



Free Game # 30 from Invisible City Productions, Inc.

**A quick game of competitive journalism for two to six players.  
Sponsored by Software Consulting Services, providers of  
newspaper software solutions.  
Created by Jonathan A. Leistiko and Sharon J. Cichelli  
Based on Economy Class by Jeremy P. Bushnell**

### **The Story:**

There's always something happening in Action City! That's why the *Action City Times* is on the lookout for fresh, hot stories from up-and-coming journalists. You're itching to be the next big name in on-the-scene reporting. So get out there, do your research, and come back to the *Action City Times* to pitch your story. If the Editor likes it, you're in print. Just look out, because other players may try to scoop your story out from under you. Good luck!

### **Object:**

To sell three stories to the *Action City Times* before any other journalist. Stories happen at Locations, and good research makes for stories that sell.

### **You Need:**

- The Scoop game board.
- Paper and pencil for each player.
- A stopwatch accurate to 100ths of a second (or a ten-sided die).
- Some loose change.

### **Setting Up:**

- Use a piece of paper as your Steno Pad, where you'll keep track of the stories you research during the game.

- Pick a coin to use as your pawn and place it in an unoccupied, red-bordered square. Once everyone has placed a pawn, play starts with you and passes to the left.

## **Play:**

### **Rolling:**

If you're using a stopwatch instead of a ten-sided die, just start the stopwatch, wait for a moment, and then stop it. Look at the number indicating 100ths of a second (probably the right-most digit). That's the number you've "rolled".

### **Moving:**

Spaces with names on them are Locations. You may not enter a regular space that is occupied by another player, but you *may* enter an occupied Location.

You may only move to spaces that share a side with the space you are in. Moves through grid intersections are prohibited.

If you occupy a space with a subway, you can move to the identical subway space in one step (i.e., one step moves you onto the subway; the next takes you to the other subway; and one more moves you out of the subway).

### **Turn Sequence:**

On your turn, choose to move, stay on the scene, or pitch a story. Then, heat up the action in Action City.

#### *Your Turn, Part 1:*

Select one of the following actions.

- **To move:** Roll. If your roll is odd, then you may move up to three spaces this turn. If your roll is even, you may move up to four. Before you move, find the number you rolled on the On the Street chart on the board and act accordingly.
- **To stay on the scene:** You must start the turn in a Location. Stay there and add a mark to your Steno Pad for that story, indicating your increased knowledge. Tell the other players what you are reporting on.
- **To pitch a story:** You must start the turn at the *Action City Times*. Stay there and pick a story on your Steno Pad that has at least one mark next to it. Add your marks for that story (your research) to the number of marks at that story's Location (its newsworthiness). Roll. If your roll is less than or

equal to that sum, then you sell the story. Circle it on your list to show you've sold it. Remove all marks at that story's Location. All other players must cross out the marks they have for that story on their Steno Pads. If your roll is greater than the sum, then the story did not sell. You may not try to sell the same story next turn.

### *Your Turn, Part 2:*

Roll and add a mark to the Location that matches the number you rolled. When your board gets too marked up, you can print out another one from the Invisible Bazaar.

(Alternatively, you can stack pennies on the Locations.)

### **Winning:**

If you've sold three or more stories by the end of your turn, then you win the game.

### **Variants:**

#### **That's My Beat:**

When you place your piece at the beginning of the game, you also roll for a Location. This location is your "beat." No player may have the same beat as another player. Jot your beat down on your Steno Pad. You may try to sell a story that's happening at your beat even if you do not have any marks for it on your Steno Pad.

#### **The Lonely City:**

This is a solitaire version of Scoop!.

When you set up the game, place a nickel on Downtown. This coin keeps track of your rival at the *Action City Times*, N. Ickel. All Ickel does is sit behind a desk and bang out mindless filler columns for the *Action City Times*. Ickel never gets out in the field to do "real" reporting.

Take your turns as you normally would. On Ickel's turns, all he ever does is try to sell a story. Roll. If the result is less than or equal to the number of the Location his nickel is on, then mark off a story on his Steno Pad and put his nickel back on the Location #1. Otherwise, move him to the Location with the next-highest number. Regardless of the outcome, roll again and add a mark to the Location rolled.

Ickel wins if he sells five stories. You win if you sell three.

### **Origin and Credits:**

In April of 2002, Sharon's dad commissioned us to make a newspaper-themed game for his company, Software Consulting Services, to use as a giveaway at NEXPO, the largest newspaper convention of the year. Like Economy Class and Jovian Syzygy, Scoop had to fit on two sides of a standard 8.5 x 11 inch piece of paper and use commonly available props.

I had **no idea** of what I was going to do.

I was staring at Economy Class, contemplating the grid-based board, when the idea of competing newspapers sending reporters out to gather stories around the city came to me. This was around the 13th of May. Initially, the players would assume the roles of reporters **and** competing newspapers. Needless to say, it was a little overly complex. Sharon suggested trimming it down to just one or the other, with a bias toward reporters. That brought the scope of the game down to what it is today.

Next I had to think of something that your average NEXPO attendee would have that could be used to generate a random number. I could have used coins like in Economy Class, but it just didn't have the numeric range and ease of use that I wanted. Then I remembered what I used to do in grade school when I was playing role-playing games without polyhedral dice: I used the 100ths digit on my stopwatch. That led to the ten Locations. The game was still too boring -- just running from place to place, so I took another hint from Economy Class and tacked the On the Street events chart onto the movement roll. Everything was almost in place, but moving around the board wasn't satisfying, so I added the subways and impassible walls. Sharon and I played it with the walls and again without the walls and realized that they didn't actually add anything to the game, so they were removed.

So the game, less layout, was ready to roll by the 15th of May. From clueless to complete one month early. I was relieved, let me tell you. I then proceeded to hack around and didn't really write the rules until May 28th, 2002. (That's the day I'm writing this.)

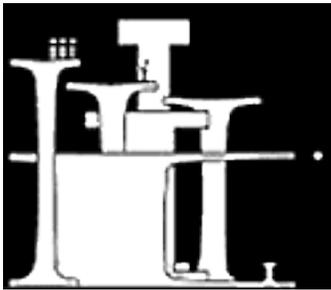
By the way, you start away from the *Action City Times* so you're not all rushing for the same places at the same time. That would be really boring. Splitting up

where you start makes you weigh your first few moves carefully.

Thanks to Sharon for editing and all of her hard work on the one-sheet layout. Thanks to Ben and Sharon for playtesting. Thanks to Ben for the "That's My Beat" variant.

June 7, 2002: We stayed up late last night to get the game done in time for Sharon's dad. \*whew!\* I may have to totally re-do the map 'cause I can't turn the EPS and Quark files into a pdf file. \*argh!\*

June 16th, 2002: Scanned the board and turned it into a jpg. Finally found time to finish these html rules. Once they're proofed, I'll pdf 'em, then I'm done. Yay!



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