



FIND YOUR FRIENDS | KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN | DON'T TIP YOUR HAND

NEVER BRING A KNIFE

RULEBOOK



4-8 Players



Ages 17+



20-30 Min.

FIND YOUR FRIENDS | KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN | DON'T TIP YOUR HAND



OVERVIEW

Never Bring a Knife is a gunfight card game with two teams: Undercover Cops and Hardened Criminals. But no one knows who's who.

As the shootout rages, players must figure out who's on their team and who's not. When someone takes three wounds they fall. If they can't be healed, everyone on the fallen player's team loses and everyone on the other team wins.

Keep your head down. Protect your teammates. And whatever you do, don't tip your hand.

SETUP

1. Deal Roles

- a) Shuffle together a number of each type of role card based on the number of players.

| <u>Players</u> | <u>Cops</u> | <u>Criminals</u> |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| 4–5 | 3 | 3 |
| 6–7 | 4 | 4 |
| 8 | 5 | 5 |

- b) Deal one face-down role to each player. Then deal one face-down role to the center of the table. (This card is the "**boss**.") If you have an even number of players, return the final, un-dealt role to the box without revealing it.
- c) Each player looks at their role, keeping it secret.

2. Get Intel

- a) Each player secretly looks at the role of the player to their left, keeping it hidden from the other players.

3. Prepare the Deck

- a) Give reference cards to players who want them. Return the rest to the box.
- b) Set aside the wound cards (showing bullet holes) for later use.
- c) *In a four- or five-player game*, return both Intel cards to the box.
- d) *In a six-player game*, return one Intel card to the box.
- e) Find the Hit card and the Mole card and make them the first two cards of the discard pile. (That is: These two cards will only join the deck the first time the discards are shuffled to form a new deck.)
- f) Shuffle the rest of the cards together to form the deck.

That's it! It's time to start.



CARD TYPES AND COUNTS

Deck Cards

Gun (23), Armor (12), Money (17), Crime (6), Intel (2), Hit (1), Mole (1)



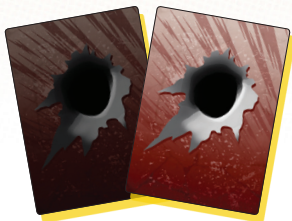
Role Cards

Undercover Cop (5), Hardened Criminal (5)



Wound Cards

Wound (16)



Reference Cards

Reference Card (8)



PLAY

Play consists of a series of rounds that continue until someone falls, which ends the game.

In each round cards are dealt, then played, then revealed and executed. Sometimes players spend Money for additional effects after the played cards have been executed. Then, the next round begins.

1. The Deal

The dealer deals four cards from the deck face-down to each player. Players pick up and look at these hands. (The dealer is chosen randomly in the first round and rotates to the left in later rounds.)

If the deck runs out, the discards are shuffled to form a new deck and the deal continues.

2. The Play

Starting with the player to the left of the dealer and going clockwise, each player plays a card in front of any player. The collection of cards in front of a given player is their “**stack**.”

There are three rules about playing cards:

- *The first card a player plays must be on another player.* That is, a player can't play their first card of the round on themselves.
- *The first card on a particular target goes face-up.* The second and subsequent cards on a given target are played face-down.
- *Once a player has four cards in front of them, no more cards can be played on them.* Players can only play cards on targets who don't have four cards yet.

To be clear, after the first time around the table, players are free to play cards on themselves. (As long as they don't already have four cards in their stack, of course.)

Players keep playing cards until all of the cards dealt this round have been played. The dealer should be the last to play.

3. The Reveal

First, everyone shuffles their stacks out of sight, so no one can tell who played which card.

Then, starting with the player to the dealer's left, each player reveals their stack, suffering or benefitting from those cards' effects.

Any decisions that must be made — like whether to pay for a Hit and who to use it on — are made by that stack's owner before the next player's cards are revealed or resolved. (To be clear, decisions are made *by the player the card was played on*, not necessarily by the player who played the card.)

It's worth noting that it never matters what order a given stack's cards are revealed or resolved in. They can always be resolved as a group. (Rare exception: If Crime and Hit appear to be in conflict, see "Hit Card Timing" on page 11.)

Revealed cards are discarded after being resolved, unless their effects say they are banked instead.

4. Money Talks

Continuing around the table one more time, again starting with the player on the dealer's left, players with Money may spend it.

- *Three Money can be spent to heal a wound on any player.* That is, players are allowed to heal themselves, or to heal other players.
- *Three Money can be spent to look at any role card in play.* That is, players can look at another player's role card, or at the boss role in the center of the table. (But see the next page for an important exception.)



7-8 Player Exception: In a game with seven or eight players, it only costs two Money to look at a role card. This reduced cost applies when looking at either a player's role or the boss role. (The normal cost applies to heal a wound no matter how many people are playing.)

Spent Money is discarded.

Players with enough Money may spend multiple times when their turn comes.

Winning, Losing, and the Next Round

After a round's four steps are complete, if anyone has three wounds they fall and the game ends. Everyone on a fallen player's team (that is, everyone with the same role as them) loses. Everyone on the other team wins.

To be clear, money talks before the game can end. So, *a player with three wounds at the end of the Reveal phase can be healed in the Money Talks phase, and if no players are fallen after money talks, the game continues.* The game only ends if someone still has three wounds after money talks.

If several players fall in the same round, the side with more fallen players loses and everyone on the other team wins. (Even fallen players can win this way!)

If the same number of players from each team fall in the same round, the boss role breaks the tie. The players on the boss's team win, and the players on the other team lose.

If no one has fallen at the end of a round, a new round begins.

Between rounds, the deal passes to the left.

CARDS

Gun: For each two Gun cards in a player's stack, they take a wound card. (So, for example, four Gun cards cause two wounds, three cause one, and one causes no wounds at all.)

Armor: An Armor card cancels one Gun card in the same stack. (So, a stack with two Guns and one Armor yields no wounds, because the Armor cancels one Gun, leaving one, which doesn't cause a wound by itself.)

Money: Players bank revealed Money face-up in front of them. Players must have Money to use a Hit, and can spend Money in the Money Talks phase to heal wounds and look at role cards. See "Money Talks" on page 7 for more details. Spent Money returns to the discard pile.

Crime: A Crime card discards a Money card from that player's stack or bank — it doesn't matter which — unless that player has no Money in either place.

Intel: For each Intel card in a player's stack, they may secretly look at one role card. This can be a player's role card, or the boss role card in the center of the table.

Hit: A player with the Hit card in their stack may spend three Money from their stack, bank, or a combination of both to deal a wound to any player. If they can't or choose not to, they can bank the Hit to use it later. See "Hit Card Timing" on page 11 for more details.

Mole: A player with the Mole card in their stack must switch their role card with the boss role card from the center of the table, without revealing either. (That player may then look at their new role card.)

TABLETALK & TRICKERY

Players can say anything they want to each other. They can collude, make threats, spread disinformation, speculate about roles, tell others what they know, and lie about what they know.

Revealing Roles

Other than as instructed, players may not physically reveal any role card to another player for any reason before the game ends. You can say what you want, you just aren't allowed to prove it.

Revealing Cards When Playing Them

When playing a card from their hand, a player is allowed to play a card face-up that they would otherwise be entitled to play face-down.

BANKED CARDS

Banked Money and banked Hits are the only cards from the deck that can persist with a player from turn to turn. (Wounds also persist, but don't come from the deck.)

A player with a banked Hit may spend three Money during the Money Talks phase to deal a wound to any player, which returns that Hit to the discard pile. Otherwise, the banked Hit persists in that player's bank until used, or the game ends.



To help make it clear which cards are banked and which are in a player's stack, slide banked cards partway underneath your role card. Other players are allowed to know what you have banked, so keep them fanned out, and don't slide them all the way under your role.

HIT CARD TIMING

On the Reveal phase of a round when a Hit is played, it can be executed immediately in the Reveal phase, or it can be banked for later use.

A banked Hit can be used in the Money Talks phase of any round, including the round it was played in. (However, a banked Hit can *not* be used in the *Reveal* phase of a subsequent round.)

A player using a Hit, in whatever phase, must spend three Money. A player with insufficient Money may not use a Hit.

Once used, in whatever phase, a Hit is discarded.

Rarely, Crime and Hit in the same stack can be in conflict, when a Crime would reduce a player's Money below the three needed to pay for the Hit. When this happens, the Crime takes precedence and the Hit can't be used that round.

EASY MODE

For an easier game with less deduction, include both Intel cards in the deck no matter how many players there are.

HARD MODE

During setup, don't look at the role of the player to your left. Only look at it — secretly, as before — once that player takes a wound.



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Special thanks to Justin Alexander, James Ernest, Kyla McT, Jenae Pedersen, Amelia Rengo, Travis Winter, Seppy Yoon, and everyone at Mole Department.

Never Bring a Knife has violent themes. It's intended for adults who can tell the difference between things that belong in games and things that belong in real life.



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