

Blind-Blue &

HATCHET CITY

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INTRO

This is an Apocalypse World 1-shot or con scenario. I call it “Blind-blue & Hatchet City” but whatever. It’s for MC + 3–5 players; it’s probably best with all 5.

The idea (thanks, Ben) is that this’d be session 4 or something of a campaign. It uses custom moves to set up what’s going on – in effect the custom moves replace the first few sessions.

TIMELINE / CHECKLIST

NOW

- You already know how to MC Apocalypse World, right? If you don’t, start there. Go to the Master of Ceremonies Playbook.
- Read through this scenario. Start with the “dear ___” letters.

THE DAY BEFORE YOU PLAY

(allow 1 hour)

- Read through this scenario again, carefully. Still start with the “dear ___” letters.
- In your head, characterize Apocalypse World around Hatchet City.
- Create two fronts, one for Ambergrease & co and one for Hatchet City’s internal threats.

RIGHT BEFORE YOU PLAY

(allow 20 minutes)

- Skim the scenario again, to bring your memory back into focus.
- Go back to your fronts and refresh yourself. Notice again what you’ll need to nail down at the beginning of play.
- Make sure you’ve got the right playbooks, dice, pencils etc.

AT THE START OF PLAY

- Announce the character types you’ll be handing out, in this order: hardholder, brainer, skinner, angel, violent person. (If you have fewer than 5 players, the hardholder, brainer, and skinner are the essential characters.)
- Who’ll be the hardholder? Pass that person the playbook and “dear hardholder” letter. Repeat for the rest, in the same order.
- Have the players start with the letters, then go on to their playbooks, and back to the letters at the end.
- Oversee character creation, introductions, Hx, as normal.
- Fill out the last details of your fronts. Finalize the hardholder’s gang lists, etc.
- With the hardholder, put Hatchet City on the map, and maybe make a map of Hatchet City itself.
- Oversee the moves in the letters.
- The session starts! The hardholder rolls for wealth (if appropriate), and away you go.

DEAR HARDHOLDER,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook, with 2 quick exceptions: your holding is named Hatchet City, and don't choose to make your gang small.

You've been waging a bloody gang-to-gang war with a rival warlord named Ambergrease. Ambergrease holds a compound a couple of miles away, across the river. His gang doesn't fight in numbers, but with viciousness beyond all reason. You've captured at least one person as his spy – a girl named Michi, who revealed herself by stabbing you.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how you're doing, what with Michi having stabbed you and all. Roll+cool. On a 10+, tell me that you're fine, you got the knife away from her before she managed to do you any harm. On a 7–9, tell me that you're fine, she cut your hand but the angel stitched it up and no real harm. On a miss, tell me that she got the knife between your ribs and you aren't really sure how well you're doing.

I'll also ask you how the war has been going. Roll+hard. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 2; on a 7–9, choose 3:

- Your border patrol, a good squad under your friend Ba, has fallen to Ambergrease's gang. No survivors.
- Ambergrease has managed to establish fortified bunkers within firing range of your compound, and is harassing you whenever you lift your head.
- Ambergrease has seized and locked down the river, cutting your holding off from traffic, trade and resupply.
- Other than Michi, you have no idea how many more spies remain, or who they might be.
- Your former lieutenant Dustwich is telling your population that she can make peace with Ambergrease and save them all, and that your time as hardholder is done. She's gaining support.

On a miss, all 5 are true. Good luck, sucker.

Love and kisses,

Your MC

DEAR BRAINER,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook.

You live in a holding called Hatchet City. Hatchet City is at war with this rival warlord named Ambergrease, whose gang fights with a viciousness beyond all reason. You're in charge of some important prisoners – a presumed spy, a captured enemy gang boss, maybe others. However and more interestingly, the world's psychic maelstrom itself seems to have turned against Hatchet City.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you what you've figured out.

Roll+weird. On a hit, ask me some of the following questions. On a 10+, ask 3; on a 7–9, ask 2:

- Is Michi really a spy for Ambergrease?
- Why is it that Ambergrease's fanatics fight so ... thoroughly?
- Upon what or whom is the world's psychic maelstrom so intent?
- Who are some other people implicated in this situation?

On a miss, ask 2 anyway, but also you are yourself implicated in the situation.

Furthermore, I'll tell you the names and circumstances of some NPCs. Choose at least 3 of the following:

- Which one is in love with you?
- Which one have you enslaved?
- Which one are you going to kill?
- Which one have you fallen in love with?

Love and kisses,

Your MC

DEAR SKINNER,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook.

You live in a holding called Hatchet City. Hatchet City is at war with this rival warlord named Ambergrease, whose gang fights with a viciousness beyond all reason. As you're the not-so-violent sort, I really hope for you that the war's over quickly and without too much devastation. You might be loyal to the hardholder, and you might not, that's up to you, but there's no question that you'll be better off if [she] loses soon than if [she] wins but burns the holding up doing it.

Before the session starts, I'll ask you how thoroughly well-positioned you are. Roll+hot. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 4; on a 7-9, choose 2:

- If you walk out of the holding, Ambergrease's people will take you directly to him, unharmed and unthreatened.
- At your word, Dustwich will open (all of) her doors to you.
- You have a key to the angel's infirmary, and the angel's kid brother Camo is your absolute puppy slave.
- You have Brimful keyed-up like a guitar string, snap your finger and he's yours.
- At the first sign of threat to you, Wooden will desert the hardholder and bring her gang to your defense.

On a miss, only this last is true, but it's true no matter what you roll:

- As the session opens, the world's psychic maelstrom itself will offer you tribute.

Love and kisses,

Your MC

DEAR ANGEL,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook.

You live in a holding called Hatchet City. Hatchet City is at war with this rival warlord named Ambergrease, whose gang fights with a viciousness beyond all reason. You're in charge not only of the wounded in battle, but of Hatchet City's overall health and material needs – you're the hardholder's representative to the population, and the population's representative to the hardholder. Thing is, difficult and disruptive shit keeps happening.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how on top of shit you are.

Roll+sharp. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 3; on a 7–9, choose 2:

- Your friend Grief has gotten close to Dustwich, and Dustwich hasn't realized that she's a threat.
- You've established a quarantine on the waders and gotten Brimful's family to enforce it.
- You've tightened the holding's decontamination procedures and gotten the hardholder's gang to abide by them. They hate it, but they're doing it.
- You've confronted your kid brother Camo about his stealing and reselling your supplies, and he's knocked it off.

On a miss, none of them are true.

Furthermore, I'll tell you the names and circumstances of some NPCs. Divvy the following out among them:

- [NPC] is just fine. Limping, but unimpaired and on [her] way back to normal life.
- [NPC] is patched up and recovering well in your infirmary.
- You've done your best for [NPC] but it's touch and go, hour by hour.
- You didn't even bother with [NPC], [her] prognosis is so terrible. [She's] dying in your infirmary as we speak.

Assign 1 of each before you assign a 2nd of any, etc.

If I ask you about the status of the hardholder, tell me that [she's] at 6:00 harm, patched up and recovering well in your infirmary.

Love and kisses,

Your MC

DEAR BATTLEBABE, CHOPPER, OR GUNLUGGER,

Go ahead and create your character, following the rules in your playbook.

You live in a holding called Hatchet City. Hatchet City is at war with this rival warlord named Ambergrease, whose gang fights with a viciousness beyond all reason. You're the leader of some violent body inside Hatchet City – maybe a lieutenant of the hardholder's, maybe a family enforcer within the holding's population, something like that.

During character creation, choose one of the following. Announce it when you go around and introduce your character:

- You head the hardholder's personal security force, [her] bodyguards.
- Your gang is the hardholder's hit-and-run smash-and-grab raiding squad (chopper only).
- You oversee the hardholder's wall and compound defense.
- You're the hardholder's enforcer, in charge of keeping control inside, not fighting the war.
- You're the captain of Brimful's family's gang.

If you're not a chopper, I'll give you your gang's stats.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how your gang's getting along with you. If you're a chopper, your gang is your gang, and you can tell me so in whatever terms come to mind when someone questions you like that. If you're a battlebabe or gunlugger, though, your gang isn't yours, you're just responsible for it, so make a roll. Battlebabe, roll+cool; gunlugger, roll+hard. On a hit, choose which of the following are true. On a 10+, choose 1; on a 7–9, choose 2:

- You're running shorter and shorter on scratch, scrounge and resupply.
- Your right-hand, Jinko, is angling for your job.
- Your hammerhead, Whychurch, is getting out of your control.
- One of your people is a spy for Ambergrease, you don't know which.

On a miss, choose 3, and as the session starts you're up to your eyeballs in a blown action.

Love and kisses,

Your MC



THE RUINAS

THE SITUATION OVERALL

OUTSIDE

Ambergrease has a pet grotesque, a perversion of birth, alive half-in the world's psychic maelstrom. This creature is named Blind-blue. With close contact it can enslave people body and brain, and that's Ambergrease's gang, of course. But more: properly mistreated, it can find vulnerable people through the world's psychic maelstrom and reach its fingers into them.

INSIDE

The waders are a guild, like. They're the mud-fishers, they provide important protein to Hatchet City in the form of these ugly-ass mud fish. Most of a meter long, snaky, bony-gilled, with fused blades for teeth. Sprinkle waste meat on the surface of the mudflats, they come up to fight for it. Now the waders are coming down with some nasty disease. It's a 4-stage parasite, one of the stages is projectile-coughing spores and bloody spray. They need quarantining pretty bad.

Brimful's family controls whatever's the most interesting gig the hardholder chose. The hardholder and Brimful have a longstanding arrangement, but nevertheless Brimful's family is an armed and organized body inside Hatchet City but out of the hardholder's control.

This guy Mammoth is Brimful's family's gang boss, with Pants, Angler and maybe 10 more. If the PC violent person chooses to be Brimful's family's gang boss, incorporate Mammoth, Pants and Angler into [her] gang. Brimful has two wives. Arbys (pr. "ar-biss") is the older and matriarch, and Snug is the younger and trophy. Brimful also has a bunch of lovers; one of them, Tip, is a spy for Ambergrease / vulnerable to Blind-blue / implicated.

Dustwich, a former lieutenant of the hardholder's, is agitating for overthrow. She's promising peace with Ambergrease and appealing to people with grudges against the hardholder, more or less cynically. Goodry, Hammer, Swiss Miss – enlist the hardholder's participation in creating their grudges, and if you need to you can fall back on these: Goodry resents the arrangement with Brimful; Hammer resents the hardholder's enforcers; with Swiss Miss it's personal. Swiss Miss is also a spy for Ambergrease / vulnerable to Blind-blue / implicated.

OWN THIS SHIT

THE DAY BEFORE YOU PLAY...

Think about imagery:

- The ruins around Hatchet City
- The river & the river-people
- Ambergrease's compound & gang
- Blind-blue
- The mudflats
- The waders' parasite

Imagine all of these, but be sure to think up some good stuff for the waders' parasite: initial symptoms, contagious stage, and what happens when the parasites mature?

Create a front for the inside threats:

- The waders (grotesque, disease vector)
- The waders' parasite (affliction, disease)
- Brimful's family (brutes, your choice)
- Dustwich and her people (brutes, your choice)

Create a front for the outside threats:

- Ambergrease and gang (warlord, your choice)
- Blind-blue (grotesque, perversion of birth)
- The ruins (landscape, your choice)
- The ruins' contamination (affliction, disease)

Create custom moves for as many of these threats as you like, but a couple of them especially call for it. The waders' parasite wants a move for when and how you're exposed to it, and what happens then. Blind-blue wants an influence move too. The particulars of Blind-blue's influence make all the difference, so create that move like crazy.

Oh and also stat up Ambergrease's gang. Maybe **3-harm gang large 1-armor**, plus because of their brain enslavement Ambergrease is always strong and present to them.

THE FINAL APPROACH

AT THE START OF THE SESSION...

THE HARDHOLDER

With the hardholder, imagine Hatchet City. Put it on the map; create another map of it in detail, too, if you want.

Here's the hardholder's gang:

- Border patrol. Boss: Ba. Others: Taboo, Manic, ___ more.
- Personal security. Boss: Rubix. Others: Pull, Mr. Whamma, ___ more.
- Hit & run, smash & grab. Boss: Atrium. Others: Salamander, Spazzo, ___ more.
- Wall & compound defense. Boss: Peanut. Others: Kickstart, Liver, ___ more.
- Internal enforcers. Boss: Wooden. Others: Mimsy, Franz, ___ more.

If the border patrol's dead, RIP the border patrol.

If the PC violent person is the internal enforcer, bump Wooden &co to hit & run, and incorporate Atrium, Salamander & Spazzo into Wooden's gang.

If the PC violent person is any other, incorporate those NPCs into [her] gang.

Kickstart and Franz are spies for Ambergrease / vulnerable to Blind-blue / implicated.

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how you're doing, what with Michi having stabbed you and all. Roll+cool. On a 10+, tell me that you're fine, you got the knife away from her before she managed to do you any harm. On a 7-9, tell me that you're fine, she cut your hand but the angel stitched it up and no real harm. On a miss, tell me that she got the knife between your ribs and you aren't really sure how well you're doing.

I'll also ask you how the war has been going. Roll+hard. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 2; on a 7-9, choose 3:

- *Your border patrol, a good squad under your friend Ba, has fallen to Ambergrease's gang. No survivors.*
- *Ambergrease has managed to establish fortified bunkers within firing range of your compound, and is harassing you whenever you lift your head.*
- *Ambergrease has seized and locked down the river, cutting your holding off from traffic, trade and resupply.*
- *Other than Michi, you have no idea how many more spies remain, or who they might be.*
- *Your former lieutenant Dustwich is telling your population that she can make peace with Ambergrease and save them all, and that your time as hardholder is done. She's gaining support.*

On a miss, all 5 are true. Good luck, sucker.

Take the results of these two moves and decide whether the hardholder's hold is secure and rule is unchallenged, for purposes of [her] wealth move.

THE BRAINER

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you what you've figured out. Roll+weird. On a hit, ask me some of the following questions. On a 10+, ask 3; on a 7-9, ask 2:

- *Is Michi really a spy for Ambergrease?*
- *Why is it that Ambergrease's gang fights so ... thoroughly?*
- *Upon what or whom is the world's psychic maelstrom so intent?*
- *Who are some other people implicated in this situation?*

On a miss, ask 2 anyway, but also you are yourself implicated in the situation.

1. Michi, like the rest, is a spy for Ambergrease, yes, but unwilling. She's acting with Blind-blue's fingers in her brain. When you answer the question, you can say "Blind-blue" if you want, or you can just say "someone", your call.
2. Ambergrease's gang fights to the end because it's brain-slaved. Again, you can say "Blind-blue" or "someone".
3. The world's psychic maelstrom is intent upon Blind-blue, like an oyster intent upon a pearl. Or if you prefer, the world's psychic maelstrom is intent upon the skinner, like a bullet is intent upon a bullseye. I'd tell both.
4. Who else is implicated? Here's the list:
 - Kickstart, of the hardholder's wall & compound defense
 - Franz, of the hardholder's internal enforcers
 - Crocker, one of the violent person PC's gang
 - Tip, one of Brimful's lovers
 - Swiss Miss, one of Dustwich's people, who also has a grudge against the hardholder
 - Michi and Stack, the brainer's prisoners, but we knew that.
 - Possibly the brainer, depending on the roll.

Furthermore, I'll tell you the names and circumstances of some NPCs. Choose at least 3 of the following:

- Which one is in love with you?
- Which one have you enslaved?
- Which one are you going to kill?
- Which one have you fallen in love with?

Here are the NPCs to list:

- Stack, the captured gang boss
- Michi, the captured spy who stabbed the hardholder
- Gramma, the brainer's assistant
- Camo, the angel's kid brother
- Pull, of the hardholder's bodyguard
- If it's now out that Tip is a spy, name her too.

THE SKINNER

Before the session starts, I'll ask you how thoroughly well-positioned you are. Roll+hot. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 4; on a 7-9, choose 2:

- If you walk out of the holding, Ambergrease's people will take you directly to him, unharmed and unthreatened.
- At your word, Dustwich will open (all of) her doors to you.
- You have a key to the angel's infirmary, and the angel's kid brother Camo is your absolute puppy slave.
- You have Brimful keyed-up like a guitar string, snap your finger and he's yours.
- At the first sign of threat to you, Wooden will desert the hardholder and bring her gang to your defense.

On a miss, only this last is true, but it's true no matter what you roll:

- As the session opens, the world's psychic maelstrom itself will offer you tribute.

That's pretty easy. The ones that are true are true, the ones that aren't, aren't.

Blind-blue is trying to reach the skinner. Not to enslave [her] but to appeal to [her], as a weird-ass psychic lover or something. Maybe Blind-blue wants to be rescued, or maybe just wants to replace Ambergrease with someone more charming.

So what tribute will the world's psychic maelstrom – that is, Blind-blue – offer? Tip! She's a sweetie for a little tribute and she can, um, proxy Blind-blue's woo.

THE ANGEL

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how on top of shit you are. Roll+sharp. On a hit, choose some of the following to be true. On a 10+, choose 3; on a 7-9, choose 2:

- *Your friend Grief has gotten close to Dustwich, and Dustwich hasn't realized that she's a threat.*
- *You've established a quarantine on the waders and gotten Brimful's family to enforce it.*
- *You've tightened the holding's decontamination procedures and gotten the hardholder's gang to abide by them. They hate it, but they're doing it.*
- *You've confronted your kid brother Camo about his stealing and reselling your supplies, and he's knocked it off.*

On a miss, none of them are true.

The true ones are true, the false ones are the interesting ones:

1. The angel's friend Grief has, yes, gotten close to Dustwich, but Dustwich has realized that she's a threat.
2. No quarantine on the waders! That means that everybody can get exposed to their parasite.
3. If there's not good decontamination, everybody who goes outside of the holding into the ruins, especially including the hardholder's gang, becomes a disease vector for the ruin's contamination.
4. Camo's stealing and reselling [her] supplies, but [she] hasn't confronted him and he hasn't knocked it off.

Furthermore, I'll tell you the names and circumstances of some NPCs. Divvy the following out among them:

- *[NPC] is just fine. Limping, but unimpaired and on [her] way back to normal life.*
- *[NPC] is patched up and recovering well in your infirmary.*
- *You've done your best for [NPC] but it's touch and go, hour by hour.*
- *You didn't even bother with [NPC], [her] prognosis is so terrible. [She's] dying in your infirmary as we speak.*

Assign 1 of each before you assign a 2nd of any, etc.

Here are the NPCs to list:

- Atrium, of the grab squad
- Spazzo, of the same
- Mr. Whamma, a bodyguard, who's taken a bullet for the hardholder
- Liminal, a little wader girl
- Rather, from the PC violent person's gang
- Goodry, one of Dustwich's people

If I ask you about the status of the hardholder, tell me that [she's] at 6:00 harm, patched up and recovering well in your infirmary.

Ha ha.

THE BATTLEBABE, CHOPPER, OR GUNLUGGER

During character creation, choose one of the following. Announce it when you go around and introduce your character:

- You head the hardholder's personal security force, [her] bodyguards.
- Your gang is the hardholder's hit-and-run smash-and-grab raiding squad (chopper only).
- You oversee the hardholder's wall and compound defense.
- You're the hardholder's enforcer, in charge of keeping control inside, not fighting the war.
- You're the captain of Brimful's family's gang.

If you're not a chopper, I'll give you your gang's stats.

Bodyguards: **2-harm gang small 2-armor**

Hit & run, smash & grab squad: **3-harm gang small 1-armor**

Wall defense: **2-harm gang small 2-armor**

Enforcers: **2-harm gang small 1-armor**

Brimful's family's gang: **2-harm gang small 1-armor**

Whatever its stats, the gang includes:

- Jinko, a competent and calculating right-hand
- Whychurch, kind of the opposite
- Rather, calm, reliable, detail-oriented
- Crocker, who hasn't seemed maybe as reliable as she used to be
- Any other NPCs you've incorporated from the hardholders' lists

After you've made your character, before the session starts, I'll ask you how your gang's getting along with you. If you're a chopper, your gang is your gang, and you can tell me so in whatever terms come to mind when someone questions you like that. If you're a battlebabe or gunlugger, though, your gang isn't yours, you're just responsible for it, so make a roll. Battlebabe, roll+cool; gunlugger, roll+hard. On a hit, choose which of the following are true. On a 10+, choose 1; on a 7-9, choose 2:

- You're running shorter and shorter on scratch, scrounge and resupply.
- Your right-hand, Jinko, is angling for your job.
- Your hammerhead, Whychurch, is getting out of your control.
- One of your people is a spy for Ambergrease, you don't know which.

On a miss, choose 3, and as the session starts you're up to your eyeballs in a blown action.

The spy is Crocker.

A blown action seems good, yeah? I bet you can come up with just the right one.