HARD ROADS
## A Risus Adaptation of Car Wars by Hank Harwell
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Introduction: In 1981, a small Texas game store released a game using a Post-apocalyptic SciFi setting to simulate combat between vehicles. The game quickly took off, and on the strength of *Car Wars* and many other releases, Steve Jackson Games is now one of the largest game companies in the United States.

Throughout the years, *Car Wars* has developed a loyal following and many regional tournaments all over the United States. Not long after its introduction, some players would string together scenarios, forming a very simple, extremely rules-lite role-playing game.
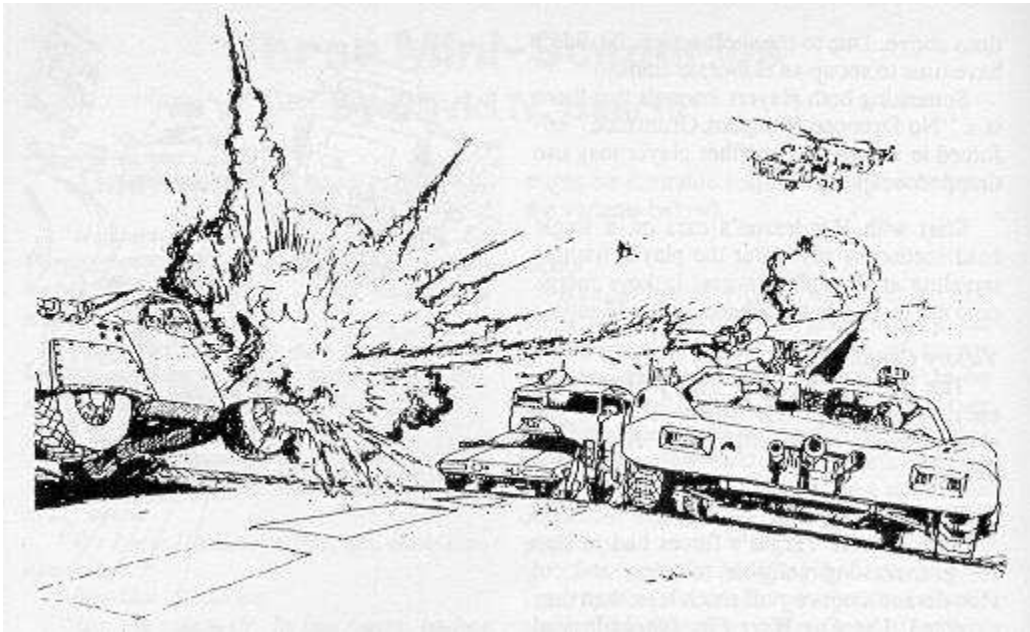
Capitalizing on these variants, SJG released *Autoduel* as one of the first worldbooks for its revolutionary new rpg, GURPS.

In the early 1990's, a former writer for SJG, S. John Ross, released a rules-lite rpg that is flexible enough to be played in any genre, Risus. Risus, too has developed a loyal fan base of folks who have adapted many genres to play.

Risus uses clichés to describe player characters. These clichés describe a variety of skills, motivations, experience levels and many other themes.

It is long past time for these two great systems to be combined into the document you now see before you: *Hard Roads*.

Inspirations: The most obvious inspirations for *Car Wars* are the *Mad Max* movies (*Mad Max, The Road Warrior, Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome)*. The

Mad Max films are loaded with Risus-worthy clichés. Look at the list of sample clichés below and see how many you can identify as characters from any of the *Mad Max* films.

In addition, Roger Corman's film *Race 2000,* and Roger Zelazny's story *Damnation Alley* contribute also to the themes.

Sample PC Clichés:

Cliche	*What It's Good For*
Burly Trucker	Wearing sweat-stained t-shirts and "gimme" caps, driving big rigs, talking on the CB, living on little sleep and caffeine, driving in convoys
Cocky Arena Duellist	Playing to the crowd, wearing flashy colors, shooting cars, driving cars, taking chances
Cold-hearted Mercenary	Selling combat skills to highest bidder, knowing about weapons, using weapons
Crackerjack Mechanic	Tinkering with engines, fixing engines, improving engines
Geeky Computer Hacker	Wearing glasses, never having a date, breaking into computer networks, building computer equipment
Law Enforcement Officer	Aresting people, giving people tickets, chasing people, shooting people
Merciless Bounty Hunter	Hunting criminals, capturing criminals, shooting criminals
Miracle-working Medic	Saving lives, administering first aid, giving drugs
Outlaw Biker	Wearing leather, riding motorcycle, terrorizing women and children, hijacking lone vehicles
Punk Anarchist	Wearing orange hair, having piercings, advocating the overthrow of the government, planting bombs
Repo Man	Breaking into vehicles, driving vehicles, getting shot at
Road Duellist	Driving cars, shooting cars on highway, taking license plates
Scavenger	Looking for wrecks, picking over wrecks, salvaging items from wrecks, selling salvage
Trustworthy Courier	Delivering packages, taing tips
Vehicle Gunner	Riding "shotgun", shooting other cars

Vehicles: The real stars of *Car* Wars are, well, the cars. In *Car Wars*, vehicles are even more highly detailed than the drivers! In Risus, players purchase vehicles as per "Sidekicks and Shieldmates" rules from the *Risus Companion*. The GM may rule that certain vehicles must be purchased at "double-pump" values. In other words, the cost will be *two* dice for a four-dice vehicle, but at least one cliché must be double-pumped. All equipment and weapons must be detailed in the character, er, vehicle description. Weapons will be considered "tools of the trade" for any combat-oriented clichés. If the item is not listed on

the description, it cannot be used.

Sample Vehicle Cliches

Cliche	*What It's Good For*
Lightly-armed Subcompact	Driving fast, carrying courier packages
Machine-gun-equipped Compact	"Hit and run" fighting, Drive-by shooting
Rocket-Launching Mid-Sized	Arena Autoduelling
Marauding Big Rig Truck	Carrying heavy loads cross country, running roadblocks
Assault Van	Transporting SWAT Team members, carrying sophisticated equipment
Heavy Police Cruiser	Car chasing, carrying "perps"

Vehicular Combat: The mechaning for this uses the Teaming Up rules from page 3 of the standard ruleset with the following variations: PC's and their vehicles are considered a "Team". The Vehicle is the Team Leader and the PC will add his "sixes" to dice rolls where appropriate. In a combat, only the vehicle takes "damage," i.e., loses dice upon losing a combat round. There is no "noble sacrifice and vegeance" rule in effect. When the vehicle is reduced to zero, the team is Disbanded, and the PC takes the one-die loss to his driving (or autoduelling) cliché.

Where more than one vehicle wants to form a team, then standard Teaming Up rules apply; only the vehicles form teams (not vehicles plus their drivers), and when the team loses a combat round, the "noble sacrifice and vengeance" rules apply. When the Lead Vehicle is reduced to zero, then the team disbands and all remaining vehicles lose one die of "damage."

Additional Notes: There are some elements of cyberpunk in Car Wars. However, these will be minimal. The vast World Wide Web was severely compromised in the collapse of society. Some of the major metropolitan areas still maintain extensive computer networks, but these will be minimal.

HARD ROADS
Character Sheet

Player Name _____

Character Name _____

Cliches   **(Dice)**

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Lucky Shots:

Tools/Equipment

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Character Sketch

Description

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Tale

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Vehicle

Cliches   **(Dice)**

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Tools/Equipment/Arms

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Vehicle Sketch