Shadows & Steel — Underworld and Criminal Networks

(Fate's Edge v0.2)

A criminal-campaign module for Fate's Edge: crime families, smugglers, black markets, fences, fixers, and the law that hunts them. Built to sit beside Violets & Stone (districts), Political Intrigue (faction play), Caravans (smuggling legs), Allies & Adversaries (crew/org management), Assets & Patrons, and the core SRD. Uses Position/DV, SB, clocks, Strings, Favor/Leverage/Exposure—no new math.

What's New in v0.2 (from playtest)

- More playbooks: added Fixers and Ward-Breakers.

- Heat threshold table: formal Crew/City Heat triggers; Setup SB → Heat/Alarm rule.

- Overhead tools: Clock Budget (3+1), Heat-to-Complication conversion, one-page Heist Cheat Sheet.

- Supernatural tie-ins: Arcane Tier black market, ward crimes, psionic hooks.

- Long arcs: three campaign frames with milestones.

- Political mapping: War Faction clocks, formal Blood-Silver + Witness settlement.

Quickstart (2 minutes)

1. Make a Crew Sheet (§1) and pick a Playbook (Smugglers, Thieves, Enforcers, Grifters, Fixers, Ward-Breakers). Choose 3 Crew Tags and 2 Strings.

2. Sketch a Turf Map (§2) with 4–6 nodes (districts/venues/routes). Mark 1 Racket you control.

3. Start tracks: Crew Heat [6], City Heat [6], Notoriety [4] (opt.), Law Mandate/Crisis 2/2.

4. Choose an opening Score Type (§6): Heist, Smuggling Run, Protection Play, or Confidence Game.

5. On any 1, GM spends from Shadows & Steel SB (§9.4). Setup Rule: each SB gained during Setup may either Alarm +1 or Crew Heat +1 (GM picks by fiction).

Crew Sheet (Template)

[CREW NAME]
Type: Smugglers / Thieves / Enforcers / Grifters / Fixers / Ward-Breakers
Tags (choose 3): Riverwise • Locksmiths • Shadow Accounts • Bribe Web • Knives Out • Silver Tongues • Wrecker's Fire • Clean Faces • Ghost Safehouses • Ward Keys • Court Whisper
Strings (choose 2): dockmaster favor • tollhouse key • guild fence • customs blind • patrol captain's debt • theater front • lamp-notary on retainer • ruin-keeper indulgence
Tracks:

- Crew Heat [6] (recent attention)

- Notoriety [4] (opt., famous style)

- Rep [6] (standing underground)

- Bank (coin abstraction)

Allies/Rivals: fixers, fences, patrol captains, rival crews
Safehouses/Fronts: names + tags

Crew Benefits by Type

- **Smugglers:** start Riverwise, Customs Blind; once/leg, Smuggle DV –1.

- **Thieves:** start Locksmiths, Clean Faces; once/score, Infiltrate Position +1.

- **Enforcers:** start Knives Out, Wrecker's Fire; once/score, Intimidate/Break Effect +1.

- **Grifters:** start Silver Tongues, Shadow Accounts; once/score, convert Audience: Cool → Warm.

- **Fixers (NEW):** start Bribe Web, Court Whisper; once/score, treat Petition/Broker DV –1 in courts/markets.

- **Ward-Breakers (NEW):** start Ward Keys, Ghost Safehouses; once/score, ignore first Desperate from wards/psionic weather.

Turf Map & Territory Control

Turf Map: Draw 4–6 nodes: Districts (e.g., Dye Yards, Pilots' Quays), Venues (Moon Market, Gambling Row), Pipelines (river cut, sewer run, postern stairs). Connect with arrows that show movement/contraband flow.

Rackets:

gambling den • dice house • ropewalk skims • dock tithe • counterfeit inks • lanternhouses • fighting pits • lockshop chain • locker barge • eel-channel • ward-glass salvage (NEW) •

oath-lamp forgery (NEW).

Taking Turf:

create Claim [6] on a node. During scores aimed at this node, strong outcomes tick Claim. When it fills, add the racket and a String (front or bribe web). Mark Crew Heat +1.

Holding Turf:

each session, roll Hold (Wits+Tactics) vs DV 2–4 by pressure. On hit, gain Bank +1 or Audience: Warm in that node. On 1s, advance a Trouble [4] for that turf (rivals, inspectors, unions).

Territory War:

When rivals contest, start War [8]. While War>0, Bandwidth –1 between sessions. Settlement Template: pay Blood-Silver (2 Bank each) + name a Witness Faction; all parties stake a Lamp-Oath [4]. Breaking it: Exposure +1, Repute –1 with the witness faction, War resumes at 2/8.

Heat, Law, and Crackdowns

Crew Heat [6] thresholds

- 0–2: background hum.

- 3: start Patrol Sweep [4].

- 4–5: random stops; Notoriety +1 when you make a flashy move.

- 6: trigger Sting [6] and Exposure +1.

City Heat [6] thresholds

- 0–2: routine.

- 3: curfew murmurs, stop-and-search; start Patrol Sweep [4] in hot districts.

- 6: Crackdown [4] (DV +1 on criminal actions, law starts with Audience: Hostile).

Cooling Actions

- **Lay Low:** lose 1 Bandwidth; clear Crew Heat –2; gain Notoriety +1 (opt.).

- **Grease Palms:** spend Bank/Favor; clear Crew Heat –1 and one Inspection.

- **Hard Pivot:** burn a front (lose one racket) to clear Crew Heat –3 and City Heat –1.

  Law Tools: Riverine Patrol, City Watch, Tax Assessor, Bridge Guards—each tracks a Sting [6].

Black Markets & Rare Goods

Use Market from Caravans.

Tiers & DV:

Street DV 2–3 • Guild DV 3–4 • Court DV 4–5 • Arcane (NEW) DV 5 (wards, psionic keys, oath-lamps).
Tags: Contraband, Hot, Forged, Sacred, Perishable, Traceable, Warded (NEW).

Partials:

price spike (Bank –1) • Crew Heat +1 • quality flaw (–1 Effect next use) • seller's Temp String • Inspection [4] starts.
Miss: sting springs (Sting [6] +2), counterfeit, or owed favor to a rival fence.
Laundering: Broker/Account DV 3–4. On hit, convert Hot → Clean; on 1, City Heat +1.

Informant Webs

Map a Web: 3–5 Informants (dock porter, lamplighter, clerk, patrol runner, skald...). Each has Access, Reliability [4], Price, Flags.

Use: pay Price for Clue +1, small String, or DV –1 in their sphere. On 1s, Reliability –1. At 0, they flip or vanish; start Burn [4] to recover/replace.

Moves (NEW):

- **Cross-Check:** spend 2 informants on same topic → take +1 Effect and only the lowest Reliability –1 applies on a 1.

- **Mask a Source:** spend Bank 1 to prevent Reliability –1 once.

Score Types & Heist Planner

Approaches:

Deceit • Stealth • Violence • Bribe • Con.

Heist Planner (lightweight)

1. Objective & Venue.

2. Entry/Exit Strings (2 hooks you can invoke once each).

3. Setup Rolls (0–2): each strong hit Position +1 or DV –1 later; each 1 → GM +1 SB or Alarm +1/Crew Heat +1 (Setup Rule).

4. Threat Clocks: Alarm [4–6], Patrol Routes [4], Inside Man [4].

5. Flashbacks (opt.) at cost (Bank/Favor/Heat).

Kit Tokens (NEW):

start each score with 2; spend to declare plausible gear or a small contact. Each extra beyond 2 adds Crew Heat +1.

Score Menus:

Heist • Smuggling Run • Protection Play • Confidence Game. (See §8 for ward/arcane crimes.)

Organization Management (with Allies & Adversaries)

Treat the crew as an Organization Asset with Cohorts (cut-purses, rowdies, scouts). Elevate via Projects: Front Business [4], Bribe Web [6], Ghost Safehouse [6], Route Map [4].

Advancement Triggers:

hold 3 rackets • beat a sting • launder a hot take • settle a feud at court • broker peace between gangs.

Supernatural Crimes & Ward Work (NEW)

- **Ward-Glass Salvage:** lift mirrored panes from ruin halls; hazards: Ward-Storm, Arcane Tier buys.

- **Oath-Lamp Forgery:** forge ritual lamps; Lamp-Oath fallout on miss: Exposure +1, City Heat +1.

- **Psionic Fences:** buy/sell noetic prisms; Aegis of Will reduces risk once/score.

Tools for Play

Typical Actions (DV)

Infiltrate 2–4 • Disable 3–5 • Skulk/Shadow 2–4 • Broker 2–4 • Intimidate/Break 2–4 • Evade 2–4 • Operate (Smuggle) 2–4.

Chases (Urban Ladder)

Foot: 2 open • 3 markets • 4 rooftops • 5 sewers.
Cart/Boat: 2 canal • 3 locks • 4 eel-cuts • 5 tide race.

Heat Events (thresholds)

At Crew Heat 3: Patrol Sweep [4].
At Crew Heat 6: Sting [6] + Exposure +1.
At City Heat 3: random stops/curfew murmurs.
At City Heat 6: Crackdown [4] (DV +1).

Shadows & Steel SB (GM menu)

Marked Silver (Inspection [4]) • Bad Badge (Alarm +1) • Gossip Sting (Audience flips) • Dogged Tail (Pursuit [6]) • Union Pushback (Blood-Silver owed) • Turned Informant (Reliability –1) • Watch List (Crew Heat +1).

Overhead Aids (NEW)

- **Clock Budget (3+1):** keep three visible clocks (Objective, Alarm/Patrol, a Rival/War) + one shadow (GM). Fold extra pressures into SB spends.

- **Heat→Complication:** when tempted to add a new clock mid-score, raise Crew Heat +1 and spend an SB item instead.

Generators

Black Market Goods (d12):

1 rare pigment • 2 forged seal kit • 3 ward key • 4 eel-channel charts • 5 customs stamps • 6 moon-kiln glass • 7 lockspike set • 8 poison salts • 9 tax records • 10 theater takings • 11 relic case • 12 ledger cipher.

Fences & Fixers (d12):

1 archivolt broker • 2 quay factor • 3 lamp-notary • 4 skald bookie • 5 guild widow • 6 patrol sergeant • 7 foreign factor • 8 tie-in priest • 9 river witch • 10 street doctor • 11 dice lord • 12 mask troupe.

Law Gambits (d12):

1 bait coin • 2 uniform sweep • 3 warrant blitz • 4 lamplighter eaves • 5 snitch buy • 6 courier sting • 7 tax audit • 8 curfew test • 9 postern watch • 10 vessel inspection • 11 customs raid • 12 proof-of-life stall.

Example of Play (short)

As in v0.1, updated to reflect Setup SB → Heat/Alarm and Clock Budget. (See canvas appendix for the full "Dyer's Ledger" walkthrough.)

Long Arcs (NEW)

- **Ledger War:** expose or control citywide tax records; milestones: seize weighhouse seal • flip a lamp-notary • bargain with Tax Assessor • settle with guilds.

- **Convoy Black:** dominate river/port smuggling; milestones: eel-channel map • union détente • patrol captain's debt • free harbor writ.

- **Ward Grid:** steal/broker arcane infrastructure; milestones: ward-glass salvage • oath-lamp control • ruin-keeper pact • mirrored hall heist.

Political Integration (NEW)

Link War [8] to Political Faction Clocks: each War +2 also ticks a related Influence/Stability/Exposure +1 for the two factions most involved. Settlement with witness faction grants Favor +1 with that faction if the oath stands a season.

GM Reference (one page)

- Crew: tags, Strings, Crew Heat [6], Notoriety (opt.), Rep.

- Turf Map: nodes; Claim [6]; War [8]; settlement template.

- Heat: thresholds; Sweep → Sting → Crackdown; Cooling.

- Markets: tiers (Street/Guild/Court/Arcane); partials; laundering.

- Informants: Web; Reliability [4]; Cross-Check/Mask.

- Scores: planner; Kit Tokens; threat clocks.

- SB Menu & Overhead: SB list; Clock Budget (3+1); Heat→Complication.

- Integration: V&Stone districts; Political factions; Caravan smuggling; psionic/ward crimes.

Changelog

v0.2 — Added Fixers & Ward-Breakers; formal Heat thresholds and Setup rule; Arcane Tier market; supernatural crimes; overhead aids; long arcs; political mapping; settlement template; revised example pointers.

End of v0.2