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Consortium
March 2013
Rules and Scenario

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The following are the rules for *Consortium*, a real-time, real-space roleplaying game sponsored by the MIT Assassins' Guild. You are responsible for knowing these rules. Many of them are nigh-impossible to enforce and rely upon the honor system. Do not cheat. Do not abuse loopholes. Play fair. Be your own harshest critic.

The **gamemasters** (**GMs**) run the game. If you have any problems or questions concerning the game, contact a GM. Rulings they make are final. They may violate the letter of the rules to preserve the spirit. The GMs promise to be as fair and reasonable as possible. Neither they nor these rules are perfect.

This game is intended to be fun. Getting into character, roleplaying, being dramatic, and playing competitively can all increase the fun of the game. Do not take the game too seriously. Even if you are losing, keep a good attitude. When the game is over, the real winners are the players with the best stories.

This is only a game. Everyone involved should act with courtesy, sportsmanship, patience, and taste. The GMs may expel anyone they believe to be violating the spirit of the rules or the game. Emotions may run high. If you think things are crossing the line from game to reality too much, or if you are just getting too stressed, calm down and maybe take a break. Stay in control. Use common sense. Always, play safely, then play to have fun.

This game is a work of fiction. Although it may refer to things in the real world, it does so only for the sake of the scenario. It does not represent the opinions of the GMs or the MIT Assassins' Guild. These rules are modifications of those used in previous games. This game and all materials thereof are copyright 2013 by Ken Clary, Jason Gonsalves, Joy Perkinson, Eli Stickgold, Christian Ternus, and the MIT Assassins' Guild.

Contents

1   Scenario

Timeline   Game is set from September 8, 2025 to September 17, 2025. Real-world dates in March become dates in September.

- Late 2012: Somali Transitional Federal Government ends, Federal Government of Somalia inaugurated.
- Late 2013: Syrian civil war escalates.
- Early 2014: Syrian President Assad killed by mortar fire; Syrian civil war ends.
- Late 2014: Somali Mining Consortium forms, acquires exclusive mining rights from Federal Government.
- Early 2015: Discovery of unusually pure veins of rare earths and rare earth compounds announced. (Herein referred to as Red, Blue, Green, Yellow, White, or Black Rare Earth.)
- Late 2015: Federal Government, backed by Somali Mining Consortium, unites and pacifies clans in Somalia. Somaliland official re-incorporated into Somalia.
- Early 2016: Mogadishu Corporate Development (MCD) project begun. Relaxed business regulations, access to rare earth mining, and other incentives bring a great deal of corporate investment.
- Late 2016: MCD Educational Work Program instantiated. Accelerated education/internship/apprenticeship system provides swathes of skilled technical labor to MCD corporations. Turnaround time for full education projected to 5 years.
- Early 2017: Somali Mining Consortium dissolved; interests absorbed into Federal Government. Mogadishu Chamber of Commerce formed by MCD lease holders.
- Early 2018: Beginning of Amazon.com Space Elevator project.
- Late 2020: First launch of space elevator counterweight.
- Late 2021: First material connection between Earth's surface and geostationary orbit.
- Early 2022: Material failure of space elevator "scaffolding."
- Late 2022: Launch of second space elevator counterweight.
- Early 2024: Stable material connection between surface and counterweight established.
- Early 2025: Amazon.com Space Elevator projected to be operational by end of year.
- 1 week ago: Apparent small "tactical" nuclear device goes off just over the border in Ethiopia (technically contested territory).
- 5 days ago: Two attacks in Mogadishu: HaroldVex, LLC is attacked by unidentified militants, office is looted and all employees die in the fighting, massive explosion takes out upper floors of Sony offices, kills majority of Sony executives.
- 4 days ago: Unrest amongst clans and militia factions becomes apparent throughout Somalia.
- 3 days ago: Cargo ship El Ataullah shows up in the harbor, is bought by Federal Government, and quarantined.
- 3 days ago: Mogadishu goes on lockdown. The harbor and airport are closed. The roads in and out are blockaded. Unknown entities cut the main fiber cable connecting Mogadishu to the internet.
- Today: Fiber restored.

Mogadishu and Somalia: Somali culture draws influence from northeast Africa, the Arabian peninsula, and parts of of southeast Asia. The majority of Somalis are Sunni Muslims – if your character is a Somali native and you do not know otherwise, you can assume your character is Sunni Muslim (to whatever extent they are religious). The capital of Somalia is Mogadishu, known locally as Xamar (see the *Pronunciation* section), a port city on the southern coast of Somalia. In this game, due to the events of the previous ten years, the culture of Mogadishu has shifted notably towards Western-style capitalism and a more secular and nationalist viewpoint. Education levels are also extremely high – in 2025, Somalia has one of the highest rates of college graduation in the world, thanks to the MCD Work Education Program. This has also resulted in a loosening of traditional gender roles in the country.

Somali Clans: Feel free to check out wikipedia for some general information (circa 2013) about the affiliations of the various clans and warlords.

- **Abgaal:** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abgaal) The Abgaal consider Xamar to be their traditional territory. The native population here is still over 50% Abgaal. They have the greatest affiliation with and representation in the Federal Government. For example, the enforcer of the common law in the city and the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce are both Abgaals.
- **Darod:** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darod) The Darod were involved heavily with the mineral boom of the past ten years. The first mines producing the new rare earth minerals were operated by Darod miners.
- **Isaaq:** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaaq) The Isaaq were quite reluctant to give up self-proclaimed sovreignity in the largely Isaaq dominated autonomous state of Somaliland in order to unify with the rest of Somalia. The steep difference in economic climate finally convinced them.

- **Al Shabaab:** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Shabaab_(militant_group)) Al Shabaab has experienced the largest change in views since 2013. After the unification of Somalia, Al shabbab was vocally outspoken against the Federal Government and the rise of Western Influence in the area. There was a brief insurgency, including several terrorist attacks attributed to Al Shabaab. In 2018, with their numbers diminished from a government offensive, Al Shabaab reached a peace agreement with the Federal government.
Over the past 7 years, Al Shabaab has seen a change in leadership and direction. (Note that the current leader of Al Shabaab is a woman, something that would have been unthinkable 10 years ago.) They now operate as a pro-Islamic political organization within Somalia. The Federal government supports their presence in the country. There have been no terrorist attacks in the past 7 years attributed to Al Shabaab.

Pronunciation: Names of characters, locations, and items are taken from a diverse set of ethnicities and cultures. To aid realism and immersion, we would like to make an attempt at correct pronunciation. The playerlist and your contact lists provide a pronunciation guide for character names.

In Somali, the letter X is pronounced like the "h" sound as it appears in Arabic, Yiddish, or Hebrew. It can be approximated as making an "h" sound while gently clearing your throat, and is guttural. You may have heard it in words such as "Hanukkah."

In Somali, the letter R is slightly rolled.

One word you may use frequently is "Xamar," the local name for the city of Mogadishu. As mentioned before, the letter X is pronounced like a guttural H. A's are soft, as in the word "car." R's are slightly rolled. The accent is on the first syllable. The result sounds like a more Arabic pronunciation of the word "hammer."

Another name you may use is "El Ataullah," the name of the ship in the harbor. The pronunciation is "ehl aht-OWL-ah."

The names of the warlord affiliations (clans and Al Shabaab) are:

- Abgaal: AHB-gahl (moving this slightly towards "EHB-gahl" is also okay)

- Al Shabaab: ahl shah-BOB

- Darod: dah-ROHD (with a lightly rolled R)

- Isaaq: ee-SAHK

Game Times: Game runs from 8pm on Friday to 2am on Sunday. Surviving PCs are expected to be in-game for the entirety. Game may end early. Cleanup and Wrapup will follow the end of game. **Game break** will occur from 6am Tuesday through 6pm Wednesday. Electronic communication will be allowed during then, but no mechanics or other game action.

In-game **auctions** will be held at **9pm** every night in the Mogadishu Chamber of Commerce.

Game Areas: Most publicly-accessible areas on campus are considered in-game (your character can move about freely in them). As usual, avoid places it is illegal for you to go, areas under construction, etc. Don't take game actions in bathrooms, private offices, activity offices, and other places not all players would be allowed to enter.

When in living areas, such as dorms, remember the *Player Rooms* section. Many living areas on campus are not technically accessible to all players. Whether or not to take game action in your living area is left to player judgment.

The **GM Control Room** is room 24-407. You may leave personal items with the GMs. The **Common Room** is the Bakaara Cafe (Common Room) (24-121). Do not leave food, trash, or personal items in the Common Room overnight. Other public locations include the Hospital (24-307) and the Mogadishu Chamber of Commerce (8-205).

First floor classrooms represent **secure locations**; see *Secure Locations* below.

Floors higher than 1 of **building 13** are not publicly accessible.

2   Getting Started

2.1   Character Packets

Your character packet is a big manila envelope. It contains your role: who you are, what you're up to; everything about your part as a **player-character** (**PC**) in the game. Read all the contents and generally keep them with you during the game. If you are missing something or find something which doesn't seem to belong to you, tell one of the GMs. Character packets are confidential. Game materials which cannot be given to other players are marked "Not Transferable," whereas things which can be given to others are marked "Freely Transferable" or "Game Item."

Name-Badge: A name-badge with your player name, character description, and **badge number** on it shows that you are in the game; wear it visibly while you are playing. It represents your character's body in-game. Badge numbers are not in-game information. See the *Character Bodies* and *Badge Numbers* sections for more details.

Character Sheet: Your character sheet describes who you are and what you are up to. It contains a list of everything else that should be in your character packet. Do not show or read your character sheet to other players.

Bluesheets: A bluesheet describes information common to members of a group. When in conflict, character sheet information overrides bluesheet information. Do not show or read a bluesheet to other players.

Greensheets: A greensheet describes and expands abilities, mechanics, or in-game knowledge. Do not show or read a greensheet to other players.

Stat Card: Your stat card lists your statistics. You might not know what all of your stats mean. Do not show your stats to others. The reverse side is a **death report**; fill it out and give it to the GMs when your character dies.

Ability Cards: An ability card explains a special ability your character has. The front side describes the effects; show it to players when you use the ability. The reverse is the rules of use and must not be shown to other players.

Memory/Event Packets: A memory packet is an envelope or stapled piece of paper with a **trigger** which describes when to open and read it. If the trigger is a number, open the packet when you see something with that number. If it's a quoted phrase, open when you hear or read it in-game. If it's a symbol, open when instructed. Do not take game action based on an unopened trigger. Do not show or read a memory packet to other players.

Items: In-game items may be transferred from character to character, and should be marked as such. See the *Items Etc.* section for more details.

2.2   Reality and Game Reality

There is a big difference between reality and game reality. Players must treat each other with courtesy and explain to each other what their characters perceive in confusing situations; e.g. "My character's hands are covered in blood," an **out-of-game** statement. Characters are under no such restrictions, and may do what it takes to further their goals; e.g. "Uh, hi Bob. Just got back from the butcher shop," an **in-game** statement.

Metagaming is inferring in-game knowledge that is inappropriate for your character from out-of-game information. Do your best to not metagame and especially to prevent the risk of metagaming. Be your own harshest critic.

Halts: A halt pauses game action. To call one, say "game halt" in a clear and audible voice; other players around a corner should hear you, but you shouldn't scare some poor grad student. End a halt by saying "3, 2, 1, resume." Call a halt for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, for safety and similar out-of-game issues, or to pause game and fetch a GM (which you should avoid).

Not-Here: You may go not-here by turning your name-badge around so the "I'm Not Here" side is showing (or by removing your badge entirely, if you are leaving game). Putting a hand on your head, visible from a distance, helps if you're near other players. Go not-here for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, to leave game, or to fetch a GM while in a halt (which you should avoid).

When you are not-here, your character is not there. Your character cannot see, hear, or remember any game actions or information you (the player) happen to encounter. Avoid other characters, common game areas, game signs, or any sort of game interaction. To leave or enter game for the night/day/whatever, walk to somewhere public. Don't go not-here in front of other characters; give them a fair chance to interact with (ambush) you.

Non-Players: Use tact and common sense when dealing with non-players (**NPs**). You are encouraged to spread the gospel of real-time, real-space roleplaying; however, many NPs prefer to sleep, study, or work undisturbed.

NPs may not knowingly affect the game. They and their rooms may not be used to hold items or information. They may not help you kill. Do not use the presence of NPs to hide from rampaging mobs that want your blood.

Avoid conspicuous or threatening game actions in front of NPs. Shooting your friend outside of a classroom one minute before class lets out is a bad idea, as is screaming bloody murder down a hallway. If, despite your most valiant efforts, some NPs do get upset, call the GMs who will help calm them down.

Player Rooms: Players may retreat to their rooms to study, sleep, or whatever in safety. Your character may not enter a player's room unless invited in-game. This has traditionally been called the "jhereg rule." Do not use your room as an impenetrable meeting place or stash site. If your character is in-game in your room, other characters may interact with (kill, torture) you. Roommates and similar are considered to have separate rooms for this rule.

Observers: An observer is someone not playing the game who has agreed to watch. They generally wear a white headband or an observer name-badge. Observers have traditionally been called "ghosts." They should stay out of the way; you can always ask an observer to leave. If a friend who is not playing wants to observe game, send them to the GMs.

Non-Player-Characters: Non-player-characters (**NPCs**) are characters in the game's universe not played by a full-time player. They are minor characters, bit parts, or random people. Some may have name-badges; sometimes called "GM plants," these are often not readily distinguishable from PCs.

Mechanics: Many actions your character can take, such as walking, talking, and general interaction with other characters, are represented by you doing them. Others, like combat, are performed via abstract mechanics, which are described in ability cards, greensheets, and rules. The abstract information for mechanics (like badge numbers) may not be discussed in-game. If you want to do something special for which there is no mechanic, ask a GM.

Become familiar with your mechanics before game starts, especially those which occur under time-pressure (like combat). Game action will not stop for memory packets, greensheets, or such.

A **kludge** (and derivative forms like "kludge-ite") is something impervious to logic and cleverness, usually for game-balance. You can't affect a kludge without a specified mechanic.

Zone of Control (**ZoC**) is a rough distance measurement. You are within ZoC of someone if your outstretched fingers can touch their outstretched fingers. Double-ZoC is twice this distance, triple-ZoC is three times, etc.

Headbands represent obvious visual effects; wear them visibly on your head. If you see a headband and don't know what it represents, ask. If you are wearing a headband, tell people what their characters see.

An **interruptible** mechanic has some duration, and may involve continuous roleplaying. It is stopped if you are attacked or if someone within ZoC says **"I stop you"** or an equivalent phrase. Some mechanics may be easier or harder to interrupt.

A **n-count** is an interruptible mechanic with a repeated, counted incant ("I pour a drink 1, I pour a drink 2, I pour a drink 3"). Speak clearly; each count must take at least a full second. Each n-count will specify the number, e.g. a 3-count.

Safety: This is a game. Real violence is unacceptable. Game action should cause no real-world damage, either to people or property. If something dangerous is happening, call a halt. Stay in control, use common sense, and do not endanger yourself or others. You should not run or otherwise force your way into or through someone else's ZoC, and you should not make physical contact with another player without permission.

2.3   Basic Strategy

> *"Look, if Le Chiffre is that well-connected, he knows who I am and where the money's from. Which means he's decided to play me anyway. So he's either desperate or he's overly confident, but either way, that tells me something about him. And all he gets in return is a name he already has."*
> *"And now he knows something about you. He knows you're reckless."*
>
> *– Casino Royale*

Make sure you understand the rules. If you are completely confused, get a GM who will try to help you out. Make sure you know enough about your character to role-play him or her when you start talking to other people. Read through your entire packet a couple of times, and skim through it again right before game starts. If you don't know something about your character, ask a GM.

As a character, your first priority should be to open lines of communication. Contact people, show up at meetings, and chat. Try to be easy to get in touch with. Ask people questions on relevant subjects. They'll probably lie, but you may find something out.

The game is mostly about taking considered risks, and most risks come from conflict with other PCs: some people will be willing to fight, die, and/or kill over various plots. When you talk to other PCs, you risk exposing your goals, motivations, and secrets to people who may want to stop you, but you can gain the reward of help, resources, and trust. There are no guarantees that you can trust anyone, but since cooperation is the key to accomplishing things, you will be forced to trust people anyway. The most trustworthy people are probably those who need you.

3   Items Etc.

Many in-game items are represented by little white cards with a number and description. Item cards may be shown to others, passed around, stolen, etc. The **item number** on the card is not in-game information and may not be discussed. Not all in-game items have cards or numbers; whatever they are represented by should be clearly marked "in-game item" or "freely transferable."

Use common sense. You can't carry a hundred rocks in your pocket, fold a sword in half, or hide a life-sized statue in a fire hose. You can't stop a bullet with a set of blueprints or rip apart a metal safe with your bare hands. Even if your bag can carry a shovel in it, the shovel noticeably sticks out ("you see a shovel sticking out of my bag").

Written Information: If you write in-game information down on a piece of paper, that paper is now an in-game item and must be clearly marked as such. Don't write in-game information on out-of-game documents (character sheet, etc.). Don't write out-of-game information (like memory packet triggers) on in-game documents.

Envelopes: Some items and locations may have an attached envelope (or just be a labeled packet or folded paper). The envelope may include directions for when to open these ("open packet if you press the big red button" or "open packet if you eat this"); otherwise you may only open them if instructed. Close them when you are done. Open and close packets gently.

Signs: Some locations and other game materials are represented by signs or packets posted throughout game area. You may read any signs and must follow any rules printed on them. If a sign or packet doesn't have some sort of in-game description (it only has out-of-game mechanics information, like a number or just a colored dot), then your character doesn't even see it or know that anything unusual is there.

Bulkiness: A bulky item is too big or heavy to be carried or concealed freely. Bulkiness is measured in **hands** or **dots** (how many hands it takes to carry it). If you are carrying a bulky item, make it clear to onlookers (hold the card). A hand carrying a bulky object may do nothing else. With one hand less than required, you may drag a bulky item at a slow pace.

Props: Some items may have props (physical representations or **physreps**) associated with them. The card and physrep should be kept together. If they are separated, the card is the real item. Prop items are as bulky as the physrep. They can be carried in bags that can hold them, on straps that are attached to them, etc.

Containers: Some items, like crates or personal bags, have a **capacity**. Capacity is measured in dots or hands; this is how many dots of items can be stored within. You can put as many non-bulky items inside as is within reason. A container may have a capacity bigger than its bulkiness; use common sense when nesting containers. Put contained item cards inside the envelope attached to the container card.

Character Bodies: A body is **3 hands bulky** and usually represented by a name-badge. It must be willing or unable to resist for you to carry it. Carry the badge conspicuously. Onlookers can't tell if it's dead without close examination, unless it would be obvious (like headless).

3.1 Searching, Stashing, and Stealing

Places: To search a place, search it. Normal items can be stashed in any reasonable, legal place. Don't put items behind locked doors, inside ceilings, in construction sites, or in hacking locations; consequently, don't go rummaging through such places for game items. Don't stash or search in places that are not in-game; see the *Game Areas* section for more information.

People: All searches of characters or their belongings are conducted via player dialogue. Someone must be willing or unable to resist for you to search them. You need at least one free hand to search someone. Searching is interruptible (see above).

You can perform a **pat-down search**, which will only reveal the presence of weapons. This takes as much time as it takes your victim to tell you what you find. If you're the victim, do this at a reasonable pace.

A **total search** is an invasive, complete search of a character's clothing. This reveals all in-game items, and takes as long as your victim spends handing over possessions. If you're the victim, hand over items at a reasonable pace.

Bags: To search a bag in someone's possession, say "I search your bag." This proceeds just as a total search. To search an unattended bag, search the physrep. Don't look through someone's character packet, read their psets, steal their lunch, etc. If the bag has an attached, displayed item card with an envelope, the bag is a prop; search the envelope and not the bag.

If you want to leave in-game items in an unattended bag (e.g. to hide a bomb), keep items in reasonable places that could be found with a quick search of the bag. Don't hide in-game materials mixed together with out-of-game materials. You can attach an item card and envelope to segregate in-game items from out-of-game materials.

4 Secure Locations

Any campus room on the **first floor** may be a secure location. Secure locations are marked by a small sign on or next to the doorframe (visible from outside the room). If a room has such a sign, you may neither open the door nor enter without **access** or being let in by someone with access. Access will be denoted on character sheets and other means.

Signs and other contents of secure locations (devices, equipment, storage lockers, etc.) will be hidden in the room, taped to the underside of desks, behind (small) furniture, and in similar places. Items, including bulky ones, may be stashed freely inside secure locations; they represent large and complex spaces, so common sense does not always apply. In general, secure locations will be set up to reduce the chance of getting grunged.

5 Webapp

The game webapp is located at **http://consortium.so**. Your character sheet and stat card will have your login and password. Do not attempt to hack or break the webapp; this includes viewing the source or otherwise attempting to circumvent interface or access restrictions. The webapp interface is *not in game* – don't show it to others.

- **Characters:** shows your profile and that of others, and allows you to adjust preferences, e.g. email or SMS.
- **Ask GMs:** allows you to view and ask GM questions.
- **Market:** if you have the Bakaara Market greensheet, you may access the market here.
- **Territory:** if you have the Territory Control greensheet, you may access that mechanic here.
- **Security:** used by the Security mechanic; see that greensheet for details.
- **Keycards:** allows you to look up and print keycards by number (see below). Don't try to guess keycard numbers.
- **Succession:** some organizations have lines of succession, dictating who has control over shared resources and who gains control when that person is removed from game. You can see your position on this page. There may be separate lines for individual powers (signatory, military, etc.). The person at the top of a line can re-order it, and may have access to additional information and powers.
- **Mail:** you may send and receive in-game mail through this interface. Characters and some groups have mailboxes. Secret mailboxes exist and are referenced by a code. You may send anonymous mail if you have the Hacking skill.

6 Skills and Trails

Some tasks require points of skills; skills are listed on your statcard. Skill points may come from different people; they are always spent for specific purposes, not transfered. They may be spent remotely, via phone, zephyr, IM, or other realtime communication. Some uses will specify restrictions and guidelines for remote useage. Skill usage must be clear to players; do not lie about spending points.

Hard skills have a value listed as a number of points per day. Most PCs have only one hard skill and/or no more than 3 points total in hard skills. There are 6 basic hard skills: **Engineering**, which is general engineering and technical problem solving; **Research**, which is the general skill of generating and analysing data; **Investigation**, the skill of getting information from people; **Administration**, organizing people and sociologial problem solving; **Security**, including information, tactical, and personal security analysis; and **Market**, used for the Market section of the webapp.

Soft skills have a value listed as a number of points per **inspiration**. PCs might have any number of soft skills; they are usually optional ways to gain extra information or reduce mechanical requirements. You convert a point of inspiration to the listed number of points of the soft skill. You can't split a single point of inspiration between different skills. When you complete a step from a key trail (see below), anyone who spent one or more points from any skill for that step may flip a coin twice: if it is heads both times, that person gains one point of inspiration.

Key Trails: A key trail is a series of different steps, each of which requires a keycard, a number of skill points, and various other tasks. Each key trail has a notebook detailing the steps, some pages of which you can't open until you've completed preceeding steps. Notebooks are out-of-game and cannot be shown to or stolen by people who do not start with access to them. You may give someone a copy of a trail by spending **Administration 1** plus **Administration 1** for each unopened page.

A **keycard** is a freely copyable item which contains agglomerated data. Successfully completing a step will usually give you a new keycard. A collection of keycards from your trail is the in-game representation of the trail's information and progress. If you lose your notebook, you may get a new copy and automatically progress as far as you have the the requisite keycards.

You may keep keycards as a virtual, out-of-game list on paper, a computer, or other electronic device; the list must include the name and number of the keycards, and anyone who searches you can get copies of all keycards in the list. You may also keep keycards as items and stash them; neither you nor people who search you will have access to them.

- Each keycard lists one or more soft skills; by spending one point in each of the listed soft skills you can get the in-game description for the step/keycard.
- If someone helps with a step, give them the description.
- If their help includes any points of any skills, give them a copy of the resulting keycard.
- If their help includes points of hard skills, also give them the preceding keycard (if there is one).

Zendo steps represent some form of training. One person, the **student**, needs to correctly deduce a **koan**. Koans are rules (like "all vowels") that describe a string of 4 letters ("ABCD" or "AABB"). Any number of people may act as **teacher** to help the student: a teacher may only write down strings that follow the koan in one column or incorrect strings in another column.

Pictionary steps represent some form of brainstorming. One person, the **brainstorming lead**, has a list of words and draws pictures, attempting to get the other participants to say the words. Only one person with the notebook may be the lead; no-one else may know the words. The step is complete once the participants have said all of the words. As lead, you may not give any clues through verbal or physical communication. You may indicate "yes," "no," and "close" in response to guesses. You may not draw words or make other attempts at language.

Engineering steps generally require you to write sentences or whole stories to certain specifications. The results should be coherent, with correct spelling and grammar.

Dots are tiny, innocuously hidden white signs.

Keycards and the Webapp From the *Keycards* page of the webapp, you can enter the number for any keycard you possess to get that keycard's page. From there, you may:

- Print a copy of the keycard.
- Learn the in-game description of the keycard, if you spend the appropriate skill(s).
- Learn the pictionary words for a corresponding step.
- Learn the zendo koan for a corresponding step.
- Learn a hint, if the step has a hint and you spend the appropriate skill(s).

7 Violence, Damage, and Death

Health States: Characters have five possible states, concerning health and damage. When you are **fine**, you may act freely. When you are **restrained**, you are helpless and may do nothing but talk. When you are **knocked out**, you will wake up in 2 minutes. When you are **wounded**, you are unconscious, bleeding, and will die in 5 minutes. When **dead**, you are dead.

When knocked out or wounded, fall down and drop anything you are holding. Just lie there. You won't be doing much of anything until you wake up. Do not listen to conversations going on. If you are wounded, the **First Aid** ability might help you survive. A stay in the **Hospital** might fix you up: see the greensheet therein.

Dead men tell no tales. If dead, do not give out any information to any players. You may play the part of your corpse; describe obvious information to onlookers ("I have a gunshot wound in my back"). When you leave, place the front of your name-badge with a description of the body's obvious state. Take the "I'm Not Here" side to wear. Stack your items with your body. Fill out your Death Report. Make sure the GMs know about your death. If your death becomes generally known to the other characters, you may be able to become an observer. Until the game is over, you may not convey game information to any player.

Status Effects: Some things may cause other status effects. The cause will state the duration. None of these can affect an ongoing combat by force: if something gives you a status effect in the middle of combat, you may ignore it until there is a lull.

- **Addled:** you can't run longer than short bursts; you can't concentrate well (wait 30 seconds before using skills or mental mechanics). Anytime you are knocked out, you wake up addled, which lasts until you sleep overnight.
- **Injured:** you can't move faster than a slow walk; you can't concentrate well (same as addled); your CR is reduced by 1; your carrying capacity is reduced by 1 hand of bulkiness.
- **Walking wounded:** you will become wounded in 15 minutes; you can't move faster than a slow walk; you can't perform any mechanics other than gunfire or button-pushing; your CR is 0; your carrying capacity is reduced by 1 hand of bulkiness.

You have a **stamina** (**ST**) stat: traumatic things like torture, excessive bloodletting, and surgery may lower it. A healthy character has a ST of 3. If it is too low, a doctor may no longer be able to fix you. ST will only affect you or change via explicit mechanics.

Weapons and Rope: All weapons have physreps; all physreps must be approved by the GMs. To use a weapon, you must have it in your hand and unobstructed. Display it in an obvious manner. You cannot hold more than one weapon in a hand. You may only use one melee weapon at a time. All weapons (blunt, edged, guns) are freely available.

Rope is freely available. To tie someone up, they must be either willing or helpless; it takes 1 minute and is interruptible. Untying them takes a 10-count. When tied up with rope, you are restrained. If conscious and left alone, you can wriggle free in 5 minutes.

Killing Blow: A killing blow will kill a helpless victim. Your victim must be within ZoC and either unconscious or restrained. You must use a weapon (melee or ranged). A killing blow requires a 3-count (see above; "killing blow 1, killing blow 2, killing blow 3"). To stop a killing blow, either attack the person doing it or say "I stop you" within ZoC.

7.1 Ranged Combat

> *"God made man. Ray Plastics and/or Gordy Toys made men equal."*

All **bullets** (any toy gun projectile) have the same effect: if and when you are hit by one, you are **wounded**. Ammo is unlimited. Ranged combat is real-time and mostly based on player skill at firing and dodging; keep it safe. Hits to anywhere on the body count the same; don't aim for the head. Hits to clothing or long hair that would not hit the body when passing through don't count. Hits to an item you hold count as hits on you, not the item. If there is a conflict over a hit, the shooter calls the shot.

Killshot: You may incant "killshot" when firing a single shot. You must make it absolutely clear which shot is the killshot, and should not fire other shots for at least a second before and after. If you are hit by a killshot, and are already helpless, you die. If there is any confusion about which shot was the killshot or who was hit by it, ignore it.

Personal Armor: Concealable armor exists; someone shot while wearing it will be **knocked out**; killshots still kill.

7.2   Martial Combat

All characters have a **Combat Rating** (**CR**) stat. This represents your basic skill in martial combat; you use the same number for attacking and defending. Someone with a CR of 1 can't fight very well. Someone with a CR of 3 is somewhat burly or skilled. When using this stat, you may pull your punches by using a lower number.

To martial-attack someone, clearly state your attack and CR ("Knock Out 2", "Wound 2", etc.) from within ZoC. You need the ability card for any attack you make; you don't have to display it. Your attack must resolve before you make another; otherwise, you may act freely. If an ally directs **Assist** at you after you attack, you may, within 2 seconds, restate your attack with the Assist's CR added ("Wound 3", "Assist 2", "Wound 5"). Assist does not change your CR for defense. You may ignore an Assist.

When martial-attacked, resolve by comparing the attack against your CR. If your CR is lower, take the effects; else, say "**resist**" and the attack has no effect. If you neither say "resist" nor state your own attack within 2 seconds of the incant's end, you are surprised and the attack just works. The attack begins when the incant begins; until you resolve, all of your actions other than martial attacks are interrupted; serial attacks don't prevent simple actions (talking, weapon-drawing, ranged attacks) in-between. Resolve all attacks alone, in the order they occur; choose the order if it is unclear. If you are attacked with "**waylay**" instead of a CR ("Knock Out waylay"), the attack just works.

Martial Attack Abilities: Here is a list of attack abilities. Everyone has Knock Out, Wound, and Assist. Only some people will have Disarm and Restrain. Other attack abilities may exist.

Knock Out: You can knock someone out as an attack. This requires a **blunt** weapon. Say "Knock Out" and your CR.
<div align="right">Effect: I knock you out.</div>

Wound: You can wound someone as an attack. This requires an **edged** weapon, such as a knife. Say "Wound" and your CR.
<div align="right">Effect: I wound you.</div>

Assist: You can assist someone else's attack. You must be within ZoC of both the attacker and target. Within two seconds of an attack, direct this at the attacker, saying "Assist" and your CR.   *Effect*: I assist your attack.

Disarm: You can disarm one item from someone as an attack. Say "Disarm" and your CR. Point at the item you want to disarm. If the attack works, they must drop that item.   *Effect*: I disarm that item.

Restrain: You can restrain someone as an attack. Say "Restrain" and your CR. You may freely drag, attack, or (if you have a weapon) killing-blow them. To do anything else, or if your health state changes, incant "release" and let them go.
<div align="right">Effect: I restrain you. You are restrained until I incant "release."</div>

7.3   Stealth

Stealth abilities represent sneaking up on a victim with obvious intent to invade their personal space, probably to attack them by surprise or to pick their pocket.

To use a stealth ability, you must be within ZoC of your victim. Form the sign of the devil (index and pinky fingers extended, thumb holding other two fingers down) and extend it along the direct, unobstructed line from your shoulder to the victim's head. Hold this position for the time specified by your ability. Before this time is up, the ability is thwarted if anyone attacks you or if the victim notices the symbol. If they react in any way to the symbol, they have noticed; you (the attacker) make the call.

If you notice someone using a stealth ability on you, make it obvious. "I notice you" is unambiguous; use it if you can. Once a stealth ability is finished, you may not retroactively have noticed.

Waylay: You can attack by surprise as a stealth ability. You must hold the symbol for **5 seconds**. If you succeed, you may replace your CR with "waylay" for a single immediate attack on your victim.

8 Miscellaneous

Interrogation: Interrogation can be initiated through a variety of means; it is handled via the GMs (we have a greensheet). It will always take the PC out of game for up to 24 hours (we will be nice to the player). Questions can be for any simple piece of information: e.g. a name, unique identifier, location, quantity — not lists, and not answers to complex logic.

The PC(s) controlling the interrogation specify 2 or 3 questions (depending the interrogation's strength) by priority; if 3, the highest priority question is unblockable. The interrogee will specify 2 topics to block, by priority; answers may be blocked or partially answered as a result; this will be obvious. Questions and blocks will be vetted by GMs via dialog with players.

Legal System: There are two kinds of criminal charges: **misdemeanors**, e.g. breach of contract, illegal entry, theft, nonlethal physical assault, etc.; and **felonies**, e.g. murder, attempted murder, treason, breach of government contract, and accumulating 5 or more misdemeanors. To make an accusation, present your case to the GMs. Don't make fake or spurious charges.

A successfull charge will be publicly announced. If it is a felony, anyone can bring the target to the Mogadishu Chamber of Commerce (8-205) or Hospital (24-307). If they are held for 5 minutes, they go out of game (see the GMs); the governement will interrogate them with 3 questions, to assess guilt and information for the public good. If found guilty, they are permanently out-of-game (deported, extradited, jailed, etc. based on context).

Notarization: When making contracts, treaties, etc, you may mark the document as "OOG: notarized." This means all signatories have the relevant signatory powers. Do not forge notarized documents.

Missing Persons: When a PC dies or otherwise goes missing (no-one has heard from them for a day or so), it will be announced within 24 hours. They will be put at the bottom of their lines of succession.

Money: Money is measured in points of **Budget**, each of which is vaguely equivalent to $1000. Budget can be traded but not stolen. **Income** is a stat representing the amount of Budget you gain each day.

Kitbashing Blueprints: A blueprint is a keycard that lists **keywords** (miniturized, flying, etc.) and levelled **tech slots** (power 3, hovering 4); these are part of the in-game description and always visible. Kitbashing can alter tech slot levels: replace the tech level in the target blueprint with the matching slot's level in a source blueprint; you can't add new tech slots; the source tech slot must be original (not kitbashed); the blueprints must share at least 1 keyword. Kitbashing requires a **Systems Integration Facility** sign, and costs **Engineering 2** for each target keyword not shared by the source blueprint plus **Engineering 1**. Mark the new level and the source's keycard number (power 4 - 12345) on the target blueprint, on the card or any virtual keycard list.

Electronic Information: You may use email, zephyr, phones, and other forms of electronic communcation freely. Do not violate any rules of use of these devices (no packet sniffing, wiretapping, etc). When searching a character or their stuff, you do not get access to their electronics. Game action is allowed in Athena clusters; obey the NP rules and don't make a mess.

Day Rollover: The day rolls over at **6am**; that is when per-day abilities (like hard skills) refresh and the webapp "ticks." This is unrelated to day/night phases in the wargame; see that sheet for details.

9   New Rule Summary

- Bodies are 3 hands bulky, not 2.
- Check any first floor classroom for a secure location label on or near the doorframe before entering. If you don't have access, you can't enter or open the door without being let in.
- Bulky items can be feely stashed in secure locations. Everything in a secure location should be somewhat concealed, to help prevent grunging.
- There is a webapp. It can be used for many things. It is out-of-game and may not be shown to others.
- Skills are on your statcard. Keep track of them. Hard skills are per day; soft skills are per inspiration.
- Trail notebooks are out-of-game; the keycards they produce and need are in-game. Helping someone complete a step generally gets you a keycard and possibly more.
- Whenever a notebook step is completed, and you spent any skill points on it, flip a coin twice: if you get 2 heads, gain 1 inspiration.
- Keycards are items that may (not must) be kept as a virtual list, either electronically or on a piece of paper. If someone searches you, they get the whole list.
- Addled, injured, and walking wounded are status effects you can gain outside of combat time. Duration will vary. You have a stamina (ST) stat that generally tracks your health.
- Being knocked out lasts for 2 minutes (not 5), and you wake up with the addled status effect, which lasts until you sleep overnight.
- All weapons (blunt, edged, guns) are freely available. Get your physreps approved.
- A killshot (with the incant "killshot") is a way to execute helpless people at range. If you get hit by one when unconscious or restrained, you die.
- The *Miscellaneous* section has a few new mechanics.
- Game action is allowed in clusters. Don't break the NP rules; don't trash the place.
- Rollover/tick is at 6am.

10   Closing Notes

These rules are imperfect. The GMs may violate the letter of the rules to preserve the spirit. We hope these rules are reasonably clear, but if you have any doubts about your interpretation, talk it over with us in advance. We should also add, as much as we hate to admit it, we GMs are human: when all of our carefully laid plans are going haywire, we may lose our cool. The best way to deal with people is remaining calm and friendly, especially when everyone is tired and hungry.

We hope you have lots of fun. Good luck.