



CRIME

OF THE



WEEK



**A ROLEPLAYING GAME
FOR ONE PERSON**

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Designed in the U.S.A.



CRIME OF THE WEEK

(a police procedural RPG for one person)

Requirements

- These rules
- A printout of the playmat (the last page of this document)
- A deck of playing cards (including jokers)
- Your imagination
- At least a passing familiarity with police procedurals such as:

The Mentalist	Law & Order	Walker, Texas Ranger
NYPD Blue	NCIS	Dexter
CSI	Burn Notice	Miami Vice
Luther	Monk	Hawaii Five-0
Homicide	Quincy, M.E.	The Shield
21 Jump Street	Hill Street Blues	Castle
Leverage	Justified	Dragnet

The Game

You are a US Marshal, Federal Agent, former spy, crime scene investigator, or local police officer. You have been recently transferred/blacklisted/assigned to a new unit and assigned a new partner or reconnected with an old friend. You are feeling out your role in the new world you find yourself in. Your goal is to serve the public trust, to protect the innocent, and to uphold the law, as much as possible.

Since the people in charge of your current assignment do not have the manpower to be pro-active, your real role in fighting crime is pretty much relegated to responding to **cases** that are handed to you by your *Desk Sergeant*.

Violence is more common in some shows and book series than in others, so set the dial as you wish, from nonviolent or off-screen violence to violent and action-packed shootouts.

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The Setting

You can take a look at the examples above and play in one of those worlds, combine different series to make your own, create one whole cloth from your head, or, if you'd prefer a more random setting, you can take a look at the list below. Pick one from each column to provide your basic setting or draw three cards at random. The value of the first card is the location. The value of the second is your character's role. The value of the third is their motivation. You can use the suits as dials for violence.

<u>Card</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Motivation</u>
2-4	Big City	Federal Agent	Revenge
5-6	Small Town	Local Law Enforcement	Justice
7-8	Rural	Crime Scene Investigator	Duty
9-10	International	Spy	Patriotism
J-Q	Suburbia	Criminal turned Hero	Atonement
K-A	Neighborhood	Vigilante	Brotherhood

- ♥ Daytime tv shows / TV-PG / PG (Quincy/Monk)
- ♦ Primetime tv shows / TV-14 / PG-13 (21 Jump Street/Hill Street Blues)
- ♣ Late-night tv shows / TV-MA / R (NYPD Blue/Justified)
- ♠ Cable tv shows / TV-MA / NC-17 (Dexter/The Wire)

The Setup

1. Place the Jokers aside. These will remain out as Trump cards.
2. Shuffle the deck fairly.
3. Separate the deck into two packets of 26 cards.
4. On the playmat provided, place one packet on the *Desk Sergeant* deck and the other on the *Draw* deck.
5. Deal five cards from your *Draw* deck. This is your hand.
6. Turn up the top card of the *Desk Sergeant* deck. This is the value of the first **case**.

The Rules

1. Number cards are worth their index value. Jacks are 11, Queens 12, Kings 13, Aces 14.
 - a. You're essentially playing a modified version of the card game "War" against the *Desk Sergeant* deck, but remember that the point is to roleplay and create a narrative, not just beat the deck in a card game. Even losing should be fun.
2. Trump cards - Jokers have a value of 15. They can be played at any time on any **case**, but once played, they are permanently removed from the game. Use them wisely.
3. You have two moves
 - a. Investigate (black cards) - and -
 - b. Arrest (red cards).
4. The color of the cards played from the *Desk Sergeant's* deck does not determine what the **case** is (although it may affect the outcome of the challenge). Instead, the **case** is decided by which of the two moves you play.

The Moves



Investigate - When you are first presented with a **case**, you have to do some leg-work. Canvas the neighborhood, perform surveillance, obtain search warrants, interview witnesses, and otherwise build up your information. Even though this is a solo game, try to challenge yourself. It is to your benefit to rack up as many clues as you can before arresting a criminal. When you are prepared to Investigate a crime, determine what information you would like to know, then play a black card from your hand.

- ♠ Compare your card value to the *Desk Sergeant* card and do the math.
- ♣ The net result is the number of clues you've managed to unravel. Make them up, then follow them. Examples include:
 - ♠ Hideouts - abandoned factories, drug warehouses, industrial complexes, private mansions, or even local corporate headquarters
 - ♠ Number of criminals and types of associates - not just how many, but also their rank or role within an organization
 - ♠ Types of crime/angles - grand theft, bank robbery, illegal drug distribution, looting, illegal parking, brandishing a weapon, inciting a riot, murder, terrorism, or assault
 - ♠ Weapons loadouts - From pea shooters to shotguns, from

small single-shot revolvers to large high caliber machine guns, from baseball bats to military cannons

- ♠ Pathologies/motivations - sociopathy, organized crime, government secrets/conspiracies, corporate influence, drug distribution, nihilism, personal glory, self-protection, corruption, or sadism
- ♣ If your card value is higher than the *Desk Sergeant's*, all the clues you've found are correct. Collect both cards and place them in your discard pile.
- ♣ If your card is a lower value than the *Desk Sergeant's*, half of the clues you've found (rounded up) are wrong in some fashion. Maybe the witnesses are lying, or perhaps the criminals you're after have left false information to throw you off their trail. Collect both cards and place them aside into a discard pile for the *Desk Sergeant*.
- ♣ If the *Desk Sergeant* card is of the same suit as your card, add one clue. A witness remembers a detail, a search yields something unexpected, or some other event provides you with some extra information. You decide.
- ♣ If the *Desk Sergeant* card is red, lose one clue. A witness is killed, a location is a dead-end, or a piece of evidence is misfiled, contaminated, stolen, or in some other way rendered unusable. You decide.
- ♣ In the event of a tie play out the "war." Deal out three face-down cards from your *Draw* deck, and play a card from your hand. Treat it as though it was the same suit as the first card you played. Then deal out three face-down cards from the *Desk Sergeant* deck, and turn a fourth card face-up. Compare the values and proceed as above. A win means you collect all the cards into your discard pile. Due to your excellent and timely policework, you gain three extra clues. A loss means the *Desk Sergeant* collects all the cards into its discard pile. Something along the line was botched and some of your clues have lead to a total dead end: Lose three of your clues.
- ♣ Keep track of how many clues you have and what they are, good or bad. Then move on to the next **case**. Turn up the top card of the *Desk Sergeant* deck and place it on top. Deal cards from your *Draw* deck until you have five cards in your hand.



Arrest - When you find yourself face-to-face with criminals, it is time to Arrest them. Even though this is a solo game, try to challenge yourself. Use the clues you created to guide your fight. An Arrest can range from a simple compliance to verbal threats to actual violence. These criminals are extremely well-armed and likely to resist arrest at all costs. Thus the game encourages violence, as much as you can stand, but it is not actually required if you would prefer otherwise. When you're ready to Arrest a criminal, determine your ideal outcome first, then play a red card.

- ♥ Example: My ideal outcome is to track down the motorcycle gang that knocked over a drugstore and walked out with cash, liquor, and a stockpile of chemicals for making methamphetamine. I want to arrest the ring-leader and collect all the evidence possible before it is destroyed. I know the gang was holed up in a bar where they had a meth cook that worked for them, that their weapons are mostly low caliber pistols with a shotgun or two in the area, and that the meth cook hasn't yet begun, so there isn't too much danger when going in guns blazing.
- ♥ Compare your card value to the *Desk Sergeant's*.
 - ♦ Clues learned from Investigation affect the Arrest. For every five correct clues you have, add one to your card value. For every five incorrect clues, subtract one from your total.
 - ♦ If the *Desk Sergeant* card is of the same suit as your card, add one to your total.
 - ♦ If the *Desk Sergeant* card is black, subtract one from your total.
- ♥ Do the math.
 - ♦ If your total is higher than the Desk Sergeant's:
 - ♥ And the difference is greater than 5, whatever you wanted to happen, happens. Winning by a lot can mean you took out multiple assailants, one big bad, or succeeded in spectacular fashion, however the clues and your ideal outcome set it up. When this Arrest is over, you have found one clue that can carry over into your next **case**. This crime is linked to something larger.
 - ♦ Example: I shot and wounded four of the gang members while my partner was able to get the drop on the leader. He stonewalled in interrogation, but the arrest was made of all involved, including the cook,

and all chemicals were processed into evidence.
There's more to this **case** than these criminals.

- ♥ And the difference is less than 5, it was a close call. Maybe the big bad got away, was really just a pawn, or you took some minor injuries in the process. You decide. When this Arrest is over, you have found one clue that can carry over into your next **case**. This crime is linked to something larger.
 - ♦ Example: When my partner and I stormed the place, I stumbled over an end table. The cook managed to get away with the gang leader, but I was able to shoot three of the gang members while my partner secured the evidence. There's more to this **case** than these criminals.
- ♥ Collect both cards and place them in your discard pile.
- ♦ If your total is lower than the Desk Sergeant's
 - ♥ And the difference is less than 5, it was a close call. Maybe the big bad got away, was really just a pawn, or you took some minor injuries in the process. You decide. Something along the line was botched, and the big bad in this arrest was able to get in touch with his boss. This **case** is the end of this particular chain you may have been developing. When the Arrest is over, discard all your clues and begin a new **case**.
 - ♦ Example: When my partner and I stormed the place, my gun discharged prematurely. The cook managed to get away with the gang leader. I was able to shoot three of the gang members, but my partner failed to secure the evidence. End of the line on this **case**.
 - ♥ And the difference is greater than 5, you got out alive, but otherwise failed completely. Something along the line was botched, and the big bad in this arrest was able to get in touch with his boss. Maybe you got shot, you or your partner were captured, or you killed an innocent. You decide. Whatever else happens, the criminals you were Arresting

got away. This **case** is the end of this particular chain you may have been developing. When the Arrest is over, discard all your clues and begin a new **case**.

- ◆ Example: Instead of waiting for backup, which was going to take too long, my partner and I stormed in. I took a shotgun blast to the heavy bulletproof armor and was knocked out of the fight completely. My partner managed to protect both of us, but in the process she shot the meth cook dead, which caused the burner he was working on to ignite prematurely. We barely made it out alive before the building caught fire, and the gang got away. End of the line on this **case**.
- ♥ Collect both cards and place them the discard pile for the *Desk Sergeant*.
- ◆ In the event of a tie play out the “war.” Deal out three face-down cards from your *Draw* deck, and play a card from your hand. Treat it as though it was the same suit as the first card you played. Then deal out three face-down cards from the *Desk Sergeant* deck, and turn a fourth card face-up. Compare the values and proceed in the usual fashion with the following additions.
 - ♥ A win means you place all the cards in your discard pile. Due to your excellent and timely policework, you find three new clues that you take into your next **case**.
 - ♥ A loss means the *Desk Sergeant* collects all the cards into its discard pile. End of the line on this **case**.
- ♥ Whether you won or lost, the fight is over. Book the live criminals, call in the coroner for the dead ones, call in backup to save your partner, your partner manages to save you, whatever. Your part in the fight is over.
- ♥ Move on to the next **case**. If you found a clue during the Arrest (by winning), carry that into your next Investigation. Otherwise a new crime is being investigated, and all your previously built up clues are no longer useful for you. Turn up the top card of the *Desk Sergeant* deck and place it on top. Deal cards from your *Draw* deck until you have five cards in your hand.

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Ending - Short game



If your discard pile has more cards in it than the *Desk Sergeant's* discard pile, you win. You live through the week, protecting the innocents and providing justice wherever it is needed. Maybe your employers reward you. Maybe they bring you in from the cold. Maybe you get a promotion to Special-Agent-in-Charge.



If the *Desk Sergeant's* discard pile has more cards than your discard pile, you lose. You or someone you love has been killed in the line of duty. Whatever happened, your will to fight for justice is no longer strong enough to perform your duties.

Ending - Long game



If you manage to collect all of the *Desk Sergeant* deck, you win. You live through the week, protecting the innocents and providing justice wherever it is needed. Maybe your employers reward you. Maybe they bring you in from the cold. Maybe you get a promotion to Special-Agent-in-Charge. You decide.



If the *Desk Sergeant* deck manages to capture all of your cards, you lose. You or someone you love has been killed in the line of duty. Whatever happened, your will to fight for justice is no longer strong enough to perform your duties. You decide.

Ending - Even longer games!

If you lose in either the short or longer games, you can choose to keep playing, but your role has changed significantly. You're now an outsider even among the people you used to call your friends.

Shuffle and re-deal all the cards. You are starting completely over, except this time you have even less support than you had before. You're on your own, pal. The gameplay is identical except for the endgame.



If you win the second time through, you manage to regain the respect of your peers and loved ones. You have clawed your way back into the good graces of the law, and are back on the force or in the fold. Congratulations.



If you lose the second time through, you are dead. No ifs, ands, or buts.

