

Material World

INTRODUCTION

Material World is the roleplaying game of corporations and their brands struggling for the hearts and minds of the brainwashed public, whose whims can shift billions of dollars at a moment's notice. The corporate world is in constant turmoil, as brand managers, lawyers, advertisers, and private commandos attempt to gain ground for their Brands, pushing other Brands out of the public awareness. This conflict hinges on the player characters, who are the only people with enough Cool Stuff to decide the world's fate.

Stuff you will need to play Material World

All you will need is a bunch of 3x5 cards, a bunch of 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper and something to write with.

Try to get into right state of mind before playing Material World

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Read Adbusters. Seek out the most outraged article you can find and read it. While doing so, attempt to abandon any critical facilities you may have developed. Try to feel exactly like the author does, and then go him one better.
2. Read just about anything by Chuck Palahniuk. Just keep opening the book to random pages until you find one that has some kind of brand name or business practice on it. Try to be as shocked as you can about the bizarre and callous true

nature of our society. Again, shut down any critical facilities, and also try to keep an open mind toward psychopathy as a potential cure for society's ills.

3. Do a Google search for words like "public relations", "advertising", "conspiracy", "environment", "suicide", "right wing", "money", "fuck", "shit", "Berkley", "anarchist" in different combinations until you find some good material. Try reading a paragraph from one, switching to a different page, reading a paragraph from that one, etc, until you're thoroughly confused as to who's actually doing what, but are convinced they're all up to no good.

Now that you've got vibe, take it to a mythical 1985 Los Angeles, California.

The game is set in the 80's because all those crazy branding and P.R. techniques you should be thinking about were mostly formulated in the mid 80s. People were generally not aware of them yet, and they were used in much more clumsy and obvious ways. The game is set in Los Angeles because it is a nerve center of America's media. Most of the what happens in this game bears little resemblance to actual P.R. or advertising, and that is on purpose: Material World is meant to be played as a caricature of those fields, with ads that balloon up to dwarf the greatest human achievements and public relations officers who schedule secret wars to derail each other's campaigns.

1985 LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles is the absolute dead center of the entire universe and it has been 1985 for as long as any of us can remember. Every organization even worth passing mention has got a HQ here, including the United States government and the Soviet Union, and all of their calendars flip directly from December 1985 to January 1985. I'm not sure why time stopped, and really, it doesn't matter, just as long as Los Angeles is the bright and shining engine of commerce it is, beating back the forces of entropy one credit card purchase at a time.

It will continue to be so as long as we've got the Brands. You know, those little symbols that they stamp on the crap they're trying to sell to make it magically worth more than it was before. That's what makes the big guys like Sony, Guess, Ferrari, and the rest the incredibly rich able to stay as rich as they are now: the ability to tell the average guy that the Brand is the only thing standing between him and a completely meaningless existence.

That's what it all comes down to. Every brain out there that's hooked up to the media system (that we build right here, in Los Tangelos) needs the Brands to tell them to keep working, keep productive, because the Brands have so many great new things to do for them. It's a struggle to keep them all focused on your message. Sometimes, people get killed in the struggle.

That's okay. We all have to do our best. Since everything is already being manufactured as efficiently as possible, delivered without delay, and needs replacement as soon as the consumer's expectations of quality allow, the only thing left to make one product better than other is how we feel about it. Every piece of the consumer's brain is our battleground, and this is war. This is one of the few ways that actual wealth can change hands, and without it, it would just be the same batch of Harvard suits making each other rich a million times over. Yawn. That's not the American Dream.

THE PEOPLE

There are four types of people in the world.

Three of them are basically the same.

Mooks

Mooks are your average Joes. Regular, hardworking Americans. They have ties to their communities and abide by their standards. They are vaguely aware of political trends but feel a little vulnerable talking about them. They play games they bought at Sears, drive Ford Taurus's, drink Pepsi, and watch their Sony TVs. They are worried about their jobs, their families, and declining moral standards. In short, total fucking morons.

The Mooks are like water. They are constantly following the path of least resistance to the lowest point possible. They get up in the morning, go to work for the Brand, go home, spend their money on the Brand, be as happy as the Brand tells them to be, but then the Brand tells them they're not happy enough, so they go back to work for the Brand, so they can get all the things the Brand tells them they need. They are cogs in the machine that was built to keep them out of trouble.

The Mooks are constantly swept along the currents of 1985's economy, oblivious to the Brands that fight and die for their precious, precious attention. Each 1% of a Mook's brainshare has been attacked, conquered, counterattacked, fortified, and then completely overrun so many times it makes Hamburger Hill look like Disneyland. If you want to know what's on a Mook's mind, try turning on your TV. Everything there continues to be able to afford ad space because it's Brand continues to hold brainshare.

Somebody also needs to keep society running smoothly so we all can enjoy modern, faith-based technology such as insurance and credit. These guys are also Mooks, but they've been given some Stuff, maybe even some Cool Stuff, and the Brands tell them to be tough so they are. The police, soldiers, bouncers, bodyguards, security guards, you know, meatheads.

Demi-Mooks

Some Mooks find that not every single one of their peculiar peccadilloes are catered to by existent Brands. These poor souls feel at odds with the world around them. They are precious snowflakes constantly being melted into the sea of humanity. They become punks, gangsters, rock stars, experimental artists, etc, etc. This used to be a real problem. Now, the Brands realize that all these people really want is something different to buy. So, they make their Rebellion Brand merchandise just for these sorts of people. The Brands make sure that the kind of stuff the Demis like is constantly freaking out the regular Mooks. There, everybody's happy.

Super-Mooks

Mooks generally keep the Mooks in line, but who watches the watchers? Usually Super-Mooks. Guys who know a little about how the world works, but are too terrified, pacified, or moneyed to try to change anything. Police Detectives, Brand Managers,

Advertisers, Politicians, and Spies are all generally Super-Mooks. They generally have some Cool Stuff related to the job they do. Super-Mooks are always watching each other in case they might become one of Us.

Us

We're iconoclasts. We're badasses. We understand what's going on, and what's more, We're the only ones with enough Cool Stuff to shift the balance of power between the Brands. Besides other Brands, I guess. Why We want to is another story. I do it for money. Either get hired, or find somebody to squeeze. Mercenary work's more reliable, if you ask me.

COOL STUFF

The Cool Stuff is the only thing separating Us from the Mooks. Besides knowing how the world works, which is going to get you exactly dick without some Cool Stuff to back it up. So what is the Cool Stuff? It's anything that gives Us an advantage. It can be a matchbook with Madonna's phone number written on it. It can be a handgun that can blow a guy's head clean off. It can be diamonds on the soles of your shoes. It can be almost anything, as long as it's cool and you can carry it around with you, or at least drive it. We'll cover the "almost" in the next section.

Every character starts with some Cool Stuff. The character has all the skills and knowledge necessary to use the Cool Stuff it has. If you want to give a character a certain skill or profession, the only way to represent it mechanically is by giving him the Cool Stuff related to the skill. Characters can gain more Cool Stuff up to the maximum Cool Stuff value for the game, and after that, they have to lose existing Cool Stuff in order to get new Cool Stuff.

Each Cool Thing has three descriptors, which define how it works.

Ideal For: What the Cool Thing is perfectly suited to do.

Good For: What the Cool Thing does well. These might be side effects of it's Ideal For. They might be incidental benefits of possessing it. They might be improvisational uses that can always be pulled off.

Lousy For: What it can't do well, but might still do anyway. These are the edges of a Cool Thing's usefulness. They work only half the time.

Every Cool Thing has a few negative qualities. These can be limits on its usage, illegality, leaving a unique signature, or just large size. Negative qualities in Good For are always in effect. Negative qualities in Lousy For only kick in half the time.

Every Cool Thing also has an Origin. This describes where the Cool Thing comes from and how the character got it. Each Origin should point back to a contact or mentor a character knows, an event in his past, or place where he could go.

STARTING COOL STUFF

Every character starts with 5 Cool Things. The Cool Stuff maximum is set the by GM at the start of the game. It can be any amount, but I suggest 10 Cool Things. That gives you a couple interesting treks for more Cool Stuff, but doesn't allow you to get carried away. It should also be noted that this limit applies only to Cool Stuff.

Where do you get new Cool Stuff? The obvious place is where you got your existing Cool Stuff. Check your Origins. Then check the other player's Origins. Then check the map. Just decide on one of these places, and that becomes the Origin for the new Cool Stuff. A character should gain one Cool Thing for each scene initiated expressly for that purpose.

HOW TO CREATE COOL STUFF

Every Cool Thing needs to be well defined as to exactly what it is and how it accomplishes what it is Ideal For, Good For and Lousy For. The concept must fit with the Origin and must inform its descriptors. If it is not obvious what size and shape it is, make sure to include those in the description. The easiest way is to simply compare it to something else.

A cool thing has, by default, one thing it is Ideal For, two things it is Good For, one thing it is Lousy For, a negative Good For, and a negative Lousy For. The negatives are generally passive effects that make the item unsuitable for different situations or conditions that have to be fulfilled before you can use the item. You can add to extra uses into each of these categories by taking additional negative effects. See chart.

Add one Ideal For	Add two Good For negatives
Add one Good For	Add one Good For negative or two Lousy For negatives
Add one Lousy For	Add one Lousy For negative

Once you've got all this worked out, write it down on a 3x5 card.

Like this:

Mono-Wire Cutter

An axe-sized industrial monofilament-wire cutting tool that has been lovingly hacksawed off some machine somewhere. Ergonomic grip expertly crafted from a pocketful of rubber bands. Covered in rust, but the mono-wire edge never dulls.

Ideal For: Cutting anything.

Good For: Melee combat, intimidation, not fitting under your jacket.

Lousy For: Precise cutting, getting you arrested.

This Cool Thing has plenty of uses. It can chop down doors, cut the chain on the bike you want or scare off the local thugs. However, the combination of not being easily concealable and attracting cops 50% of the time make it “sometimes” type of item.

LIMITS ON COOL STUFF

There are some limits on what Cool Stuff a character can have. No one piece of Cool Stuff can do everything that’s going to need doing.

Limit 1: Must fit the technological limits of the setting.

What are the limits of mythical 1985 technology? Start with what was possible in 1980s cyberpunk novels. Add in any devices you can find in games like Cyberpunk 2020 and Shadowrun. Most of the Progress Level 6 D20/Alternity gadgets are in, but the vehicles are out.

Limit 2: Must get into a modern American city somehow.

How exactly did the character get a main battle tank? Where does he keep it when he’s not using it? Why doesn’t the National Guard shut down the entire city as soon as he rolls it out? Military grade vehicles are mostly out. Heavy military hardware, like missile launchers or suitcase nuclear bombs, are at the GM’s discretion, but are likely to attract too much heat for most characters to handle.

Limit 3: Must be carried by the character, or at least driven.

Nothing that can't fit in the character's car can go with him to Scenes, and therefore probably won't get used.

Limit 4: Nothing impresses everybody.

Items that give a character social rank or fake security clearance need to be defined as to whom they work on. Each use generally does not extend beyond a particular subculture or company. However, stuff that's intimidation works on anybody who doesn't have superior weaponry or numbers backing them up.

Limit 5: With weapons, all that power has to come from somewhere.

Guns have limited ammunition in the magazine. Lasers have limited batteries. Your laser pen might be able to melt off a pad lock, but it can't kill a man. Or if it can, it can only be used once. There's only one poison dart in your poison dart watch. If it's powerful enough to be Good For killing a room full of people, it's probably larger and less convenient than a pistol. If it's Ideal For killing a room full of people, it better be machinegun equivalent.

DRAWING THE MAP

Get out the 8 1/2 x 11 and 3x5s. Write the name of each corporation or Brand in the game on a 3x5 card. Draw big circles on the 8 1/2 x 11s, one for each area the Brands compete in. A few Brands should touch three circles, a few two, and a few only a single circle. Place a few counters in each circle and 3x5 card. These are brainshares.

The brainshare value represents the strength of the Brand and how valuable it is. The higher the brainshare, the more they can mark up a product simply for stamping their Brand on it. That means profits, which means continued existence for the Brand and jobs for all its employees. Unfortunately, your average Mook can only hold so many opinions, deeply held beliefs and gut feelings; so an increase in one Brand's brainshare usually means a decrease in another's.

Now, give each Brand some advantages and disadvantages. Celebrity spokesmen, cartoon mascots, ad campaigns, P.R., hipness, scandal, health studies, or a shoddy product are all things that could impact the Brand. Each is associated with a formula: +/- X Brainshare every Y scenes. Example: Product causes cancer: -2 brainshare every 2 scenes. Celebrity spokesman, Prince: +1 brainshare every scene. It is up to the GM to determine how effective these are. These should be balanced so that no company is going to collapse in the first few scenes, but some will eventually. If the Brands deplete the entire stock of brainshare, somebody has to decrease, putting brainshare in the circle, before anyone increases again. The Brands add and subtract brainshare according to their advantages and disadvantages going clockwise, starting at 12 o'clock. During the course

of the game, companies will try to gain advantages to keep them in brainshare and inflict disadvantages to eliminate the competition. Some of these will be single events that move brainshare around, and some will establish advantages/disadvantages.

Remember to advise the players before a scene starts of all the changes to brainshare that will happen at the end of the scene. The characters are connected guys, and they at least hear rumors of anything that's going to happen the next day.

THE APOCALYPSE

If meddling in the corporate underworld and trying to get rich becomes dull, here's a suggestion: end the world. The players can attempt to initiate the Apocalypse any time that every player and the GM agree to do so. The exact nature of the act that will end the world is left up to the GM. It might be the destruction or dissolution of the Soviet Union, the invention of crack, Communist revolution in California, or playing punk rock so punk it causes the end of the world. Whatever it is, the moment it happens, the calendar rolls over to 1986.

Besides the difficulty of the task itself, the characters should be opposed by every turn by the powers that be. They might not be winning in 1985, but at least they understand it. Who knows what the future might hold?

PLAYING THE GAME

At the start of the game, the GM introduces the map and relates it to the characters. The players spitball until they come to a consensus about what needs to be done next, and who does it, and where they go to try. The GM picks one guy to become the active player. The characters that are in the scene pile into somebody's car and drive over there. Then, it's time to start taking turns.

HOW A TURN PLAYS OUT

The active player takes the first turn. Then, the player on his right takes the next turn, and you continue around the table. It goes like this:

1. The active player pauses for a second to see who blurts out what advice, encouragement, denouncement, or whatever.
2. The players who aren't active just say anything they want. None of it "actually happens", that is, enters into the game as character action. It's just spitballing. Hopefully,

they come up with some actions the active character could take and some proposed consequences, as well as some color to apply to the description.

3. The active player gets five action points (APs). He uses these to declare things his character does or things that happen in the game world.

4. Everything the active player says is something that “happens” in game, and may cost him APs. He declares what he is doing and how it is resolved at the same time he spends his AP. Remember to resolve the coin toss for any Cool Stuff used for anything it is Lousy For before moving on. The exception to this is if the character uses his AP to say something or interact with the environment, after which, he pauses for the GM to describe the effect of his actions.

5. Once the active player has spent all of his APs, or decides not to use the rest of them, the GM has a chance to introduce new facts into the game.

6. The players consider the evolving situation and spitball what should be done about it. Then the player to the active player’s right becomes the active player, or, if the GM is to the player's right, the NPCs take a turn.

USE OF COOL STUFF AND SPENDING APS

A player with APs can use them in several ways. They can:

Use Cool Stuff. This takes a variable amount of AP depending on how it is used.

Something it is Ideal For: Two AP.

Something it is Good For: Three AP.

Something it is Lousy For: Three AP. When using Lousy For, flip a coin; if it comes up tails, the action fails and the APs are lost.

Movement. A character moves to a new part of an area for each AP spent.

Interact with the environment. Flip the switch, pull the lever, search a part of an area, etc.

Immediately after the player declares this, the GM describes the results of his action.

One AP.

Say something that has an effect. Regular speech and one liners have no cost. Saying things meant to have an immediate effect cost an AP, such as: "Everybody on the ground, this is a robbery!" or "Stop him, he's got a bomb!" Immediately after the player declares this, the GM describes the results of his action. One AP.

Add a detail to something in the SIS that previously didn't exist but aids the character somehow. Such as: "There's a key on the molding above the impenetrable blast door the Security Chief keeps there in case he loses his." These must either: be in the realm of possibility or get a laugh. Otherwise, they do not enter into the SIS. Five AP.

Bring a character not present in the scene into the scene. The character starts one area part away from the active character. One AP.

Make a getaway. The character must be in the same part of the area as a car he can use or have no opposition in the scene. This ends the scene if he is the last character in the area, or all other characters are in his car. One AP.

MOVEMENT AND PARTS OF THE AREA

Movement in Material World is handled by dividing an area into parts. Anyplace people might go in an area that they are not currently at is a different part. This can be near or far, but wherever the division of 'part' of an area is meaningful, it takes one AP to get there. This can be between hallways in an office building, between streets in the city, between the street and a shop, between the front room and the back office, or whatever the GM says.

Characters in different parts probably can't shoot or speak to each other, or else there's not enough difference in the 'parts'. Sometimes it is appropriate for them to do so, however, like shooting through the window display at people in the street, or out the attic window with your sniper rifle. If you're the GM, make sure to tell the players about this if you're going to have the NPCs do it. We don't get surprised, We surprise the Mooks, know what I mean?

THE MOOKS IN PLAY

All the NPCs take their turns at the same time. All NPCs which take the same action are treated as one NPC taking that action – there's no bonus for having greater numbers. When multiple NPCs use the same thing, it's resolved as one use. The only thing the advantage of numbers gives the Mooks is difficulty in getting rid of them fast enough. Other than that, they go just like We do, five APs and all.

GETTING WOUNDED

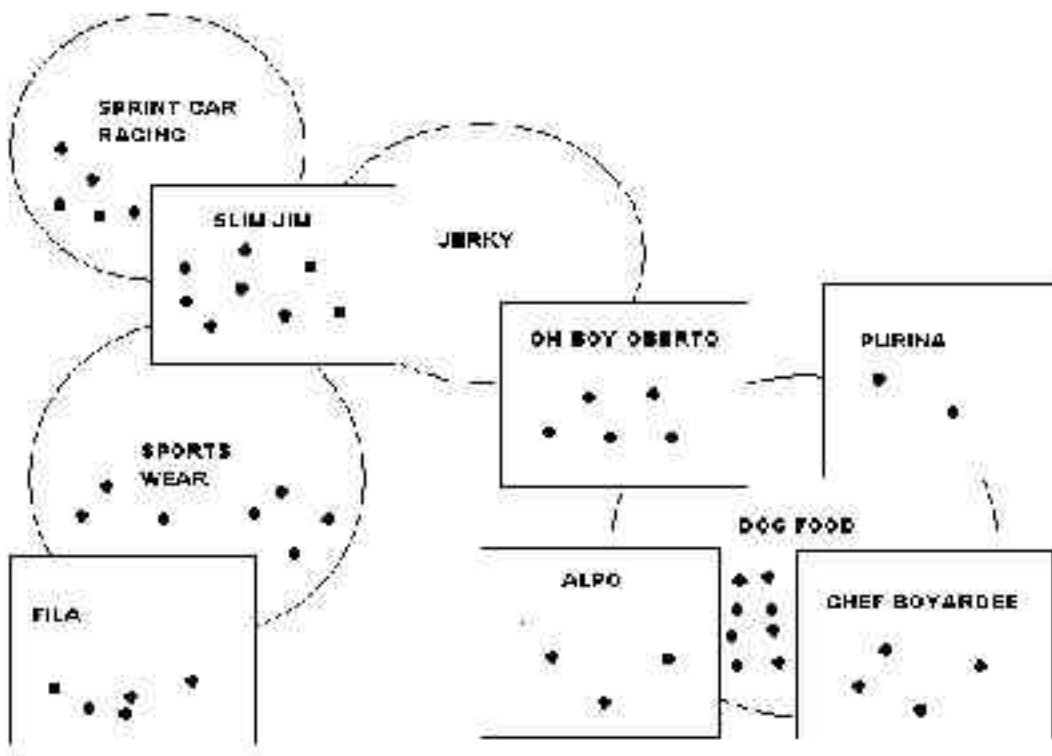
Anytime that anything negative would happen to one of Us as the result of stuff being used, We take a wound. Every wound reduces our total AP by one, until We are incapacitated at zero possible AP. These wounds are removed at the end of every scene.

IMAGINED PLAY

Play testing is against the rules of the 24 Hour RPG, but here's how the game is played in my head. Hopefully, this will make how I'm intending the game to be played clearer.

Before the game, the GM tries to get into the Material World mindset and reads some stuff about marketing on the internet. In this case, he read “Oh Boy! The new beef jerky” by Ruth Shalit. He looks at some of the real companies in the beef jerky game, looking for areas they might compete, and records their names.

He starts by making four circles: jerky, sportswear, dogfood and sprint car racing. Then, he makes six 3x5 Brand cards, one for Fila, Slim Jim, Oh Boy! Oberto, Alpo, Purina and Chef Boyardee. He lays them out so that Fila and Slim Jim on the edge of sportswear; Slim Jim and Oh Boy! Oberto are on the edge of jerky; and Alpo, Purina and Chef Boyardee are on the edge of dog food. Slim Jim has the edge of Sprint Car Racing all to itself. It looks like this:



The round things are circles on your 8 ½ x 11s, the square things are your 3x5s and the dots are your brainshare counters. Now, he sets each company’s starting advantages and disadvantages.

For this game, Oh Boy! Oberto needs to be a company teetering on the edge of oblivion. He gives it “Rumors of Satanic Cult Involvement, -1 every 1 scene” in the dog food circle, meaning it will cease to exist in five scenes without player intervention. He also gives it “Strong Ad Campaign, +2 every 1 scene” in the jerky circle, giving it a strong presence there, but all the brainshare is already taken from it.

He gives assigns generic advantages to the other dog food companies. These can be assigned descriptions later in play. Purina has “+4 every 2 scenes” and “-1 every scene”. Alpo has “+1 every scene”. Chef Boyardee has “+1 every scene” and “-2 every 2 scenes”.

Slim Jim’s got no advantages in the jerky circle, but gets “+1 every scene” from sportswear and “+1 every scene” from sprint car racing. Fila also gets “+1 every scene” from sportswear.

Now that the GM has a concept of how things are going to shake out and has drawn a map to support it, he kicks around some location ideas and gets his players together. We’ll call them A, B and C. They generate some characters, basing them on characters from other games, movies, novels, or whatever. The GM kicks things off with a colorful introduction, or not. They get down to business.

GM: You’re all sitting in the conference room at Oh Boy! Oberto. The office controller is setting in front of you, sweating through the air conditioning. He didn’t bring any papers in with him, which is a good sign he’s about to propose something right up your alley. He tells you that it could be all over for Oberto. His man inside Slim Jim just got wind of something the boys over there are planning, and it’s big. They’ve been deadlocked in the market, but Slim Jim’s got lots of profit coming in from some non-jerky ventures, and they’ve poured it all into a single commercial. It’s supposed be so powerful, when it goes live, it will destroy Oberto’s chances in the jerky market forever. They’ve been incredibly secretive about the ad. Copies go out the broadcasters just 24 hours before it airs, and nobody knows who’s been developing it. He’s promising millions in stock if you can find out what’s going to on and stop it while Oberto’s still got a shot at the jerky market. Anything you need that Oberto’s jerky division can provide, you’ve got. Company cars, credit cards, lawyers, it’s yours. Thing is, they think the ad’s going to drop within 72 hours, so you’ve got to do something before then.

A: No problem. We’re professionals. Lets call our relationship to Oberto being one of the Oberto Boys, their crack team of mercenaries.

C: Heh. Okay. So, mysterious advert. What first?

A: Let’s break into Slim Jim’s ad department.

B: Right off the bat? Why don’t we lean on some contacts first?

A: When is this ad going to air, scene-wise?

GM: Let’s say two scenes a day, so around scene six. I’ll let you know if it’s getting close. When you’re done with this scene, Oberto will be down to 4 brainshare, and at zero, they are gone and nobody pays you.

A: C’mon, we don’t have time to screw around. Let’s hit that ad department!

C: Alright.

B: Sigh... okay. But we take my car.

GM: You all pull up outside of Slim Jim advertising headquarters. It's a shiny new industrial campus full of big swelling green lawns that have just recently been laid down. There's the big Slim Jim logo that lights up all the nearby buildings.

A: It's night?

GM: You're breaking in, right? I assumed you'd do it at night. You're active, by the way.

A: Well, okay. I'll hit my chameleon suit, which is Ideal For hiding as long as people aren't looking too hard. (This costs two AP, of A's five.) Then I'll move from the parking lot to the side of the building (One AP). I'll look for a way in (One AP).

GM: There's a exit door, it doesn't have a handle on the outside.

C: B's mono-wire thing might work on that.

A: Then I'll let B go now. (Has one AP left, but ends his turn anyway.)

B: I'll follow A around the side of the building (One AP). I've got my mono-wire cutter. Can it cut the latch on the door so we can get in?

GM: That sounds like precise cutting, which that thing is Lousy For.

A: Still could work. Try it.

B: I'll try it anyway (Three AP). Heads. That means it works. I'll go inside (One AP, which ends B's turn.)

C: I'm going to stay in the car and be the lookout. I'll introduce that A and B find an alarm panel set to go off in 30 seconds unless the right code is entered.

A: Ah! What did you do that for?

B: So you could use your sequencer! And probably hoping the GM won't send the cops first thing.

A: Oh right. It's ideal for entering the right code, brute force style, so I use it on the alarm panel (Two AP). Now, I'm going to enter the main office and use my wrist computer to access there computer network.

GM: That thing is only Good For that type of use. You're short an AP.

A: I just go there, then. And over to you, B.

B: I'll use my mono-cutter to cut open the bolt on the boss's office. Is that in the same area I'm in?

GM: Sure. Flip your coin.

B: Tails (Three AP). No good. It bites deeply into the door, but doesn't cut the lock. I'll go help A in the main office (One AP). I'll search around in the trashcans for any mention of the mysterious ad (One AP).

GM: All you find are memos regarding the normal functioning of an advertising office. Meanwhile, a car pulls up outside. It's some guy who works here, showing up to get some work done after hours. C?

A: Distract him! All I needs one more turn to look around the network, and we'll go.

C: Uh... okay. I say something to get him to come over to me.

GM: Like what?

C: Hey! Do you work here (One AP)?

GM: It works. He comes over to see what you want.

C: Errrrr...

A: Just keep him there for another round.

B: Engage in some idle banter!

C: I'll shake hands with him. Does that take an AP?

B: Engage him somehow! Ask about the wife and kids.

C: And when I shake, I'll zap him comatose with my shock hand. It's Good For that(Three AP).

A: Great!

B: No! We'll get found out!

Stuff like this continues until the characters find evidence of the ad. They shouldn't find the ad yet, though, because it's just the first scene. After they leave the area, the scene ends. Brainshare is moved around.

A: So now we know the ad's been developed by Soviet scientists in exchange for Slim Jim passing them data on US troop movements. This should take a hunk out of their brainshare when it hits the seven o'clock news! Let's hit CBS headquarters and get it on the air.

C: We're not out to reduce Slim Jim's brainshare, at least, not yet. We've got to find out about the ad so we can save Oberto. I say we track down the Soviet lab and crack some commie heads.

B: Oberto's going to bleed its brainshare into the dog food market before the ad airs anyway. If they go kaput, it won't matter if the ad airs or not. We need to get them some more brainshare somehow.

A: They'll get brainshare if Slim Jim takes a hit in the jerky market. Oberto's got a plus two ad campaign.

B: Running that will also alert the Soviets that we're on to them.

A: Okay, good point. We've still got three scenes before we've got to worry about it. Let's go find the Soviet lab, I guess.

B: Right.

Then another scene begins, and so on, until the characters are all incredibly rich, have gotten revenge on the Brand that killed their Pa, or reshaped the destiny of the human race.

EXAMPLE REGULAR STUFF

Here's some example regular stuff, like to give Mooks.

The Nine

Short For 9mm pistol. The basic way of being armed in 1985. If a Mook has a gun, it's probably a Nine.

Good For: Shooting a guy close up, hiding in your jacket

Lousy For: Shooting a guy beyond close up, shooting a guy behind cover

Twenty-Two

Often used by wannabe thugs, stick up men, and Mooks who are in over their heads.

Smallest thing we can still call a gun, but it can get the job done in a pinch.

Good For: Having a gun. Hiding in your pocket. Not impressing other people with guns

Lousy For: Actually killing the people you shoot.

Sub Gun

Short For submachinegun, this covers most guns that shoot pistol rounds and can be set to automatic fire. If a tough Mook has a gun, it's probably a Sub Gun.

Good For: Shooting a coupe people at once

Lousy For: Shooting a guy far away. Hiding under your jacket

Assault Rifle

An automatic rifle that fires a round midway between a pistol and a real rifle. If the Mooks are expecting trouble, they call guys who have these.

Ideal For: Shooting people

Good For: Shooting a couple of people at once, penetrating body armor, not fitting under your trench coat, getting you arrested

Lousy For: Shooting through heavy barriers

Magnum Pistol

Sometimes a high-ranking meathead Mook or Super-Mook will have one of these instead of a Nine.

Good For: Shooting people through cover, penetration body armor, hiding in your jacket

Lousy For: Shooting a guy far away

ASP Baton

Lots of security/police type Mooks have these collapsible batons for when they need to hit people but not kill them.

Good For: Hiding in your pocket or on your belt, whipping out quick, whacking stuff, beating people, making a cool sound

Radio

Most security guards and cops will have radios to communicate with the security office or dispatcher.

Good For: Calling for backup, checking identification

EXAMPLE COOL STUFF

Here's some example Cool Stuff, like to give tough Mooks and Super-Mooks, or maybe use for one of Us if you want. Players should make up the Origin and modify the descriptors to reflect their character if they'd like to use any of these.

Mono-Wire Cutter

An axe-sized industrial monofilament-wire cutting tool that has been lovingly hacksawed off some machine somewhere. Ergonomic grip expertly crafted from a pocketful of rubber bands. Covered in rust, but the mono-wire edge never dulls.

Ideal For: Cutting anything

Good For: Melee combat, intimidation, not fitting under your jacket

Lousy For: Precise cutting, getting you arrested

Chameleon Suit

Looks like a dull gray tracksuit until you turn it on. Then, it uses tiny optical cameras to camouflage the wearer against whatever he's standing in front of. This suit revolutionized the way that people get hit by cars.

Ideal For: Hiding from people who aren't looking for you

Good For: Staying still to avoid people chasing you, , getting noticed by people behind you

Lousy For: Hiding in bright light, running out of juice after 20 minutes

Sequencer

Small, sandwich sized box that enters codes into keypads, again and again, until it gets it right. Frowned upon by uniformed authorities.

Ideal For: Entering the right code on a keypad

Good For: Hiding in your pocket, convincing people you're up to no good

Lousy For: Getting you arrested

Keycard Recorder

This is a small computer with a credit card like protrusion on one end. The magnetic strip on the card is reprogrammed to whatever card is swiped through the machine. It can duplicate credit cards, work badges, or anything that uses those magnetic strip thingies.

Ideal For: Swiping a card through to record it...

Good For: ... and then using to do whatever that card did, storing a card in memory for later, convincing people you're up to no good

Lousy For: Swiping a card through in front of the mark without getting noticed, getting you arrested

Climbing Gloves

These gloves stick to walls, allowing you to climb a completely vertical surface with no other aid.

Ideal For: Allowing you to move to a new part of the area by climbing straight up (you will still need to spend a movement point)

Good For: Grabbing on to hard any hard smooth surface, putting on and taking off quick, being too clumsy to use other stuff while they're on

Lousy For: Clinging to the top of a moving vehicle, not working if they get wet

Race Gun

This is pistol that has been specifically designed to shoot things as quickly and accurately as possible, usually used for competition. Its parts have been anodized garish neon colors and it's covered in logos from sponsors.

Ideal For: Shooting people

Good For: Shooting people behind cover, hiding under your jacket, getting you arrested

Lousy For: Shooting a guy at long range, breaking the sights off while brawling

Disguise Paste

This disguise kit is just a tube of paste and a small box that fits in your pocket. When the paste is smeared over your face, and the wire from the box connected to it, you'll be virtually indistinguishable from the person the kit was programmed to look like.

Ideal For: Convincing people you're somebody you're not

Good For: Applying quickly,

Poison Dart Watch

It's looks like an ordinary watch... but when you press the date button, a poison dart shoots out. Anyone hit by the dart falls unconscious until the end of the scene. One shot.

Ideal For: Suddenly knocking out the unwary

Good For: Telling time, being indistinguishable from the normal watch, getting you arrested if anybody sees you darting people

Lousy For: Darting the alert, being hard to reload during a scene