

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

## THROWN UNDER THE BUS

The Game  
of Office Politics



## Welcome

**Thrown Under the Bus**, the hilarious Game of Office Politics, is packed with cringeworthy buzzwords and all-too-familiar office tropes that will keep players entertained while they steal credit for coworkers' hard work in an attempt to advance up the corporate ladder. But be careful. Fellow associates are attempting to do the same thing, and once you play a dirty trick on them, they now have access to this new trick. Anyone who has worked in an office environment knows there is no more brutal kill-or-be-killed workplace environment than the modern office setting.

**Thrown Under the Bus (TUtB)** is a game for 2-6 players ages 14 and up, taking 30-90 minutes to determine who will be the company's new Sr. VP.



## 4 PLAYER GAME EXAMPLE

"Steph from Marketing was supposed to lead this tour but as usual she is not here yet. So I guess it is up to the rest of us to pick up her slack."



"Anywho, Throughout the Employee Handbook and on the cards you will notice **terms in bold**. These words represent game terms that are defined in the Glossary."



"Colluding in the game is not only acceptable it is encouraged. When colluding there is only one rule you can not discuss card names or effects. Speaking of collusion is Steph in?"



## GAME SETUP

To set up your office for a game of **Thrown Under the Bus**, you need to reserve the conference room or, if playing at home, a dining room table, will do. Place the **conference room** game board in the center of the play area. Separate the 6 sets of 10 card decks with the portraits of the playable **associates** from the other cards. Each set is known as an **associate deck**. The remaining cards are known as the **corporate deck**. Shuffle and place the **corporate deck** in the center of the **conference room** game board. Assemble the **associate of the week marker** by inserting the parking sign shaped chip into the parking space base.

Each player now chooses one of the 6 **TUtB associates** and takes the corresponding **associate desktop**, matching **associate deck**, 5 **influence tokens**, and **status token**. All unused **associate decks**, **desktops**, **influence tokens**, and **status tokens** are returned to the game box, now known as the **trash bin**. Each **associate** shuffles their 10 card **associate deck**, then places it face down on their **HR bio** forming their **draw pile** and places their **influence tokens** on their **associate portrait**. Their **status token** is placed on the Office Associate **start cube** chair on the **conference room** board.

"Where is Steph, at another interview? Oh never mind... Influence Tokens perform several functions. Most simply they track associate turns and serve as a reminder as to who played what on who. The ● symbol in a card's instructions represents both the physical influence token and it's controlling associate. If the card instructions call for a choice the associate whose influence token is on the card makes the decision."



## GAME PLAY

### STARTING THE GAME

The **associate** that most recently had some upward mobility at work (new hire, raise, promotion, new title...) goes first. This **associate** takes the **associate of the week marker** signifying they go first and are this **week's associate of the week**. Play proceeds clockwise from **associate of the week** in all phases of the game, this is known as the **order of play**. When the **associate of the week** changes play starts from the new **associate of the week**.

### TURN ORDER

A Game of **TUtB** is broken into rounds, also known as **weeks**. Each **week** is broken into 3 phases.

The first phase is the **work week**, in which **associates** draw 5 cards from their **draw pile**. They then take turns playing these cards on themselves and each other in hopes of gaining **status** within the company.

The second phase is the **Friday meeting**, in which **associates reveal** and **resolve** the cards played on their **desktops** and calculate any change in **status**. Any **associate promotions** are awarded at the end of the **Friday meeting**.

The final phase is the **end of the week**, in which associates **cleanup** their **desktop**. Return other **associates' influence tokens** and collect yours returning them to your **portrait**. **Discard piles** are formed by placing cards from your **desktop**, face up on top of your **sticky note**. Then decide who will be next **week's associate of the week**.

### THE WORK WEEK

All **associates** draw 5 cards from their **draw pile** forming their **hand** for this **week**. The **associate of the week** starts off the **week** by spending their first **influence token**. Play then continues clockwise with each **associate** spending 1 of their **influence tokens** until all **associates** have exhausted their tokens. On their turn **associates MUST** spend 1 of their **influence tokens**.

There are 4 ways to spend influence tokens:

- 1. Do Some Work** - Play a card facedown with 1 of your **influence tokens** on top of it on your **desktop** on any **day of the week** not already occupied by a card and or an **influence token**.
- 2. Delegate** - Play a card facedown with 1 of your **influence tokens** on top of it on any other **associate's desktop** not already occupied by a card and or a **influence token** except their **Monday**.
- 3. Call In** - Place 1 **influence token** in the area above your **desktop** and do nothing.
- 4. Learn a New Trick** - Place 1 **influence token** in the area above your **desktop**, **trash** a card from your hand throwing it in the **trash bin**, and draw a new card from the top of the **corporate deck**. This card goes directly into your hand.

### FRIDAY MEETING

It is the duty of this **week's associate of the week** to conduct the **Friday meeting** in an orderly fashion.

- The **associate of the week** starts by calling for all cards down. All **associates** place any cards in their hand in any order on the top of their **draw piles** that cover their **HR profile**.
- The **associate of the week** calls out the **days of the week** starting with **Monday**. All **associates** with cards on their **Monday** pick up the **influence token** on the card, flip the card over and place the token on the front of the card **revealing**. If it is an **action card**, read and follow the card **instructions resolving** it. If multiple actions are **revealed** on the same day they are **resolved** in the **order of play**. For more information, see **THE CARDS**. The same procedure is followed for the rest of the **days of the week**, one day at a time.

## TALLY EXAMPLE



"Steph was supposed to... ugh, nevermind. To start off his week Albert took the initiative +4, Tuesday he came in early and left late X2, bringing his tally to 8. Wednesday Sharon's nosiness knocks him back one point. Thursday he did nothing keeping him at 7. On Friday I spread a rumor about Albert costing him 5 points. Bringing his weekly total to +2. Unfortunately he still advances 2 seats."



3. Once all the cards are **revealed** and **actions resolved**, following the **order of play**, **associates tally** up all **accounting** cards on their **desktop** working left to right. **NOTE: All fractions from divisions are rounded down and ÷0 equals 0 and any number X0 equals 0.** A negative score reduces **status** and the positive score raises **status**. The **associate of the week** then moves each **associate's status token** around the **conference room** to reflect any changes.

4. Now the **associate of the week** announces **promotions**. If any **associate** has landed on or passed a named chair they have been **promoted**. For each chair passed, that **associate** draws a card from the top of the **corporate deck**. **NOTE: Associates can not be promoted more than 2 named seats during a Friday meeting.** When an **associate** gains enough **status** to bring them to or past 3 **promotions** they stop at the chair directly before the third **promotion**.

### END OF THE WEEK

1. **Cleanup**, each **associate** collects all of their **influence tokens**, returning them to their associate portrait. All cards on your **desktop** go face up onto your **discard pile**. Except for any remaining **one shot** cards which are moved to the **trash bin**.

2. Decide next **week's associate of the week**, the **associate** with the highest **status** is next **week's associate of the week**. In the case of a tie the player who scored the most points this turn is next week's **employee of the week** and takes control of the marker. If it is still a tie and one of the tied **associates** is holding the **marker** they retain it. If neither is currently holding the marker all **associates** vote to break the tie.

## WINNING & LOSING

### END OF THE GAME

If at the end of any **Friday meeting** an **associate** has reached the **Sr. VP** chair or the **corporate deck** has become depleted, the game ends.

### WINNING THE GAME

Only 1 **associate** can sit in the big chair, becoming the **Sr. VP**, and there are 2 ways a player can win.

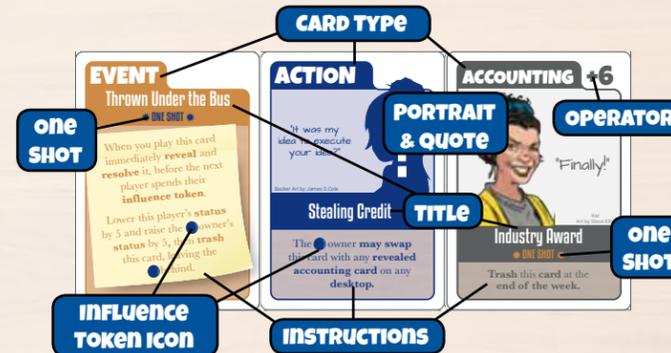
1. If at the end of the game only 1 **associate** has reached the **Sr. VP** chair, they are declared the winner. If multiple **associates** reach the **Sr. VP** status, the **associate** who scored the most points in the final **week** wins. If it is still a tie and one of the tied **associates** is holding the **associate of the week marker** they are the winner. If neither is currently holding the marker all **associates** who have not been **fired** vote to break the tie.

2. If at the **end of a week** the **corporate deck** is depleted, the **associate** with the highest **status** wins. If there is a tie, use the same procedure as above.

### FIRED (BUT NOT FORGOTTEN)

An **associate** is **fired** when they go below 1 **status**. That **associate's status token** is **trashed**. **Fired associates** no longer gain or lose **status** and can never return to the office. However, they are still in the game and have the ability to influence the outcome of the game, their legacy living on to haunt those that led to their demise. **Fired associates** must still spend **influence tokens** as normal, and other **associates** can spend **influence tokens** to **delegate** work to them, playing a card on their **desktop**. At the **end of the week** they cleanup as normal.

## CARD ANATOMY



## THE CARDS

### CARDS VS. RULES

When a card's **instructions** conflict with these rules the card text wins out.

### DECKS & SHUFFLING

At the beginning of the game, all **associates** start with their respective **associate deck**. All starting **associate decks** have identical numerical values but have distinct art, quotes and colors to differentiate them from the others. During setup, shuffle these cards and place them face down on your **HR Profile** forming each **associate's draw pile**.

At the beginning of the **work week** draw 5 cards from your **draw pile** to make your hand for the **week**. If you ever need to draw more cards than you have in your **draw pile**, draw all the cards left in the pile, set your hand aside, shuffle your **discard pile**, place them on top of your **HR profile**, and draw the remainder of the cards needed to bring your hand up to 5. **NOTE: Do not shuffle until additional cards are needed.**

When drawing cards if an **associate's** hand, **draw** and **discard piles** total 5 or less cards they can no longer **delegate**. On later draws if this **associate's** total goes to 6 or more they can once again **delegate**.

At the beginning of the **Friday meeting**, place all unused cards in your hand face down on top of your **draw pile**. If you have multiple cards, you choose which order they are placed.

At the **end of the week**, unless a card's **instructions** state otherwise, all cards on your **desktop** are moved to your **discard pile**. This means eventually you will end up with other **associate's** cards in your deck and

this is the point of the game. When you do something good or bad to your coworkers, they will remember it and learn from that experience.

### DISCARD VS. TRASH

When a card is **discarded** it goes face up onto the **discard pile** of the **desktop** it is currently on. When a card is **trashed** it goes into the **trash bin**. If a card is **discarded** or **trashed** before **cleanup** the accompanying **influence token** remains on that day until cleanup.

### INFLUENCE TOKEN ● ICON

This icon on a card represents the physical **influence token** resting on it and the associate who makes the decision on the card's **may** statement.

### REARRANGING, REPLACING AND SWAPPING CARDS - MOVING CARDS

**Rearranging, replacing** and **swapping** is not **playing a card** it is **moving** a card. **Moving** allows access to another **associate's Monday**.

**When moving cards follow these rules:**

A. The **influence token** on the card remains with it.

B. **Influence tokens** on a **day** with no card under them are moved as if it had an accompanying card.

C. Next and before only applies to the **day of the week** immediately before or after the day in question, not the next or before day with a card on it.

D. All card **movement** must be completed before any **moved** cards are **revealed** and or **resolved**.

E. If a card that has not yet been **revealed** is moved to a **day of the week** that has already been called, it is **revealed** once all **moving** is done. If an **action card** is revealed it is **resolved** before the turn continues.

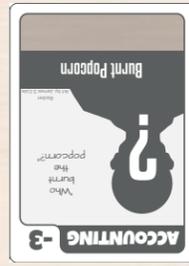
F. If a card that has not yet been **revealed** is moved to a later **day of the week**, then it is left face down until that day is called out by the **associate of the week**.

G. **Revealed** cards that have already been **resolved** do not **resolve** again.

H. A card moved after Friday is placed on **Monday**. A card moved to before **Monday** is placed on Friday.

## REVERSE

Only **accounting cards** can be reversed. When **reversing** a card just it's **operator** is reversed. Example a plus (+) becomes a minus (-) and a multiply (x) becomes divide (÷). To signify a **reversed** card, turn the card upside down so that its **operator** and number are facing downwards.



Reversed Accounting Card Example +3

## TYPES OF CARDS

There are 3 types of cards in the game, **ACCOUNTING cards**, **ACTION cards** and **EVENT cards**. Either of these types of cards can also be a **\*ONE SHOT\***.

### ACCOUNTING CARDS

**Accounting cards** are the core of the game and are identified by the **ACCOUNTING** tab at the top of the card. They are basic addition, subtraction, and multiplication cards. They are identified by an **operator** followed by a number (+3, -1, X2...) at the top of the card. These cards are tallied up at the **end of the week** to reflect the change in an **associate's status**. Most **accounting cards** have no **instructions**. All **associate decks** are comprised of **accounting cards**.



### ACTION CARDS

**Action cards** are identified by the **ACTION** tab at the top of the card. These cards have **instructions** under the title for how to **resolve** them. All **actions cards** take effect when they are **revealed**. If multiple **action cards** are **revealed** on the same day, they are **resolved** in the **order of play**. **Action cards** that are discarded go into the **discard pile** of the **desktop** on which they have been played leaving the influence token behind.



### EVENT CARDS

**Event cards** are identified by the **EVENT** tab at the top of the card. When **event cards** are played

they are **revealed** and **resolved** immediately before the next **associate** spends their **influence token**. Once the **event** is **resolved** the card is **trashed** and then play continues. Leave the **influence token** on the day the card was played on.

### ONE SHOT CARDS

**One shot** cards are identified by the **\*ONE SHOT\*** in the title bar. The card **instructions** will dictate when the card will be **trashed**, removing it from play. If a **one shot** is **discarded** before it is **trashed**, it is not **trashed** and goes into the **discard pile** of the **desktop** it is currently on, not the **trash bin**. Any one particular **one shot** card can only be **resolved** once per game.



## GLOSSARY

● - This icon represents both the influence token and it's owner.

**Action Cards** - These cards are identified by the blue **ACTION** tab at the top of the card and instructions underneath. Action Cards are resolved according to their instructions and following the order of play.

**Accounting Cards** - These cards are identified by the **ACCOUNTING** tab at the top of the card followed by an operator and a number. All accounting cards are resolved in order at the end of the Friday meeting.

**Associate** - A Character/Player in the game.

**Associate of the Week** - The associate currently in the lead and who is in possession of the Associate of the week marker. The Associate of the week has the honor of playing the first influence token during the work week. They are also tasked with running the Friday meeting in an orderly fashion. The player with the highest status at the end of the week becomes next week's Associate of the week.

**Associate of the Week Marker** - This marker is made of two parts the parking sign and reserved parking spot. The Associate of the week marker signifies who is the current Associate of the week. Whenever the Associate of the week changes, control of the marker changes.

**Associate Deck** - The 10 cards that feature the portrait of one of the six playable Associates. Each Associate Deck has the same cards but different quotes and portraits to reflect the personality of each character.

**Associate Portrait** - Large portrait of the associate on their desktop, where influence tokens are stacked until they are spent.

**Call In** - One of the 4 ways you spend an influence token on your turn. To call in you place your token in the space between your desktop and the conference room and do nothing. This is the the way to pass on your turn.

**Cleanup** - When you return influence tokens to the associate to which they belong to and move cards from your desktop into your discard pile except one shot cards which are moved to the trash bin.

**Conference Room** - The central game board that is placed in the center of the table between all players. The numbers on the chairs around the table track each associate's status.

**Corporate Deck** - All cards without associate portraits.

**Days of the Week** - Playable areas on a associate desktop.

**Discard** - When a card is discarded it goes face up on top of the discard pile of the desktop it was played on. A card is discarded when its instructions say, if it has no instructions it is discarded during cleanup. When a card is discarded before cleanup the accompanying influence token remains on that day until cleanup.

**Discard Pile** - The large colored sticky note on each desktop is the designated spot for that Associate's discard pile. A discard pile is not shuffled until that associate needs to draw further cards from their exhausted draw pile.

**Do Some Work** - One of the 4 ways a player can spend their influence tokens on their turn, during the work week. To do some work, place a card facedown on any day of the week on your desktop and place one of your influence tokens on top of it.

**Draw Pile** - A player's draw pile rests on top of their HR profile in the lower center of their desktop.

**Duplicate** - When this card's instructions say to duplicate another card this card acts as the duplicated card until it is cleaned up at the end of the week. And is now an accounting card for all intents and purposes. Only accounting cards may be duplicated.

**End of the Week** - The final phase of a week where associates return tokens to their owners and place all cards on their desktop into their discard pile except one shot cards which are moved to the trash bin. The player with the highest status becomes next week's Associate of the week.

**Event Cards** - Orange event cards are identified by the **EVENT** at the top of the card. All event cards are revealed and resolved immediately before the next associate spends their influence token. Once the event is resolved the card is trashed and then play continues. Leave the influence token on the day of the week the card was played on. All event cards are one shots.

**Fired** - If an associate's status ever falls below 1, they are fired from the company. They can no longer gain status or win, but they are not removed from the game. They continue to play influence chips on their turn in the upcoming weeks. Other associates can also play cards on them but the cards point totals are not calculated at during the Friday meeting.

**Friday Meeting** - The middle phase of a game round in which the associates tally up status gained or lost from the work week. The Associate of the week moves each player's status token to reflect status changes.

**HR Profile** - HR's notes, this where you put your draw pile.

**Influence Token** - The 5 large chips with an associate portrait on them.

**Learn a New Trick** - One of the 4 ways a player can spend their influence tokens on their turn. To learn a new trick the player places a influence token above their desktop, trashes a card from their hand and draws a card from the top of the corporate deck placing it in their hand.

**May** - When a card's instructions have the qualifier "may" the player who's influence token rests on the card chooses if they wish to resolve the card's action or not. If they choose to resolve the card they must follow all of the cards instructions.

**Monday** - Only the associate who owns the desktop can play a card on the Monday space. Cards can be moved onto the Monday of another.

**Moving** - The player controlling card that prompted the move is in control of the move. Moving a card is not playing a card, cards can be moved onto other associates' Mondays.

**One Shot** - These cards are only good for a single use. The card's instructions will dictate when the card is trashed. Once shots are represented by the **\*ONE SHOT\*** text printed on the card.

**Operator** - A symbol of a mathematical operation. Addition (+), subtraction (-), division (÷), and multiplication (x). In Thrown Under the Bus, all operators are immediately followed by a number. Example +3.

**Order of Play** - Always starts with the Associate of the week and rotates clockwise. Turn order changes when the Associate of the week changes.

**Play a Card** - You can play a card along with a influence token on any

day of the week that does not already have an influence token on it, except another associates' Monday.

**Promotion** - When a associate's status token lands on or passes a named chair they have been promoted. For each promotion they draw 1 card from corporate deck and place it on top of their draw pile. Associates can not be promoted more than twice during the Friday meeting. When an associate gains enough status to bring them past 2 promotions they stop at the chair directly before the third promotion. No promotions are rewarded when moving backwards however all forward promotions are rewarded even if it was for a status you had previously held.

**Rearrange** - Rearranging allows the controlling player to move the cards around as they see fit. All card movement must be completed before any other moved cards can revealed and or resolved.

**Resolved** - Accounting cards are resolved at the end of the Friday meeting. Action cards are resolved when the card text says and the associate whose chip rests on the card makes any necessary choices.

**Revealed** - A Card is revealed when it is turned over. When revealing a card pickup the influence token resting on top of it, flip the card over and place the token back on top of the card.

**Replace** - Happens only when instructed by an action card's instructions. To replace a card pickup the Action card and move the new card onto this day. Then discard or trash the original card according to its instruction.

**Reverse** - Only accounting cards can be reversed. Action cards are unaffected by reverse cards. When an accounting card is reversed its operator (+, -, X and /) is reversed: + becomes -, - becomes +, X becomes /, and / becomes X. The number is unchanged. To help signify that a card has been reversed, turn the card 180° so that the operator and number are facing downward.

**Spend Influence Token** - During the work week each player must spend 1 influence token following the order of play until all tokens have been exhausted. There are 4 ways a influence token a token can be spent: Do some work, delegate, call in and learn a new trick

**Sr. VP** - The winning objective of Thrown Under the Bus.

**Start Cube** - The status (11) of all associates at the start of the game.

**Status** - An associate's rank inside the corporation. It is represented by the chair number an associate holds at the end of the week.

**Status Token** - The six small chips, each with an associate's portrait.

**Sticky Note** - The large color block on an associate's desktop with a handwritten quote. During a game the sticky note is where you place discarded cards forming your discard pile.

**Swap/ Swapping** - Happens only when instructed by an action card's instructions. To swap cards each card is moved onto the day of the other card. If only one card is in one of the days to be swapped it is still moved.

**Tally** - When calculating always move left to right. Remember nothing multiplied is still nothing. When dividing all fractions are rounded down.

**TUtB** - Acronym for Thrown Under the Bus.

**Trash this Card** - When a card's instructions direct you to trash this card move it to the trash bin (the box bottom) removing it form play for the remainder of this game. When a card is trashed before cleanup the accompanying influence token remains on that day until cleanup.

**Trash Bin** - The box bottom becomes the trash bin for cards trashed when learning a new trick or when directed to by a card's instructions.

**Week** - A round of play in the game is known as a week.

**Work Week** - The work week starts when the Associate of the week plays their first influence chip and play proceeding clockwise until all players at the table have exhausted their influence tokens.



"Hi, I'm Steph and I will be your tour guide.."

## SETUP THE GAME

- A. Place the Conference Room game board in the center of the table and shuffle all non-associate cards, placing them in the center of the conference room.
- B. Each player selects a matching desktop, 10 card associate deck, 5 influence tokens and status token.
- C. Return all unused desktops, associate decks, and status tokens to the game box.
- D. All players shuffle their associate decks placing the cards face down on their HR profile (draw pile) then place their influence tokens on their portrait.
- E. All players' status tokens are placed on the "Office Associate" seat on the conference room board.
- F. The player most recently promoted takes control of the associate of the week marker (reserved parking spot), making them this turn's associate of the week. Turn order starts with the associate of the week.

## PLAYING THE GAME

### 1. WORK WEEK

Each player draws 5 cards from their draw pile forming their hand. When a player's draw pile becomes depleted and they need to draw additional cards they shuffle their discard pile, making the shuffled cards their new draw pile and continue drawing until they have 5 cards. Starting with the associate of the week each player spends 1 influence token, then play moves clockwise until all tokens have been exhausted.

**The 4 ways to spend Influence Tokens are:**

- **Do Some Work** - Play a card facedown on any open day on your desktop, placing 1 influence token on the card.
- **Delegate** - Play a card facedown on any other desktop on any open day except Monday and place 1 influence token on the card.
- **Call In** - Place 1 influence token above your desktop and do nothing.
- **Learn a New Trick** - Place 1 influence token above your desktop, trash a card from your hand, and draw a card from the top of the corporate deck.

## QUICK PLAY RULES

### 2. FRIDAY MEETING

All players place any remaining cards in their hand on the top of their draw pile face down. The associate of the week calls out the days of the week in order. Players reveal any cards on that day. If an action card is revealed, follow it's instructions. All action cards are resolved in the order of play. Any calls to be made about a card are made by the person who's influence token is on the card. Trashed cards are moved to the game box, leaving play for the rest game. Once all cards are revealed, starting with the Associate of the week, players tally up their status change by working left to right. Changes in status are recorded by the associate of the week moving each player's status marker. Any player whose status token lands on or passes a named chair gets promoted, they draw a card for each promotion from the corporate deck and place it on top of their draw pile. Associates can not be promoted more than 2 named seats a during a Friday meeting. If an associate gains enough status to bring them to or past 3 promotions they stop at the chair directly before the 3rd promotion.

### 3. END OF THE WEEK

All influence tokens are returned to their owners. All cards are discarded, placing them face up on the sticky note (discard pile) of the desktop they are on. The player with the highest status becomes next week's associate of the week. In the case of a tie the player who scored the most points this turn is next week's associate of the week and takes control of the marker.

## WINNING THE GAME

Repeat rounds until a player reaches the Sr. VP status. If multiple Players reach the Sr. VP seat the player who scored the most points this final round wins.

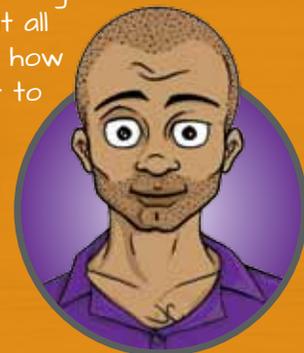
Expanded and updated rules PDF can always be found at [www.thrownunderthebusgame.com](http://www.thrownunderthebusgame.com)

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"These are an abridged version of rules inside. It all comes down to how nerdy you want to play it."



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