

# AFTER SCHOOL INVESTIGATIONS

A mini-RPG by Côme Martin for 1 MC and 3 to 5 PCs, written in February for the DCA 1 (Défis des Courants Alternatifs).

*You're high schoolers in a small American town; each of you has a complicated life to handle, between classes, family, friends... So when a crime is committed and the adults don't notice it, when it's up to you to find out who done it, it becomes a pain to deal with all that stuff!*

**Creation:** Start by choosing more or less randomly a small American city, or make it up: broadly, its number of inhabitants, what teenagers do for fun, what's around...

Then, create as many PCs as people around the table (MC included). They all start with a personal pool at 6/10, which represents their private and school life; there's also a common investigation pool which starts at 0/10.

Flesh out the PCs: give them names, hobbies, personalities and most of all, at least one problem in their personal life: they have a dissertation to finish, they got into a fight with a friend, they're grounded...

Each PC has a strong bond of friendship with another PC, likes another one and dislikes a third one.

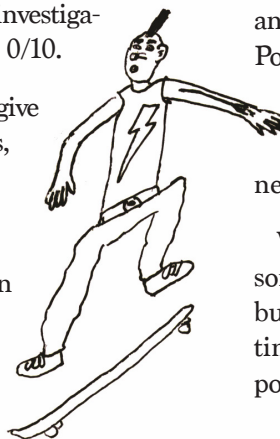
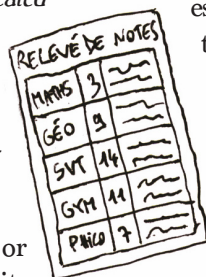
Finally, each player, except the MC, chooses a PC: the remaining character is the victim.

Doing things, using the pools:  
The MC decides if the action is in relation with the PC's personal life or the investigation. They announce a number of points to spend from

the pools: 2 if the action is easy, 3 if it is average, 4 if it is difficult. You can only spend points from the pool unrelated to the action, to symbolize time spent and things neglected to do this action. These points are added to the other pool (in other words, when a PC investigates, they spend points from their personal pool and add them to the investigation pool). Pools can never go beyond 10 points.

If a PC's personal pool reaches 0 or loses 4 points in a row, they get a new personal problem to solve.

When a PC solves one of their personal problems (they make up with their buddy, hand their math homework on time...), their pool immediately wins 6 points (without going over 10).



♠	Place
2	A room in the local movie theater
3	A field outside of town
4	The high school's washrooms
5	The parking of a supermarket
6	The local pool
7	At the most popular teenager's
8	The high school's staff room
9	The high school's library
10	A fast food restaurant
J	At the teen's where there was/will be a big party
Q	The local skatepark
K	A slightly seedy bar
A	In front of a small museum

♣	Object
2	Prints from a limited-edition shoe
3	A phone (turned off)
4	A pack of gum
5	A movie ticket
6	A mailbox key
7	Part of a report card
8	A jewel
9	A rubber mask
10	A scribbled drawing
J	The box of a videogame (empty)
Q	A piece torn from a poster
K	A book
A	A pack of trading cards

♦	Person
2	A teacher
3	A tramp
4	A harassed student
5	A brainiac
6	A very quiet student
7	The class's comedian
8	The school's career counselor
9	A dealer
10	A musician teen
J	One of the PC's neighbours
Q	A spoiled brat
K	A hipster
A	One of the high school's bullies

♥	Gossip (true or not)
2	Constating the victim's honesty
3	About a NPC's parents
4	Damaging 1 of the PC's social status
5	About a secret romantic relationship between two NPCs
6	Turning a PC's problem worse
7	Claiming the same crime has been committed before
8	Revealing a NPC's shameful past
9	About a Place's secret function
10	Insinuating a NPC has a double life
J	Accusing a NPC of a minor crime
Q	About a group secretly created by several NPCs
K	About the most popular character
A	Suggesting another origin or owner for an Object

Leading the investigation: The MC first draws a card or chooses the type of mystery the session will deal with, and answers the question between parentheses. It's generally a crime the adults have no interest for or which they can't fix, which will take a few days to be solved.

They also determine 3 Clues the PCs have at the start (see flaps). The 3 cards drawn for this are discarded.

The investigation is divided into scenes. Once per scene, the PCs get a new Clue for free (by drawing a card which is then discarded) as long as they act accordingly. Any extra Clue requires a difficulty 3 action.

The PCs can also link a Clue to another character for free as long as it makes sense; to claim a link without any proof is a an action with a difficulty of 4, minus the number of Clues already linked to that character.

When at least 3 Clues have been linked to a character, they can be designated as Suspect. They then get a Suspicion score, which starts at the number of Clues linked to them. Suspicion increases by 1 by finding new Clues or leading actions against this Suspect (interrogation, searching their stuff, tailing them...). When their Suspicion score reaches 10, a Suspect can be designated as Culprit.

Clues and Suspects can be discarded at any time by the players, deciding they are false leads, if it doesn't make sense in the story. That's a difficulty 2 action.

Once the Culprit is designated, all that's left to do is explaining their motive (if it hasn't been done already) and more importantly, to prove their crime and punish them, if necessary by calling competent authorities!

2	Blackmail (to reveal what?)
3	Beating up (for what or who?)
4	Disappearance (of who?)
5	Vandalism (of what?)
6	Spreading of a gossip (about what?)
7	Theft (of what?)
8	Identity theft (by who?)
9	False accusation (of which crime ?)
10	Harassment (in which way?)
J	Killing of a pet animal (why?)
Q	Burglary (At whose place?)
K	Discovery of a former crime (which?)
A	Falsification (of what?)



Thanks to Eric Blaise for the title!



### Play example

The MC draws cards to determine which crime Zoe (the victim) will ask Anna, Boris and Claire (the PCs) to solve: it's a two of clubs, a queen of spades, a king of diamonds and a seven of clubs. The crime is thus black mail and the clues are about the local skatepark, a hipster and part of a report card. The MC thinks for a while and decides Zoe has tried to falsify her report card so her parents wouldn't be tough on her, but that she got her bag stolen at the local skatepark and has been receiving texts since then, which threaten to make the whole thing public. She thinks it's related to Mark, the hipster skater she dumped last week, but that's just a hunch the investigators will have to prove!

The PCs decide to go ask Mark a few questions after class: that means less time preparing for tomorrow's geography test, but friends come first. The MC says making Mark talk is difficult: he still bears a grudge against Zoe and has no reasons for helping her. After a roleplay scene, Anna and Boris spend 1 point each from the personal pools, and Claire spends 2. The 4 points go to the investigation pool. (A nicer MC would have been satisfied with just the roleplay scene and wouldn't have asked players to spend points, since PCs get a free Clue per scene.)

Boris's player draws a card: a 8 of hearts. Mark heard gossip about Zoe; apparently, she was harassing kids with a few friends of hers, and that this guy Paul was their favorite target... (The MC could also have made a gossip up about a NPC not yet introduced in the story; the goal, in both cases, is to give the players a new lead to follow.)

A little later, the PCs have 4 Clues against Paul, who seems to hold quite a grudge against Zoe. To make his Suspicion score go up, Claire and Anna decide to sneak into his place to search his room for clues. Neither has enough points in their personal pools to attempt the action, however! So before the searching scene, the PCs fill up with personal scenes: Anna takes her little brother, whom she hates, to the pool, and Claire makes up with Jade, her girlfriend. It empties the investigation pool a bit, which Boris's player doesn't like, but that's life!

Later still, Paul's Suspicion score has climbed to 9 and the PCs think it's time to confront him once and for all: a tight interrogation makes him snap and he confesses his crime to the investigators. But is it really a crime? At the end of the day, he simply wanted revenge on Zoe, who harassed him for years and is the only responsible for her bad grades. That's his take on it, anyway... Now that all cards are on the table, to whom will the PCs do justice?

Inspired by *Bubblegumshoe*, *Noirlandia* and *The Dreadful Secrets of Candlewick Manor*.