another PC or getting an NPC to provide you with an alibi.*

Experience: *this is how much you've learned and you advance when it reaches 5: reset it to zero and take +1 on any stat (max.+3) or take a new move.*



Mark 1 heat and 2 experience at the start of play.

When you and another PC **double-cross** each other, nullify their double-cross move. Whatever it is, it just doesn't happen.

Debt: *this is what the other characters owe you; you can roll+debt to help (they take +1 on their next roll) or hinder them (they take -2.) When your debt with another PC goes over +3, reset it to zero and choose one: mark 1 experience, swap all your heat with theirs or make a deal where they have to do what you say but they can **argue the toss** over the details.*

DRAW-YOUR-PIC

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Greg "Monster" Waterman:

Your big brother, he always fought your fights for you when you were kids and your mouth got you into trouble. *You can make a deal with him once, as above.*

Chris "the Magpie" Cole: He's too wise to your games after getting burned by you in the past; he'll be keeping a close eye on you. *Start with +2 debt with him.*

Penny "Wheels" Winchester: You swindled her dad over a phony investment scheme, so she's got reason to dislike and distrust you. *Start with +2 debt with her.*

Payback: *these are people in your 'hood who might do you a favour or have a score to settle with you.*

○ Max "Duke" Barrett: King of these streets, he'll break you if you try anything on his patch.

○ Tina "Righteous" Wallace: The slightly bent cop on the beat in your 'hood, stay in her good books by helping her out with her inquiries.

○ Claire "the Godmother" Waterman: Your mum, who's grown used to you providing her with life's little luxuries.

○ Wes "the Kid" Barrett: Max's nephew, a kid in **the 'hood** who runs a few errands for you when you're busy or being watched.

CHRIS "THE MAGPIE" COLE

All property is theft, so on balance you're not really doing anything wrong. It's barely a crime when people leave stuff lying around, you're actually, like, tidying up and being all environmental, innit?

STATS



NAME



HUSH



BRASS



WISE



STRAIGHT

● **Nick It:** when you steal gear, roll+hush. On a 10+, choose 2, on a 7-9, choose 1: you leave no evidence you were there, you can get out the same way you got in, you don't set off any alarms. Goods you steal are always +hot.

● **In & Out:** when you **cover your tracks** and get a hit, choose one less option from those available.

When you advance, you can take one of these moves:

○ **Stealthy:** you get +1 hush (hush+3)

○ **Disarm:** if you enter a situation without a weapon, you may take the weapon with the lowest edge or lead value from those around you.

Heat: *this is how much trouble you're in and if it reaches 5, you're **burned**. You can get rid of it by shifting the blame to another PC or getting an NPC to provide you with an alibi.*

Experience: *this is how much you've learned and you advance when it reaches 5: reset it to zero and take +1 on any stat (max.+3) or take a new move.*

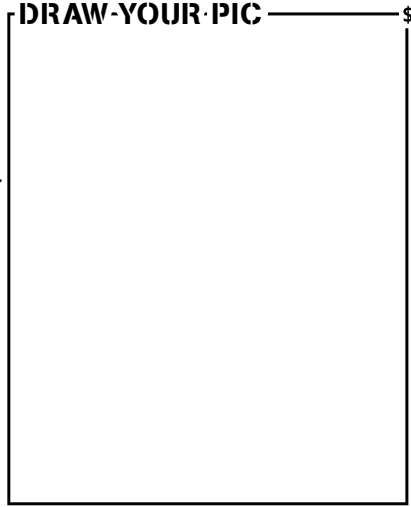


Mark 1 heat and 2 experience at the start of play.

When you and another PC **double-cross** each other, steal one bit of their gear from them.

Debt: *this is what the other characters owe you; you can roll+debt to help (they take +1 on their next roll) or hinder them (they take -2.) When your debt with another PC goes over +3, reset it to zero and choose one: mark 1 experience, swap all your heat with theirs or make a deal where they have to do what you say but they can **argue the toss** over the details.*

DRAW-YOUR-PIC



Greg "Monster" Waterman:

The dumb fuck still hasn't figured out how you lifted his stereo & DVD from his mum's house, but he suspects you did it.

"Smiling" Seth Waterman: You both cut your teeth in this game stealing what you wanted from the local shops. *Start with +2 debt with him.*

Penny "Wheels" Winchester: She owes you for that time you helped her lose a hot car she was driving, just before the police turned up looking for her. *Start with +3 debt with her.*

Payback: *these are people in your 'hood who might do you a favour or have a score to settle with you.*

○ "Uncle" Heston Malahide: Money-lender and fence, he finds a market for the goods you nick.

○ Tina "Righteous" Wallace: The local cop, if she knew how crooked you were, she might not entertain your advances.

○ "Metal" Mitchell Winstone: You're both in the same game, except he steals cars and you steal everything else.

○ "Smooth" Annie Prentiss: She's been in this game since the 1980s and knows everybody; buy her a drink and she might tell you a name.

PENNY "WHEELS" WINCHESTER

When it positively, absolutely has to fucking get there tomorrow, you've got the marketable skills and no conscience: you don't ask what's in the bag, you just pick it up and drop it off, quickly, quietly and cleanly.

STATS



- **Duck & Dive:** when anyone gets rough or opens fire on you, they take -1 now.

- **Your current vehicle is a motorbike:** it's +fast but also +tiny and +weak: you can outrace most other vehicles but you can't carry much and any collision will wreck it.

When you advance, you can take one of these moves:

- **Escape Route:** when you got to Plan B, roll+hush instead of roll+wise.

- **Backstreet Knowledge:** when you overtake others on the move, roll+wise. On a 10+, you end up minutes ahead of them. On a 7-9, you are seconds ahead. On a miss, you stay behind them all the way.

Heat: *this is how much trouble you're in and if it reaches 5, you're **burned**. You can get rid of it by shifting the blame to another PC or getting an NPC to provide you with an alibi.*

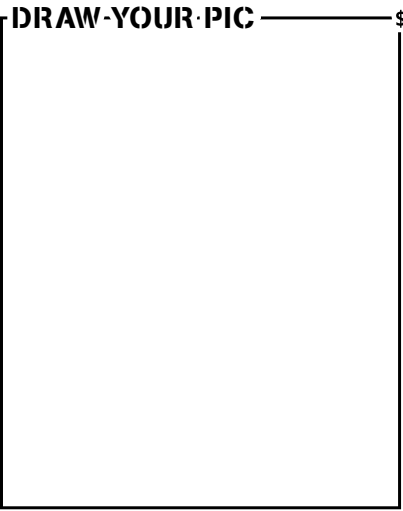
Experience: *this is how much you've learned and you advance when it reaches 5: reset it to zero and take +1 on any stat (max.+3) or take a new move.*



When you and another PC **double-cross** each other, they get dumped in any location of your choice within the city.

Debt: *this is what the other characters owe you; you can roll+debt to help (they take +1 on their next roll) or hinder them (they take -2.) When your debt with another PC goes over +3, reset it to zero and choose one: mark 1 experience, swap all your heat with theirs or make a deal where they have to do what you say but they can **argue the toss** over the details.*

DRAW-YOUR-PIC



Greg "Monster" Waterman:

He set the police onto you just because you warned him to stay away from Lauren, your half-sister. *You can make a deal with him once, as above.*

"Smiling" Seth Waterman: You once borrowed his car for a job you were doing, but he didn't get it back in one piece. *Start with +2 debt with him.*

Chris "the Magpie" Cole: You've helped him move some of the stuff he's nicked from time to time. *Start with +1 debt with him.*

Payback: *these are people in your 'hood who might do you a favour or have a score to settle with you.*

○ "Hot" Lauren Winchester: Your mum's other daughter, she tries to keep her nose clean in this rotten town.

○ Max "Duke" Barrett: He rules the roost around here and keeps pressuring you to join his crew.

○ "Metal" Mitchell Winstone: The best gearhead in town, you smash cars up and he puts them back together again.

○ Jeanette "Ghost" Douglas: When you need some forged documents in a hurry, she never lets you down.

There are four player characters and ten non-player characters named in this playset, but more NPCs can quickly be added as the development of the story demands.

Main Cast

- **Monster (Greg Waterman):** the muscle, he is older brother to Seth and involved with Penny's half-sister.
- **Smiling Seth (Seth Waterman):** the brains, this is his scheme and he's put the team together.
- **The Magpie (Chris Cole):** professional but low-class thief, he's just in this for the money.
- **Wheels (Penny Winchester):** the getaway driver, she has a long and complex history with the Waterman brothers.

Supporting Cast

- **Hot Lauren (Lauren Winchester):** Penny's half sister and Greg's sometime girlfriend.
- **Uncle (Heston Malahide):** a crook with money and connections, he launders cash and fences stolen goods.
- **The Godmother (Claire Waterman):** Greg & Seth's mother, Greg still lives with her, Seth pays her bills.
- **The Brick (Brian Edwards):** a mate of Greg's, they have both worked many jobs together as the hired goons.
- **Duke (Max Barrett):** his gang patrols the 'hood where the PCs live, keeping it safe and taking their cut.
- **Righteous (Tina Wallace):** the police patrol officer, she knows when it's best to look the other way.
- **The Kid (Wes Barrett):** Max's tearaway nephew, not out of school yet but already a proud ASBO winner.
- **Metal Mitch (Mitchell Winstone):** chop shop mechanic and dealer in dodgy motors.
- **Smooth Annie (Annie Prentiss):** once a girlfriend to some notorious gangsters, her youth may have left but she still has the knowledge and connections.

- Ghost (Jeanette Douglas): quiet and anonymous, just how she likes it, she is the go-to girl for changing your identity.

———— ACT ONE: THE PLAN —————\$

"Smiling" Seth has a proposal for his brother and a couple of mates he thinks he can more or less trust; together, they're going to carry out a heist by sticking up a security van loaded with the weekly takings of a couple of target businesses. The first part of this plan requires picking a target, then finding out about the security arrangements it uses: what time do the takings get collected, what route does the van take, who's driving and how are they armed, etc.

There are two ways the PCs can get the information they need:

Ask Around: there are a few people about who know this business, like "Uncle" Heston, "Duke" and "Smooth" Annie, but they'll probably want something in return for their help and it'll take a little while before they can give you an answer.

When you **ask around** for answers to questions, roll+name. On a hit, you get an answer and choose options. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- The answer is worse than you expected.
- They don't answer you directly; instead they give you the name of someone who does have the answer.
- Whoever you ask wants a cut or a favour: mark them for payoff.

Cover Your Tracks: you could just spy things out for yourself, but that means hanging around on the streets, trying to observe the routine without arousing suspicion.

When you **cover your tracks**, roll+hush. On a hit, you get an answer and choose options. On a 10+ choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- It takes several hours.
- You arouse suspicion: mark heat & experience.
- You have to call on another PC for help: tell them to take +1 debt with you.

Whenever the PCs get an answer to a question, they should add that information to their plan: start with a big blank sheet of paper and draw the plan of their heist on it as they progress.

- Start with whatever small business the van makes its first collection at.
- As you find out more about the van's route, add the streets it travels along, marking other sites of interest on them.
- Think about other streets that aren't on the van's route: could it be diverted to a more vulnerable spot?
- Note any ways you can exploit the situation: anything you discover about the drivers, the businesses they collect from, the time of day they collect at and so on, can all go on the plan.

Besides a plan of the heist, the PCs will need to tool up with a getaway vehicle and some weapons: they can find these by **asking around** again, but to actually acquire them they'll have to **argue the toss** with whoever is willing to part with the goods.

Ask Around: same as before, but now the PCs are looking for the tools and other resources they need to carry out the heist, like weapons, a vehicle, disguises and anything else they can think of that will be of use to them. They can go further afield for this, such as by asking "Metal" Mitchell for a vehicle.

When you **ask around** for goods & favours, roll+name. On a 10+, choose 1 option. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- What you get isn't quite the quality you expected and has a mechanical or other problem with it.
- Whoever you asks just points you to where you can find what you want, they don't have it to hand.
- There's a problem with getting it; you'll have to solve that before it's yours.
- You owe the person you asked for helping you out; mark them for payback.

A common drawback with many vehicles and weapons is that they are *hot*: each item you have in your possession that is tagged as *hot* adds +1 to your heat, but you can only

get rid of heat from *hot* gear by getting rid of the item in question and you get no experience from it.

Argue the Toss: when you cut a deal with someone or make an agreement, you want to get the best deal possible for yourself, just like they want to get the best deal possible for themselves. Most of the NPCs the PCs have to deal with want money now, which the PCs probably don't have: that kind of wealth is represented by *dough* and the PCs start with *Odough*, which is why they are willing to carry out this heist. When NPCs demand money now in return for what they're offering, PCs can respond by haggling over how much they'll pay or when they'll pay.

When you **argue the toss**, roll+wise. On a 10+, NPCs take your deal and PCs either take it or take +1 heat. On a 7-9, if they take your deal, mark NPCs for payback and PCs take +1 debt with you.

Weapons can be divided into two types: there are the clubs & blades which provide *edge* and the firearms which provide *lead*. They provide this in a range of +1 to +3: the bigger the bonus, the more damage they do, but the harder they are to acquire and to conceal. Vehicles can have all sorts of tags attached to them, both good and bad: Penny's starting motorbike is a good example of this, being +*fast* (able to overtake most other vehicles) but also +*tiny* and +*weak* (no room for passengers or luggage and very vulnerable). Other vehicle tags are *faster*, *slow*, *slower*, *agile*, *stiff*, *roomy* and *tough*: if a vehicle has more good tags than bad ones, it's going to cost 3 or more dough, but if there are more bad tags, you can probably get it cheaper. Another option is to borrow a vehicle off someone like "Metal" Mitch, but he'll definitely want payback for that.

This first act of the game, planning the heist, gives the players a free hand in creating the situation they'll face: no details are fixed in advance, so any time they ask a question or propose a strategy, it's down to them to make a move that will provide the answer or which represents how they are preparing themselves. Let them plan out their heist for up to an hour, but then call a halt and move on to the next section.

As MC, you also need to think about the plan, but you're looking at it from the perspective of what's missing and what could go wrong: any question the players don't ask is one that you get to answer how you like. For example, have they checked out when a police patrol coincides with the security van's route? Have they checked for any local

events on the day of the heist? Have they prepared for what the weather will be like? Jot down a few surprises you can spring on them in the next act, but be fair about it: don't just undermine their plan arbitrarily, especially the parts they have prepared for. If they've managed to get an inside-man on the security van, then he turns up on the day as expected, he won't just phone in sick; on the other hand, if they've left it to one of their contacts to organise the inside-man, maybe they get someone they weren't expecting and who can't be trusted...

If things have gone badly wrong with their plans at any stage, the gang can always ask you for help.

Plan B: roll+wise. On a hit, the MC gives you a way out of whatever trouble you're in: this is guaranteed to work, at a price. If you take the lifeline you're thrown, choose options; on a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2.

- You have to leave someone behind.
- You don't get what you came for.
- It costs you: take -1 dough that must be paid from the total dough taken in the heist.

INTERMISSION

\$

The PCs now have a plan, but they also have a stack of problems:

- **Heat:** if they've attracted too much attention to themselves, by bringing in too many people on the plan or acting suspiciously around the target, they'll have drawn some heat. If this rises to 5+, they're going to get burned, which means its game over for them when the cops arrest their ass or some other gang decides to rub them out.
- **Payback:** they've either promised a lot of favours or they've committed themselves to debts they have no way of paying back unless they pull the heist off. Each NPC they owe payback to is like a little ticking bomb, just waiting to blow their life apart.

Before they press on with the heist itself, they'll probably want to clear the decks a little: once they leap into action, they won't have time to deal with this shit and it'll keep mounting up until it topples over and buries them. As MC, you should *strongly* suggest to any player with more than

2 heat or two NPCs marked for payback that they take the time to deal with some of that before going any further.

Lie Low: the PCs have friends and family who are of less interest to the police and rival gangs than themselves, so these are the best people to ask for help when seeking someone to provide an alibi. These NPCs can act as a distraction, vouch for your cover story or just let the PC hide-out in their spare room until the people who are looking for them have gone away.

When you **lie low**, roll+straight. On a hit, take -1 heat. On a 10+, you may also take an additional -1 heat but you owe someone for this; mark them for payback. On a 7-9, you only take -1 heat and you owe someone for this; mark them for payback.

There's no singular move for dealing with NPCs that are marked for payback, it all depends on who they are and what they want, but seeking them out to settle things should give the PCs the upper hand. The most likely two things an NPC will want for payback is dough or a favour, but as the PCs don't have any dough right now, they'd have to cut the NPC in on the take from the heist in order to pay them back that way. Persuading an NPC to accept the promise of money later means **arguing the toss** with them: they won't want more than *1dough* but they'll want payment to happen sooner rather than later, so this can easily put the clock on the PCs, forcing them to act now instead of spending more time on preparation.

An NPC can also be paid off with a favour that only the PC is in a position to offer: PCs can check out their unique moves and offer to put them at the service of an NPC. The relationships between all the characters can also be put on the block: as MC, you have to make **the 'hood** seem alive, so think about what some of those NPCs could want from each other and how the PCs could be used as the go-betweens. Of course, that kind of favour will take more time and almost certainly lead the PCs even deeper into the tangled web of loyalties and allegiances that underlie **the 'hood**.

This is a good time to begin a map of the gangs' own '**hood**' as well as the target one: mark on it where they hold their meetings about the heist, where they go to get gear and information and any other places they mention. This will help in the final act, when the PCs are looking for escape routes, hiding places and friendly faces.

———— ACT TWO: THE HEIST —————\$

Everything in this act takes place on the day of the heist itself, so the players better be sure that they're ready for it. By now, they should have a good map of the security van's route accompanied by an amount of relevant data about the routine and the environment. The two main obstacles to carrying out the heist are dealing with the security and then getting away, so it's time for some new moves.

Take the hard way: some of this stuff can't be done under the radar, because there's no subtle way to ram a van off the road or wrestle a case out of someone's hands. Anytime the PCs have to get direct and physical to remove an obstacle to their goal, break out this move.

When you **take the hard way**, roll+brass. On a hit, you do what you set out to do and choose options. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- This doesn't go unnoticed: there are witnesses or cameras watching you, or else you're just leaving clear evidence behind. Whatever the case, mark heat and experience.
- You've made things personal by affecting someone who has a stake in what you're doing: mark your new enemy for payback.
- That was more painful than you intended it to be: take -1 forward as you get your breath back or shrug off the damage.

Get rough: if the problem is someone who just won't step out of the way, then you might have to take them down, but you'll need to be tooled up for this.

When you **get rough**, roll+edge. On a 10+, take your opponent **down**. On a 7-9, choose 1.

- They feel threatened enough to back off out of your way, but they're still active.
- They get their licks in on you: they're **down** but you take -1 ongoing for this situation.

Open fire: if you're really serious about your violence, you need some firepower, especially if it's been established that the security on the van are armed.

When you **open fire**, roll+lead. On a 10+, take your opponent **out** and take +1 heat. On a 7-9, take your opponent **down** and choose 1.

- The authorities take gunfire very seriously, so this will put them on your tail: take +1 heat.
- You either lose your weapon in the struggle or you find it expedient to get rid of it: dump the weapon you used.
- Things are too desperate for you to stick around, so leave without getting what you came for.

The NPCs aren't just standing around waiting to see what the PCs will do next while they're carrying out the heist, they'll be responding appropriately:

- Bystanders are witnesses: even if they aren't calling the police right now, they'll be able to give a statement about everything they see and hear later, so how are the PCs going to deal with that?
- The security guards aren't just going to give up without a fight: if they're active and armed, they'll be coming after the PCs however they can, including the classic tactic of taking out the getaway vehicle if possible. Failing that, maybe one of the guards is edgy enough to try a stand-off, forcing a PC to decide whether they're prepared to **open fire** to get the dough they came for.
- How quickly are the police going to arrive on the scene? If the players forgot to ask that sort of question in their plan, then there could be a patrol on the street right now, quite possibly "Righteous" Tina Wallace herself: have they got a plan in place for dealing with that?

Additionally, there's anything else you've got ready to spring on them: a group of kids from the nursery walking by, a heavy storm at the time of the heist or just a have-a-go hero from the general public who wants to make a bid for

fame & glory. Even when they get through all that, there's still a getaway to come and they can't just **take the hard way** all the way through or else they'll still have cops and others on their tail. At some point, someone's got to **cover their tracks** or the police will just be waiting for them by the time they get home.

Cover Your Tracks: whether you're trying to avoid some pursuers, clean up the evidence or using some subtle tactic like an inside-man, break out this move to get away clean.

When you **cover your tracks**, roll+hush. On a hit, you get an answer and choose options. On a 10+ choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- You really have to go out of your way & take your time for this.
- You avoid any immediate attention, but you leave evidence that can be traced back to you.
- You have to call on another PC for help: tell them to take +1 debt with you.

While all this is going on, the PCs are going to be attracting a lot of attention to themselves, which can make their heat build up quickly, especially if there is one of them making most of the risky moves. There's no time to lie low in the middle of this, but luckily there's another option: stick the blame on a friend.

Take the heat off: when you take heat, you can try to fit someone else up for it, whether they want you to or not. Put them in the frame for your misdeeds and when trouble comes calling, it'll call on them instead.

When you **take the heat off**, roll+brass. On a hit, deflect the heat you should have taken to another PC: they mark heat and experience instead of you. On a 7-9, they also gain +1 debt with you.

———— **ACT THREE: THE SPLIT** ————— \$

Getting away with the heist isn't the end of the characters' troubles: now they have to deal with the aftermath.

The amount being carried in the van when they pull off the

heist is 15 dough, more if they specifically took a riskier course of action to get more cash, less if they played it safe or were forced to abandon the scene prematurely.

Of course, 15 dough doesn't split 4 ways evenly, but they probably owe someone some payback anyway: also, some of the gang probably feel entitled to a larger share, because they did more legwork, took more risks, were essential to the plan or whatever. Good: this is when they can argue it all out between themselves.

So where are they going to count out the cash? Are they all sticking together or are they splitting up? Is just one of them carrying the cash or are they dividing the cases between themselves? Bear in mind, the money won't be evenly be distributed around the cases they got hold of (at least 2, no more than 5) so one might only hold *2dough* whilst another has 4 or 5. This isn't a good debate to hold while still on the run, so if they haven't planned for this (or even if they have: plans can always change) this is a great time for them to **argue the toss** with each other, keeping in mind that on a 10+, any PC who doesn't want to go along with that deal has to mark heat and experience.

This is when being able to call in a favour really counts: if any of the PCs reached more than +3 debt with another PC, they can at least make that PC go along with their scheme, but the target still gets to **argue the toss** over the exact details, so "Give me the case and meet me at the garage later" can be answered by "Let's both take the case to the garage together" or "We'll meet later but I'll hold onto the case."

———— **THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT** —————\$

There's one question the PCs may not have bothered to ask when planning the heist: *whose money have they stolen?* Seth's biggest weakness is his ego and he doesn't like to think how little his name means outside his own small patch: the problem is, he hasn't pulled off this heist on his own patch, he's pulled it off on someone else's.

All those shopkeepers who have just had their takings nicked in broad daylight have been paying protection to Matt "The Scarecrow" Chisholm just so that kind of thing wouldn't happen to them. They're pissed at him because he hasn't protected them and he's pissed too because his

livelihood depends on their profits. Now he and his gang are coming after the crooks who are responsible for this:

Matt "The Scarecrow" Chisholm: when he **sniffs you out**, roll+heat: on a 7-9, he knows one thing you're hiding, on a 10+, he knows two things. On a miss, someone tells you he's been asking around about you.

Ebele "Grim" Fall: she's The Scarecrow's pet psychopath and when you **stand up to her boss**, she'll go after the person you care for most and take them **down**. This is usually going to be either Penny's sister Lauren or the Waterman brothers' mother, Claire.

Brian "The Brick" Edwards: The Scarecrow has hired on some extra muscle, paying Greg "Monster" Waterman's mate and occasional colleague to provide a bit of muscular back-up. When you **try to run**, he'll follow you relentlessly: he won't quit until he's got you or you take him **down** or **out**.

Keeping hold of the money is the trickiest part of the whole deal: The Scarecrow won't rest until he's got all his money back, which includes any debts the PCs have already paid off with it. Until he has all his money, he's going to make the PCs' lives hell, largely by using Grim to rough up their loved ones and The Brick to stop them from running away. Of course, first he has to get to them, but they left enough clues for him to follow in Act One, when they asked around for information & tools: with his talent for finding secrets, they might as well have painted a trail from the van to their front doors.

While The Scarecrow and his gang are coming after them, they're still having to avoid police attention, so some more **lying low** is in order to lose all that heat they picked up during the heist itself. If they miss, then the police are going to be on their street soon asking questions, but if that happens to be Tina "Righteous" Wallace, she might help them out with their problems if the price is right. No matter how it goes though, all that time spent keeping their head down just gives The Scarecrow more time to close in on them and their loved ones.

How does it end? Well, assuming they don't want to just give the money back to The Scarecrow and then get murdered, they can always try to kill two birds with one stone: if they can frame The Scarecrow for the heist, then neither his

gang nor the police will still be after them. Helping them in this is The Brick, Righteous and the shopkeepers who would like to get The Scarecrow off their back for good. Don't expect the Scarecrow to go down without a fight though: if he gets a sniff of what they're up to, he'll send Grim after them directly to take them **out** and it'll be a good trick if they can pull this off without at least one of them getting **burned** by the police or the rival gang.

———— FILLING IN THE BLANKS —————\$

All sorts of unpredictable things could happen during this game, so have your copy of **The 'Hood** on standby, but check here first for a quick reminder of some of the general things you should be doing as MC.

Make a Move

The moves given in each act cover most of the options that can come up during game play, but if a player states they want their character to do something which isn't covered, here's how to handle it:

1. **Say yes:** consider just allowing it to happen the way they want; you can complicate it if you wish, but there isn't always a need to roll dice and a number of actions can be resolved through negotiation.
2. **Use the dice:** if you decide to go to the dice, first make a fair decision about what stat the move uses: if someone wants to do the same thing later, they'll make their move using the same stat you pick now.
3. **Say what happens:** on a 6-, they miss and you should make a hard move against them; on a 7-9, they succeed but the price is high or the success is only partial; on a 10+, they succeed with a smaller price.

Hard Moves

When the players miss, the MC makes a hard move, which is just a way of saying that the consequences of failure are more than just 'nothing happens', the fiction demands that the characters always fail forward, so the result of a miss should change the situation just as much as a hit does.

Here's a checklist of hard moves you can pick from; when

the players miss, start at the top of this list and work downwards until you come to a move that fits the situation and hasn't been overused.

Make trouble: the player who missed must roll+heat. On a hit, whoever they are dealing with turns their back on them and refuses to be involved any further. On a 12+, the PCs takes +1 heat; on a 7-9, they can mark the person they're dealing with for payback and they don't turn their backs on the PC. On a miss, they stay friendly and sociable.

Turn up the heat: make them take +1 heat. This is a good, common move to use if it's not clear what the consequences of a miss could be: when the PCs mess things up, they attract attention from the authorities or they lose the trust of other villains, both of which are represented by heat.

If a PC's heat ever rises to 5+, they get burned: either the authorities have enough evidence on them to send them away or the heavy mob have enough reason to take the PC out of their way for good.

Payback: push an NPC from their payback list into the spotlight and make them deal with it by having that person demand payback right now: the PC has to either find a way to meet that demand as soon as possible or convince the NPC that now is not the best time. Whatever way it goes, it further complicates the situation the PC is in and raises the tension as well.

Take them down: this is a serious response and should only be made when the character tries to get rough or open fire and misses; when a PC goes down, they can make no further moves in the current scene and they take -1 ongoing (a -1 penalty to all rolls) until they have rested and healed.

If a PC is already down when you hit them with this move, then they're out: end of the line, game over, send flowers to the family.



THE
'HOOD

APPENDIX

CREATING & DESIGNING THE ‘HOOD

The game that became the ‘Hood started life in a very different form and went through a number of other iterations before I settled on the AW hack it is now. I can unreliably trace the roots of the design process (i.e. I can’t actually remember, but this seems likely) back to around 2010, when I wrote **Never to Die** for Game Chef that year. It was a simple, fast game about a bunch of typical young men in a big city having a night out without realising that it would be the last night out they ever shared. I really liked the mundane urban setting of that game and wanted to explore it further, taking it beyond the single, dramatic night out in the city that **N2D** focuses on and expanding the scope to encompass all the adventures a group of small time chancers might go through as they try to make it big without going to jail.

There were a number of influences on my line of thinking at the time: in part, there was the housing estate I lived on, which was notorious for its rough reputation and higher-than-the-national average number of drug users and other crime statistics. I’d also had a discussion with friends at the **Milton Keynes Role Playing Group** about the tendency for otherwise quite ordinary games to stick in something gonzo simply to attract potential players and how we were fed up with “laser sharking.” Why couldn’t a game with a realistic setting be as engaging as a game with a fantastic one?

With this in mind, and inspired by the success of **N2D**, I started toying around with ideas about what a full-on game of urban life would look like: what sort of characters would you have? What would they do? What would the players do? What would the whole thing *be about*? It seemed clear that a crime drama with soap-opera elements would provide the most interesting situations to play through, but I didn’t want to focus on a single crime or even a series of crimes committed by a single gang: I wanted a game about the people who committed the crimes, not the crimes themselves. I was more interested in a big picture game that allowed for the exploration of a complete life rather than just generating scenarios based around hard moral choices: I wanted a serial, not a movie.

I started doodling with mechanics on my A4 pad, scribbling down ideas for rules that would motivate and support the style of play I was aiming for: the first thing I hit upon was that the game needed to motivate the players to take risks in order to receive

rewards, but at the same time this would tend to shorten the shelf-life of the characters. It's easy to sit back and not care about the consequences your actions as a player have for the characters and while 'drive it like you stole it' is a valid play-style, in order to sustain play over the long-term, players had to want to keep their characters for as long as possible, whilst also seeing them succeed at their endeavours.

The first solution to this was to have each session represent a long time in the characters' lives, say six months to a year, an idea I took from board games I was playing at this time: in many of these, most notably *Agricola*, one round of play might equate to a season or a full year of 'real time', with all the actions taken by the players in that round reflecting the work done by their 'characters'. Taking this approach as a model, I started looking at the resources the players would have to play with, the goals they would be trying to attain and the methods by which they could convert the former into the latter. This proto-draft had a working title of *Pond Life* (reflecting what eventually became the motto for the 'Hood, (*big fish in a small pond*') and used a set of 'jobs', each of which was a modular expression of the rules, that enabled you to attempt to gain progress towards a goal, either directly or by converting resources you had gained from other, easier jobs. For example, one job might be 'Rob the bank', which would earn you lots of dough, but also carried with it a lot of heat and a strong risk of injury; an easier one might be 'Deal in stolen goods', which gained you less dough and less heat, with no risk of being injured. The other key resource you could gain was 'reputation' and there were jobs that allowed you to spend dough and reputation to advance your character or open up new jobs with greater risks & rewards.

Obviously, there was a bit of crunch to this system but not a huge amount, as the stats involved were quite simple and the jobs used standard templates for working out the risk and reward, e.g. some gave you a fixed but low reward, some let you gamble to gain a higher reward, some let you simply spend 2x resources to gain x results and so on. The bigger problem I had with this line of development was that it made everything a strategic decision: at any point in play, there was always going to be a logically optimal choice, so what was to stop players from doing that? If they were free to choose any job on their turn, without reference to the narrative being created, the whole thing became an exercise in parlour narration, like barking each time you moved the little dog around the board while playing *Monopoly*.

That's the point at which I started thinking about hacking an existing system instead of creating one from scratch: the notes I

had were for a board game, but I wanted an RPG or storygame. At this time, a lot of **Apocalypse World** hacks were in various stages of development, so it was natural to consider it for a hack of my own. Immediately that I thought of this, I could see that it scored on several grounds, in terms of what I already knew I wanted from the game:

- Simple stats and advancement.
- Very clearly defined ‘jobs’, i.e. moves.
- Strong character types with unique specialties.
- A tight marriage between mechanics and story, neither benefiting at the expense of the other.

Apocalypse World is a very hackable system, due to the clear, modular components the game is built out of: the trinity of stats, moves & playbooks are the spine of the game. Creating an urban crime hack mainly meant making decisions about what form those modules would take in the game I was looking for and I already had a clear idea about what I wanted some of them to be:

- There was always going to be a reputation-style stat, for measuring how well known and respected you were.
- There had to be one move for doing things aggressively and one other for doing things on the sly.
- I definitely wanted a gang-leader and a bent police office in the mix.

Taking those goals as the foundations of my design process, I started a fresh sheet on my doodle pad and started writing down names for stats, moves and playbooks. The ideas I came up with then have pretty much stayed part of the game throughout, but a lot of the names changed as I tried out different sounds and looks for them; I settled on **The Bastion** very early on as a cheeky little nod to my favourite PC game. Other than that, it was mostly a matter of cropping, e.g. **Plan B** was originally named **go to Plan B** and was a slightly messier move that didn’t require MC input.

The original list of playbooks had one idea that got dropped pretty quickly, as I felt **The Escort** was too weak compared to the others and was liable to end up as a victim rather than a mover & shaker, but Charles Perez suggested **The Pimp** and I kicked myself for not seeing that sooner. Throughout the process, I created rules and playbooks in parallel, so that the needs of the characters could inform the game what it should do as much as the game rules could inform the playbooks how they should be shaped. This complicit, reciprocal design process lead to the late addition of one more playbook, **The Shark**, whose development shadowed the refining of the rules on dough and vice versa.

Getting the economy of the ‘hood nailed down was the toughest challenge: I have an aversion to bean-counting, so just tracking currency earned and spent, and coming up with a table of goods & prices, was never going to happen. I favoured a very abstract system for a while, where dough was akin to heat and rose or fell depending on what you were doing: when you paid cash, you had to roll+dough to determine the quality of what you bought and any conditions attached to it. I also looked at using dough in a way like the strings in **Monsterhearts**, so that you could spend dough to give a bonus to a roll and for other things too, but neither option ever got seriously developed. Both had things to recommend them, but they also had the downside of making dough too unreliable, i.e. spending it didn’t guarantee you’d get anything at all as a result, which I really hated. The current **pay cash** move, after a few tweaks, became the ultimate answer to that: if you’ve worked for your dough, then it works for you, every time, as long as you have enough of it.

The other big change to the hack, which occurred very late on, was in the relationship between heat & experience: until a few months before publication, you advanced when experience+heat reached 5+, at which point you reset your experience to zero, but not your heat. Instead of marking experience when you **took heat**, you marked it when you **paid cash**: the intent was to drive play towards two goals, either hanging onto what you’ve got (restoring your livelihood) or getting rich and spreading the wealth (pay cash). A little play experience not only showed that this was somewhat clumsy to execute in practice, but it also gave players little motivation to gain heat, so they often took low-risk strategies: it showed me that my own assumptions were back-to-front, so I changed how all of that worked, in order to reward players for taking heat, and also rewrote the MC’s advice for giving it out. Always turn up the heat if you can, it’s relatively easy to get rid of (**take the heat off** or **lie low**) and it creates more debt and payback in the process.

HEAT

There’s no gain without pain and the ‘hood holds a lot of pain: expressing that kind of lifestyle in my hack was a tricky balancing act between keeping the players hooked for more but also being honest about the lives of their characters. The PCs couldn’t face a smackdown every time they stepped outside the bounds of the law, but nor could they act with impunity: there always had to be a chance that they would face the music, otherwise there was nothing stopping them from doing whatever the hell they wanted.

Heat was always intended as the mechanic for measuring just how much trouble each PC was in, right from the very beginning when

I was still working on *Pond Life*. In that game, heat was a waste product of the jobs you did: you gained it as you took actions and having too much penalised you, especially in the end-game scenario of working out your character's ultimate fate. There were a couple of jobs that allowed you to lose heat, the most basic one being 'Go to jail', where you chose to take your PC out of play for a round and have them serve time for their crimes.

When it came to the '**Hood**', I knew I wanted heat to be in there, but I wasn't sure how, and it went through a number of changes of mechanics before it settled into its current form. As I said, for quite a while, you advanced whenever experience+heat equalled 5, but you only reset experience to zero after advancing, not heat. I really wanted there to be a way for your heat to reflect the speed at which you were learning the tricks of surviving and thriving in the '**hood**', but this method proved to be too confusing and counter-intuitive. Other methods I toyed with included having heat also act as experience, but then that made it hard to also use it as a countdown; then there was a special advance list for heat, like the one now used for debt; and also an end-of-session roll+heat to see if you earned an advance that session, replacing the normal experience system.

Another variation that lasted quite a while was the MC's **turn up the heat** move, which was much like the harm move from *Apocalypse World*: when you gained heat, you rolled+heat right away to see if there were any immediate consequences, up to and including getting burned on the spot. This also got modified, to a hard move the MC could make whenever a PC missed, but it was too harsh and unpredictable, as it didn't play fair with the players' expectations and could easily short-change them on their characters' stories.

The main thing I got wrong with heat was being too cautious with it, treating it like the rocket fuel that drove the game but which could also blow it up at any moment. I regarded it as a big deal, a serious consequence that was handed out rarely and had to be avoided at all costs, despite having written two basic moves that were expressly about getting rid of it. It wasn't until my first actual face-to-face playtest that I realised I was doing it backwards and that I should be *encouraging* PCs to take heat, as doing so was one leg of the three-legged stool of the game's economy, with the other two being payback and debt. In order for that economy to function, the players had to be chasing heat as much as their characters wanted to avoid it.

FINE, DOWN & OUT

The other threat to the PCs' lives had to be, well, a threat to their lives, but I wanted something more immediate than the existing harm system from **Apocalypse World**: I didn't want players to sit round strategising based on how much damage they could take, I wanted them to be saying, "Shit, I've been stabbed! Drop the gear and let's get out of here!" There had to be risk in every single violent confrontation, otherwise violence would quickly become the answer to everything: there was a moment in the design process when there were only two states a character could be in, alive or dead, but I decided to soften that for the sake of game play.

Fortunately by this point in the process, Tommy Rayburn had taken an interest and was working on the design and layout of the hack with a view to eventual publication: he asked a lot of questions about how things worked and the answers I gave to Tommy eventually became the rules for going down and out. The Feelgood's healing move existed before the details about being down and out were finalised: Tommy asked how the Feelgood could heal you from being out if that meant you were already dead, so not only was the move in that playbook modified as a result, but the descriptions of being fine, down and out got a make-over, to clarify that you could take a lot of punishment and still be fine; you're only down when you can't move without help.

The tighter definition of those states also fed back into some of the moves: it was easier to see the difference between **taking the hard way** and **getting rough** once it became clear that you could rough someone up incidentally, without causing them any serious, lasting harm. Tommy also suggested the street doctor, a back street surgeon the criminal underclass could call upon for their medical needs, which made sense as a playbook that would have something to do in **the 'hood**: where there's a wound, there's someone with a needle & thread and a bill.

PLAYBOOKS

It was this feedback phase that led to the number of playbooks ballooning to the vast number of 18: I originally set myself the goal of writing 12 and these were the Bastion, Blur, Fallen, Feelgood, Go-Between, Heavy, Ice, Lever, Merchant, Mover, Thief & Trickster. The last of those soon evolved from being a basic confidence trickster to the professional scam artist that became the Schemer; similarly, the Lever was originally more focused on face-to-face confrontations, but his moves were changed to give him more scope when one group of volunteer playtesters said it wasn't clear what the character was meant to be. When Charles

Perez suggested adding the Pimp, that went hand in hand with the idea of treating some NPCs as resources, which fed back into the Feelgood: named NPC sub-types (users, hoes, debtors, kids and flock...) became a thing that the 'Hood did. The Shark popped up in response to refinements in the economic model, which brought the total to 14, but while Tommy was busy choosing the right images to illustrate those character types, I created four more: Tommy suggested some ideas for a cybercriminal and a back-street surgeon, so we thrashed out what the Hacker and the Quack would be able to bring to the party. Also, when I was first discussing the hack on story-games.com, two users put forward the idea of a non-criminal resident of the 'hood who just happened to get drawn into the crimes of the other PCs. It took me a while to warm to the idea, but eventually something clicked and the Neighbour was born, whose hook was having the misfortune to live next door to one of the other characters. Finally, the Rebel sprang from my own desire to have a character who reflected the lives of many of the young people I worked with professionally, someone who had been exposed to the harsh realities of life at an early age and embraced those ways regardless of the intervention of responsible adults.

DEBT & PAYBACK

Getting by in the 'hood isn't just about what you owe, it's about who you owe: at almost every step in every scheme, you've got to be thinking *who is this gonna piss off? And how can I sweeten things with them again?* It's about more than just money, there's the complex tangle of favours and the history of trust and betrayal to work through. Debt began life as just a placeholder name for the standard Hx rules from Apocalypse World: one of the underlying principles of the 'Hood is that it's all about the money, so it seemed natural to reflect that in the terms used where possible. Whereas history says you *know* each other, debt says you *owe* each other, but to begin with there wasn't more to it than that shift in emphasis for colour purposes. Debt first became an alternative advancement track when I was still playing about with the relationship between heat and experience; it struck me that part of growing up in the 'hood was learning tricks from your friends, or just dropping them right in it and taking advantage of them.

Debt advancements are all about getting something back from another PC for all the trouble they've caused you: it might be a small favour, like getting the best deal possible from them, or it could be a big thing like getting them to take the rap for you when you're close to being burned. The debt advancement track makes it easier to get moves from other playbooks, but it limits your choices to the playbooks your friends have: you can't

just learn stuff out of thin air, you've got to have been watching someone else at work before you can do it.

Payback was never planned as part of the hack, it just emerged organically as I was writing moves down: something I have trouble with is coming up with consequences that are more narratively interesting than 'Take +1/-1 forward,' so in a couple of places I wrote things like "You've pissed someone off" or "You're going to owe someone for this." As I was going through the text on the second or third draft, I noticed there was an underlying principle there and decided to codify it in the rules: it took a couple of versions before I settled on the simple idea of the payback box you wrote names down in, but once I'd done so, it unlocked a lot of potential in many other moves, especially unique moves from playbooks like The Feelgood, The Pimp and The Go-Between. From an MC's point of view, the payback box is a really powerful storytelling tool, as it constantly asks questions of the players:

- *Who is this person and how do you know them?*
- *How are they affected by what you've done?*
- *What are they going to want from you when they come to collect?*

The only limit on how many names you can have in your payback box is the number of people that your character knows: every time you're told to mark someone for payback, you can make up another NPC, so you need never run out. The deal the MC offers you is, "Sure, you can do that, but first tell me who you've upset and how," then they get to throw that back at you later when you need it least.

DOUGH & LOOT

Money is a privative: if you've got lots of it, you hardly notice it's there, but when it's all gone, nothing else could matter to you more. It's the oil that lubricates the machinery of Western culture, making everything spin around that much more easily, but crushing a lot of us in the process. From the outset of designing this game, there was no doubt that money would be of central interest to the characters: they all want more of it, but just as importantly, they don't want to run out of it. The straightforward way to handle this would have been to work out how much everything cost in the game (including the living expenses for each of the characters) and then award the PCs money for doing certain things, especially any jobs supported by their playbooks. With that information in place, the game's economy would have taken care of itself and there would have been very clear markers for what each character could afford to do next.

I didn't do that for a couple of very good reasons, the first and foremost being that I play storygames to have fun and explore the lives of the characters in a given set of situations, not to simulate real-life to the finest degree; I really have a strong aversion to excessive bean-counting in RPGs, so a realistic money mechanic was as attractive to me as one for tracking how hungry the characters were, how many calories they got from what they ate and when they should take a dump.

The second reason I decided against an income & expenses model was that if you give players a score to track, someone will immediately see that as the way to 'win' and will look for ways to game the system to do so. I also wasn't confident in my ability to keep a detailed economy balanced and was aware that, not only could one big payoff upset the apple-cart, but a series of smaller payoffs plus any overlooked or underestimated expenses would have the same result. It looked like a headache to crunch the numbers and my personal rule for game design is that it shouldn't cause me any pain, so there was never going to be any chance of a system like this being used in the 'Hood.

One idea I seriously toyed with for a while was not to have any mechanical representation of wealth or money in the game, but to handle it all narratively: purchases and expenses could be handwaved ("Well, sure, you've had no problem with your business this week, so you can afford to buy a round of drinks") and any big payoffs would just reposition the character in the narrative, giving them more leverage in situations involving money but also making them a bigger, juicier fish to be caught and gutted.

After an involved and detailed exchange on this subject with **DWeird** on the **Barf Forth Apocalyptica** forums, during which I considered using dough as a stat you rolled against to buy stuff and get other things done, I gravitated back towards a more abstract representation of how much money you had but with the addition of the concepts of **getting by** and being **short**. Now it's time to put my hands up and confess how my love of wordplay and my inability to come up with lists of 'Looks' for all the playbooks contributed to this decision: when it became apparent that the characters should be concerned with protecting their livelihoods, I thought of the idea of each playbook having a unique revenue stream that could be threatened by outside events. There were a few instances of this which were immediately obvious and which had already crept into some of the playbooks, such as mention in the Feelgood's moves of interrupting their supply of drugs, so I latched onto the idea and looked for a way to formalise it in the rules. Each playbook would need a separate entry for this, just

as each one has a separate entry for sex moves in **Apocalypse World** and **Monsterhearts**, so I looked at the design I had roughed out, trying to spot a place to put in a statement about how the character earned their living... and there was the word 'Looks' staring up at me from a space that was nearly blank as I was struggling to fill it. Something in the back of my mind popped up with the word 'Loot' as an appropriate substitution and the principle of protecting your livelihood became part of the hack forevermore; I still find it a challenge writing an appropriate Loot entry for each new playbook but it's much less work for me than coming up with lists of Looks for each one!

Finalising the rules for dough was a much harder, longer road, with lots of false starts and dead ends along the way, as there were two driving factors to contend with: the need to mark the character's level of wealth within the game versus my own preference for keeping things at a story level rather than a mechanistic one. A recent campaign I'd run for a few friends was strongly influencing my thinking: we'd played the world's first **Dead of Night** campaign and, despite having absolutely no way of tracking wealth or status in the game, one of the characters had risen from a petty criminal to Pope of a new religion within the space of 8 weeks of play, all as a result of the narrative path we'd followed, taking the consequences of each scene and building on them episode by episode. I really enjoyed that and wanted to provide the same space for stories to take place within my hack; I didn't want the rules to restrict the stories we could tell about the characters and felt that no-one should reach a point where they couldn't take the next logical step in their character's development because the rules counter-indicated it.

In the end, it took about two weeks of private thought and public discussion on the subject before I settled on the almost-abstract treatment of dough as it is now: I was much happier to use it as an indicator of your general level of wealth than as an exact count of your money. There's no hard and fast correlation between money and dough because there shouldn't be, they're two different things: dough is about more than the currency in your pocket, it's also about your credit cards, your pre-paid mobile contracts, your insurance & investments, your on-going payments on your house and your car... in short, it's about everything that has monetary value in your character's life, not just the money itself. This made it easier to describe how being short affected you: previously, it was hard to reconcile this with having a lot of dough and there was the option to take -1 dough instead of having your livelihood threatened, but the two sides of the economic model still didn't quite line up and there were gaps between them which were creating edge cases that needed more

and more spot rulings to patch up.

With the current model, it's easier to see how a character with a lot of dough can still be short: sure, you've got all the trappings of wealth, but if you've just paid your bills in anticipation of a big score that actually falls through, then you can have all the perks of a well-off person but still not be able to afford a ride on the bus or do your weekly shop. Dough is about the big money in your life, but protecting your livelihood keeps change in your pockets.

The 'Hood still isn't done: there are more playbooks to be produced (though we may never see *The Meddler*), not to mention all the unique moves I hope are being created by everyone who plays. I don't regard this hack as something static, it's not a finished project I can ever shelve: there will always, I hope, be more to say about **the 'hood** and the lives of its residents for as long as someone, somewhere is playing this game, so stay sharp, be ready and take what you can get while you can get it.

James Mullen, September 15th 2014



THE
'HOOD

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

BASIC MOVES

Ask around, roll+name. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- What you find isn't quite what you expected.
- You find out where it is, but you'll have to fetch it yourself.
- There are strings attached to acquiring it.
- You owe someone for this; mark them for payback.

Cover your tracks, roll+hush. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+ choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- It takes a long time.
- It can be traced back to you.
- You need someone's help; take +1 debt with them.

Take the hard way, roll+brass. On a hit, choose options. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2:

- Take +1 heat.
- You've made a new enemy; mark them for payback.
- Take -1 forward.

Take the heat off, roll+brass. On a hit, deflect 1heat to another PC. On a 7-9, they gain +1 debt with you.

Argue the toss, roll+wise. For NPCs, on a 10+ they just do it your way, while on a 7-9, mark them for payback if they do it your way; for PCs, on a 10+, they mark experience if they do it or take +1 heat if they don't, while on a 7-9, they take +1 debt with you if they do it and -1 debt with you if they don't.

Go to Plan B, roll+wise. On a hit, the MC gives you a way out of whatever trouble you're in; choose options if you take it. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, choose 2.

- You have to leave someone behind.
- You don't get what you came for.
- Your livelihood is threatened.

Lie low, roll+straight. On a hit, take -1 heat. On a 10+, you may also take an additional -1 heat but you owe someone for this; mark them for payback. On a 7-9, you only take -1 heat and you owe someone for this; mark them for payback.

PERIPHERAL MOVES

When you **make trouble**, roll+heat. On a hit, friends or family turn their backs on you; on a 12+, take +1 heat; on a 7-9, you can mark them for payback and they don't turn their backs on you.

When you **cross a partner**, they take +1 debt with you.

When you **double-cross**, use your special move.

When you **pay cash**, spend dough and mark experience; take a 10+ on any move right now but with no consequences, e.g. choose none.

When you **get rough**, roll+edge. On a 10+, take your opponent **down**. On a 7-9, choose 1.

- They take -1 forward.
- They back off.
- They're **down** but you take -1 ongoing for this situation.

When you **open fire**, roll+lead. On a 10+, take your opponent **out** and take +1 heat. On a 7-9, take your opponent **down** and choose 1.

- Take +1 heat.
- Dump the weapon you used.
- Leave without getting what you came for.

Mark experience when:

- You restore your livelihood.
- You **take heat**.
- Your debt reaches more than +3 with another PC (see below)

When your **debt with another PC rises to more than +3**, reset it to zero and choose one:

- Mark experience.
- Choose a move from that PC's playbook.
- Move an NPC from your payback box to theirs.
- Swap all of your heat for all of theirs.
- Make a deal with that PC: they must do what you want, but they can **argue the toss** over the precise terms.

Whenever **experience reaches 5**, reset experience to zero and choose one:

- Choose a move from your playbook.
- Take +1 in any stat (max:+2)
- Advance a basic move.
- Advance a move from your playbook.

THREAT 1

IS CALLED:

GEAR:

DOUGH:

DESCRIPTION & CAST:

CUSTOM MOVE:

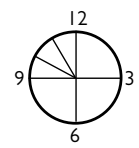
HEAT: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

STATUS: FINE ☒

DOWN ☐

OUT ☐

COUNTDOWN



THREAT 2

IS CALLED:

GEAR:

DOUGH:

DESCRIPTION & CAST:

CUSTOM MOVE:

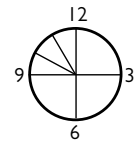
HEAT: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

STATUS: FINE ☒

DOWN ☐

OUT ☐

COUNTDOWN



'THE HOME FRONT'

IS CALLED:

TARGET:

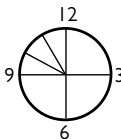
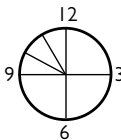
BASIS:

DESCRIPTION & CAST:

AUTHORITY	SYNDICATE	CAMPAIGN	BUSINESS	CLAN	OTHER
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

QUESTIONS:

OVERALL COUNTDOWN(S):



NPC: _____	\$
KNOWN TO PC:	
LIVE/WORK:	
INFO:	
DEBT/PAYBACK:	
STATUS FINE ☒ DOWN ☐ OUT ☐	

NPC: _____	\$
KNOWN TO PC:	
LIVE/WORK:	
INFO:	
DEBT/PAYBACK:	
STATUS FINE ☒ DOWN ☐ OUT ☐	

NPC: _____	\$
KNOWN TO PC:	
LIVE/WORK:	
INFO:	
DEBT/PAYBACK:	
STATUS FINE ☒ DOWN ☐ OUT ☐	

SESSION ____ NOTES

DATE:

PLAYERS:

FRONTS USED:

INFO: