



GOODMAN GAMES PRESENTS

CRIME PAYS

A GODFATHER'S GRIMOIRE

FOR USE IN FOURTH EDITION CAMPAIGNS OFFICIALLY LICENSED UNDER THE GSL
WRITTEN BY HARLEY STROH EDITED BY AERYN "BLACKDIRGE" RUDEL COVER ART BY DAVID GRIFFITH
INTERIOR ART BY BRAD MCDEVITT GRAPHIC DESIGN BY JIM PINTO PUBLISHED BY GOODMAN GAMES
WWW.GOODMAN-GAMES.COM

CRIME PAYS

Writing: Harley Stroh

Editing: Aijalyn Kohler, Shawn Merwin, Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel, Jessica Van Oort

Cover Art: David Griffith

Interior Art: Brad McDevitt

Graphic Design: jim pinto

Publisher: Joseph Goodman

Playtesters: Kale "Silverlock Duncan, Amber "Maralithtrix" Ebert, Max "Cathedral" Foster, John "Mo' Money" Spear, Will "Crazy Ben" Stroh

Original Concept: Joseph Goodman

table of contents

Introduction: A Crime Lord's Primer	3
Chapter 1: The Making of a Mob	7
Chapter 2: Crimes & Punishments.....	17
Chapter 3: The Mob Turn	30
Chapter 4: Gang War!.....	37
Chapter 5: The Crime Campaign	40
Chapter 6: Founding Scenarios.....	46
Chapter 7: The Slave Lords.....	51

appendices

Appendix A: Sample Made Men	71
Appendix B: The Vulgar Tongue	79
Appendix C: Neighborhood Mapping	82
Appendix D: Neighborhood Design	91
Append E: Sample Boons	93
Appendix F: Crime Templates/Mob Sheet.....	94

tables and charts

Table I. Territories	7
Table II. Mob Strength	11
Table III. Made Men.....	11
Table IV. Mob Muscle.....	14
Table V. Holdings & Network	15
Table VI. Initial Mob Composition.....	16
Table VII. Punishments.....	21
Table VIII. Oldtimers & Retired Coves	21
Table IX. Random Events	30
Table X. Boon Bonuses	32
Table XI: Law Events.....	32
Table XII. Underworld Events.....	35
Table XIII. Gang War Challenge	38
Table XIV. Respect & Infamy	43
Table XV. Boon Generator	94

Bring Honor to the Family



INTRODUCTION

Growing up on the miserable streets, you learned early on that no man is free.

Every knight answers to his lord. Every lord to his king. Every king to his patriarch, and every patriarch to his god.

The thief, alone, dares to defy both man and god, answering to none — save his godfather.

Beneath the rain-slick cobblestones that line the foggy streets, behind the ratty curtains hung over the back of smoky taverns and gambling dens, there is a secret city — as real and as vibrant as the bejeweled palaces and wide promenades — ruled by its own sinister princes and lords of the night.

the underworld

A world of black markets and shadowy principalities; a hidden society that rewards treachery between allies and honor among thieves, where glittering fortunes can be won by the bold, and anything can be had for a price. A culture that thrives in the shadows of every city-state, hamlet and town — anywhere that a handful of tarnished coins and a few bright jewels can trump a man's sense of duty and principle.

But you already know all this. By now, you're probably an aspiring cutpurse, making a few nips here and there, working the square on market day, gambling it all away in the night, and waking up just as poor the morning after. Maybe you already have a crew of coves, like-minded souls that are your partners in crime. Perhaps you've even done a turn or two in the workhouses and gaols, atoning for the crime of poverty.

Your father was an honest man. He died in the workhouse, his body and spirit broken by the yoke of law. You swore to be something greater, that you would never indenture yourself to a man of privilege and rank, that you would call no man lord.

You swore to become a master of rogues, above the law, answering to no one but yourself.

A godfather.

not just for rogues

The work of a crimeboss isn't just for rogues. Godfathers hail from every walk of life — the one thing that unites them is the will to make their own way in life, and their disregard for authority.

Any character possessing these traits can become the boss of a few dozen coves. To be truly successful, to earn the title of Master Cove or Godfather, the character will need something special to elevate him above the common magsman. This quality varies from boss to boss. For some, it is an unflinching cruelty towards those that oppose them. For others, it is a powerful charisma coupled with a sharp mind for political stratagems. Others find their way to the top through ruthless betrayal and backstabbing.

How you make your way is up to you, and will determine whether your career as a godfather is short lived or enduring. In the end, though, the best godfathers must be all of these things in turn: ruthless and cruel towards their enemies, benevolent and generous to their allies, brilliant in their stratagems, and unforgiving in their wrath.

Contrary to the stories told in the back of taverns and inns, bosses aren't necessarily evil. In truth, quaint notions like good and evil have very little to do with the choices you make. It is a vicious world, and you do what you need to in order to survive.

Sometimes, certainly, you might accomplish some good. In the course of your career, you offer protection to the poor and strength to the weak. You make certain beggars have meals of warm gruel and crusty bread in the depths of winter, and when a knight claims rights to an innkeeper's daughter on her wedding night, you see that he lives to regret it. Perhaps the beggars play your informants later on and maybe the innkeeper hides your rogues when they are on the run, but they do it willingly, out of love, not fear.

But evil comes just as readily. When the slightest sign of weakness invites attack from all sides, you must be willing to be ruthless at any moment. For every hand extended in friendship, another lies in wait, clutching a poison-slicked dagger. You must anticipate attacks from every quarter, and respond in kind.

CRIME PAYS

Do you have what it takes to survive when legions of foes are arrayed against you, and all you have to rely on are your friends and your wits? To flaunt authority and risk your life to become a legend among the underworld?

Of course you do. You're a godfather.

You weren't born a prince, heir to a kingdom. You weren't chosen by some shining god, to lead his holy people. But you were born with a keen mind and a forked tongue, and most importantly, the will to cheat, steal, and slay your way to top of the swarming rats that perch atop the throne of this dark underworld.

And that, you know, is true freedom.

crime lord's primer

Never mind the prince and his sycophantic retinue. Once the red orb of the sun drops beneath the horizon and the fat lamps sputter to life, the godfather rules the night; answering to no man, reaping the fruits of the city and all its riches, heir to all its vices and sins.

Those riches inevitably bring dangers, especially when you are forced to associate with villains that would love to draw a poisoned dagger across your neck and leave you to bleed out in the back of a filthy alley, all for a handful of grubby copper coins.

And these are the ones you call allies.

In order to rise to power in the grim underworld, you will need *territory* — the neighborhood or ward that is your dominion; and a *family* — the loyal enforcers, bravos, assassins, and troops that do work on your behalf. A family working a territory is a *mob*. When you begin your career as a boss, you will have just one mob, but successful godfathers control many.

Simple enough? Rogues without territory are just a band of brigands. And a neighborhood that isn't worked by family doesn't earn any income. It's only when a crew of rogues works a neighborhood that you have a criminal organization. Lose either, be it to rival mobs or the law, and the mob collapses.

But before you start sharpening your fighting knife and dipping your shuriken in black lotus poison, let's go over the basics of an underworld empire.

the fundamentals

You're a crime boss, not an accountant. The action taking place in your mob serves as a backdrop to your adventures, creating new adventure hooks and drama as you navigate the grim underworld, dealing with rival bosses, corrupt officials, and cruel overlords with your skills and cunning, and — when things get ugly — your skill with a blade.

You aren't on hand to direct every mugging or every time a shopkeeper gets shaken down for a few copper pieces. You dole out that work to your mob, giving directions and orders, but always keeping your hands clean of the actual crime. Any time you take a direct hand in an action, the mob turn is temporarily suspended.

Like a character, your mob is defined by a set of statistics that change over the course of your rise to power. These statistics determine how much income your mob earns from your territory, how well your mob holds up to outside attacks, and how well it attacks others. It serves as a measure of your success as a crime boss and godfather.

Things progress slowly on the mob level. When you send out a band of thugs to intimidate a rival mob, they do their work over the course of days and weeks. A mob turn is 1 month long.

A mob is never static. In addition to whatever nefarious plots you cook up for your band of chummy outlaws, every month you risk three types of events: **Law**, **Underworld**, and **Random**. The events can introduce plot hooks for your godfather's adventures, stymie his plans, and offer opportunity to the cunning. The specific timing of the events is up to the DM; at any moment a godfather needs to be prepared for a raid from the authorities or an assault from a rival crime boss.

The **Law** roll determines whether the authorities take any action against you that month, and how draconic that action is. The Law roll is influenced by the number and severity of crimes committed in the past month, as well as by your territory's social class. A dramatic burglary in the noble quarter will earn a quick response from the prince, whereas beggars turning up dead in the slums are routinely ignored. You can mitigate the chances of a raid by bribing corrupt officials, ordering your mob to

stick to low profile (and low profitability) crimes, and — when worse comes to worst — making sure that you have spy lookouts watching for a raid.

The **Underworld** roll determines whether a rival mob attempts to make a move on your territory, and how militant the action is. Like the Law roll, the Underworld roll is influenced by the strength of your mob and the cruel ministrations of fate. You can decrease the likelihood of an attack by keeping enforcers visible on your streets, working deals with the corrupt officials, and using spies and snitches to report attacks before they happen.

Finally, **Random Events** are rolled each month. These events bid weal or woe to a crime lord, depending on how intelligently the boss can react to a changing world. Cunning bosses are quick to turn nearly any event to their favor, while passive mob lords are forever cursing the fates for their poor fortune.

the mob sheet

By and large, your mob's statistics are determined by the cutpurses and thieves you gather to your banner, and how you direct them to conduct their business. The wealthiest mobs, led by powerful, charismatic crime lords, have their pick of coves, while poor mobs, led by weak bosses, will be hard pressed to win the loyalty of talented rogues.

Your mob's statistics can vary quickly with the composition of your mob. When you are asked to make check against your mob's statistics, the core mechanic is 1d20 plus:

- The mob stat, either Streetwise, Muscle, or Respect;
- Made man bonuses (if any)

Following is a brief summary of your mob's statistics. Each is detailed later in the grimoire.

The **Muscle** of a mob is based on the number of coves you have and the martial composition of your mob. Stronger mobs are more expensive to keep, but help to defend against attacks from other mob lords, and a strong mob is crucial to staging a coup on another territory. Note that coves are typically cowardly and untrained in battle and a single trained warrior can easily cut his way through a mob of panicking coves. You'll want to be careful to augment your raw coves with trained sellswords.



CRIME PAYS

A mob's **Streetwise** represents your eyes and ears on the street. Beggars, orphans, tavern keepers, and snitches — they all work to provide a constant stream of reports. Some arrogant crime bosses disregard these, the meekest of their peers, but cunning bosses recall their own humble beginnings, knowing well that their fortunes rise and fall on their ability to stay connected to the street. Streetwise also reflects how quickly your rogues can hide themselves, vanishing into safehouses and boltholes when rival mobs or the authorities make raids.

Respect is a measure of how you and your people are treated by other criminals. The more powerful you are and the stronger your mob, the more other organizations will fear and respect you. Godfathers that always stand by their coves, no matter the danger, will earn high Respect. Godfathers that abandon their coves to the gallows will lose Respect in the eyes of the underground.

Every mob lord is infamous. The degree of your **Infamy** is determined by the number and severity of crimes you direct your mob to undertake in

a month. Infamy is a delicate balancing act: Godfathers need to undertake crimes to support their mobs, but a high infamy invariably draws the attention of the prince and his executioners.

Your mob's monthly base **Income** is determined by your territory's social class. This is the amount you earn through protection rackets, extortion, and petty crimes. Your family can undertake additional crimes to boost your income, but this increases your infamy.

Your mob's monthly **Upkeep** is determined by the total cost of keeping up your coves, made men, and defenses.

Your **Made Men** are the lieutenants and captains of your crew. While your coves perform all the petty crimes and extortions, made men provide the leadership necessary for more sophisticated rackets. Unlike the nameless coves working beneath you performing petty crimes, your made men are specific personalities with talents and skills. The more made men under your command, the more actions you can make in a month.

