

SEEK

DRUGS

&

ROCK 'N ROLL



1.

SEX, DRUGS & ROCK 'N' ROLL

INTRODUCTION

“Rock and roll doesn't necessarily mean a band. It doesn't mean a singer, and it doesn't mean a lyric, really. It's that question of trying to be immortal.”

Malcolm McLaren, manager of The Sex Pistols

“My defences were so great. The cocky rock and roll hero who knows all the answers was actually a terrified guy who didn't know how to cry. Simple.”

John Lennon, The Beatles

SYNOPSIS

The young, upcoming rock band Spruced Up from Liverpool is sent on a futile promotional tour in the U.S. The tour is a not going great. Nobody knows the band, and people can't relate to the music. During a backstage party, their manager is introduced to a drug that removes mental blocks and unleashes great creativity. He talks the band into trying it, and almost immediately, the first signs of success start to show. Unfortunately, the drug has a side-effect: It induces a personality disorder in a way where small quirks are magnified, distorted and turned into outright insanity.

The scenario consists of a sequence of scenes that show the band and their manager in different situations from their tour through respectively Williamsburg, Austin, Los Angeles and Manhattan. There are only a few scenes about the concerts themselves. The majority of the scenes show how the band's success, fame and madness affect their relationships with each other and their loved ones and their general ability to lead a normal life. In the end, the band is getting ready to give their biggest and most prestigious performance. While their personal lives are falling apart they must make a choice: Will they stop taking the drug and go back to their normal lives? Or will they choose to become rock legends at any price?

CONTENT

- 1. INTRODUCTION 1
 - 2. SETTING AND VIBE 4
 - 3. CHARACTERS 6
 - 4. THE PLOT 11
 - 5. IMPORTANT NPCs 14
 - 6. CENTRAL THEMES 16
 - 7. PLAYING THE SCENES 17
 - 8. GETTING STARTED 18
- HANDOUTS 21

GENRE AND SETTING

Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll is a satire of the music business and rock star myths. It takes place in a semi-realistic cliché univers. People and story lines are twisted and grotesque. Many scenes offer plenty of material for situational comedy, but there are also serious scenes that revolve around the main cha-racters' feelings and personal relationships. To name a few references, the vibe should be more like Almost Famous and Some Kind of Monster and less like Spinal Tap and Get Him To The Greek.

The story takes place in present day U.S. Many scenes are set on specific locations that illustrate the band's way to the top. However, focus should be on the characters and their interactions. Most scenes revolve around the music business, but your players do not need to a lot about the industry or about playing music for that matter.

THEMES

Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll is about the myths of rock and creativity. In western culture we praise creative individuals' ability to see the world in alternative ways. Within that line of thinking, we also accept that these individuals sometimes have a hard time fitting in because of their deviant nature and world-view. Some times, they are even expected to behave in a deviating manner. The creative individual serves society but at the same time his/her creativity makes it impossible for him/her to become fully integrated. The myth dictates a choice between creativity and normality.

In Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll the gift of creativity is represented by a pill that provides the characters with creative insights but at the same time alienates them from their normal life.

The story is set in rock culture where the cult of the creative individual has become a cliché. The premise is: In order to succeed in rock culture, you need to live the cliché and become a rock archetype. But within these clichés lie a story about alienation and self-destruction. In his suicide note from 1994, Kurt Cobain wrote: "It's better to burn out than to fade away". This is the choice that the characters are faced with. Will they go up in flames as legends or will they choose to fade away in the fog of insignificance.



STRUCTURE

The story is divided into four acts, each linked to a location on the tour.

Williamsburg – Frustrations about a career that just won't take off.

Austin – The first taste of success.

Los Angeles – Life as a rock star.

Manhattan – Decay and the big choice.

The acts are made up of a few main scenes with some sub-scenes that focus on the characters' personal themes and conflicts. The sub-scenes are seen through the characters' own world-views that become more and more distorted. The lead singer who suffers from illusions of grandeur will see a crazy fan as a new disciple. The paranoid bass player will see him as a CIA agent.

In practice, this means that all sub-scenes are played in the distorted reality of one character and all the other players will act as supporting roles. Sometimes they will play NPCs, other times they will play a distorted version of their own characters.

As gamemaster it is your job to set scenes and cut them. In some scenes you must play an NPC in order to have hand-on control of certain events.

2.

SETTING AND VIBE

**LOCATIONS**

The locations Williamsburg, Austin, Los Angeles og Manhattan are picked, as their specific music scenes represent different stages in the band's development.

Williamsburg is about aspiring wannabes.

Austin represents the music business' search for new talent.

Los Angeles represents stardom and decadence.

Manhattan represents the full-blown rock icon, living on the edge of society's norms. Don't worry too much about facts and details. It is all about the symbolic meaning. The locations and relevant details about the business is presented in the scene introductions.

COMEDY

It is okay to work with comedy. The players can have a laugh, as the characters do outrageous stuff, but the vibe must not be too slapstick. The humor should be more satire than clowning. It is built on the grotesque behaviour of the main characters and NPCs.

References: Extras, Californication, The Office and Entourage.

LANGUAGE

Remember, that the band is British, but they operate in an American setting. Try your best to work the different accents. Use significant British slang words such as “wanker”, “daft”, “tossler”, “sod off”, “dodgy” and “bloke”. Use significant American slang words such as “player”, “dude”, “motherfucker”, “that’s sick”, “awesome”, “scrub”, “blow” and “booze”.

Work the slang, no matter what language you and your players speak at your session.

MUSIC

Genre-wise the story is about a mainstream rock band. They play traditional electric instruments. Ideologically, the musicians see themselves as “rock”, in the sense that their music is serious and not just commercial entertainment. On the other hand, they still aim to write hit songs with catchy hooklines.



3.

CHARACTERS

THE BAND AND ITS MANAGER

The characters are four band members and their manger.

The band **Spruced Up** is:

Simon, bass guitar

Steve, guitar

Paul, drums

Johnny, lead vocal

Malcolm, manager

SPRUCED UP - TIMELINE

2000: The brothers Simon og Steve start playing with their dad.

2003: The brothers form a trio with Simon's childhood friend, the keyboard player Malcolm.

2005: The trio starts playing with the drummer Paul and they play their first gig. The band starts getting a local following.

2007: The band smells commercial success. This also means replacing Simon as the lead singer with Paul's childhood friend, the good-looking Johnny.

2008: Malcolm's musical abilities do not live up to the band's ambitions. He is thrown out of the band and reinstated as their manager. By the end of the year, the band signs its first record deal.

2009: The first album is released in the U.K. The band plays a series of summer festivals.

2010: The record company decides to release the record in the U.S. if the band the can put together a new hit single for a special U.S. edition. However, the studio work is delayed, because Steve is hospitalised due to a serious of attack of his chronic lung disease.

2011: The episode with Steve motivates the record company and Malcolm to take action. It is time to cash in on their hard work with the band. Next year may be too late! The band starts a promotion tour in the U.S. and plans to finish the last recordings in an American studio.

The brothers – Simon and Steve have played together always, and they have a special bond.

The front man – Johnny is the band's newest member. His good looks has earned him the spot as front man at Simon's expense, even though Simon is a better musician. Simon's commercial ambition has lead him to accept this situation, however, he constantly pushes Johnny to improve in order to really earn the spot.

Malcolm's mistrust – Malcolm used to be the band's keyboard player. However, the brothers felt that his abilities where more suitable for the position as manager. Malcolm knows that he is in the right job, but being forced off stage has done irreparable damage to his relationship with the others. Malcolm wants success but his is not necessarily loyal to the band.

The disease and the affair – Steve was recently hospitalised a couple of month due to a chronic lung disease. This has made the band aware of life's fragility and has induced a sense of urgency in their quest for success. At the same time, Steve's hospital admission resulted in a short affair between his girlfriend Emily and his older brother Simon. This is still a secret.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

The characters are portrayed in relation to some common issues.

Position in the band – All characters have strengths that make them a good lead singer, manager, e.g., but they all feel uncomfortable in the band as they find it difficult to meet the others' demands and expectations. These issues stay with the band members despite the new drug and success. Some issues will even get worse.

Sex – A central part of rock mythology is the rock star as sex symbol. The music symbolises sex and the rock stars sexual powers and appeal. All characters have a hard time living up to this ideal. As they start doing the drug these problems go away.

Drugs – It is made clear in all character descriptions that drugs are a natural part of everyday life. Drugs are used to enhance performance, to intoxicate and as a social lubricant.

Rock 'n' roll – All characters see music as a calling that surpasses mundane ambitions. Rock music is larger than the individual. Music is a valid life purpose and individuals must make sacrifices.

THE EFFECT OF THE DRUG

When the characters start taking the pills their personalities start to change. So does their experience of reality. When they take the first pills, hand each of them their own **Star Persona** (these are enclosed as a separate document).

The star personas are extra character descriptions that portray the characters in two stages of insanity. The players must themselves manage how their characters change from the early stage to the advanced stage. This development is supported by the scenes of the plot.

Changes in the characters' personalities work as an intensification of certain personality traits that pull the characters towards rock mythology's classical archetypes and clichés. This also means that the players' briefs before each scene may be based on a distorted version of reality. I will return to that in the chapter "Playing the scenes".

On the next pages, there is a brief description of the characters and what the drug does to them.

SIMON – BASS PLAYER

Simon is Steve's older brother and the band's natural leader. He gets involved and takes responsibility. **Simon's mission is getting a commercial breakthrough** and he works constantly to improve the band's mass appeal. Malcolm helps him working towards achieving his goal but his true loyalty lies with Steve. Simon is a control freak but he is also frustrated that he has to take on so much responsibility. He is trying to be brave but he is weighed down by guilt because he has slept with his brother's girlfriend. He acted irresponsibly and he has jeopardised his most important relationship.

Sex: Simon has problems using condoms. In the scenario, this works to his disadvantage as it turns out that he has made Steve's girlfriend pregnant.

Drugs: For Simon, doing drugs is about putting worries and responsibilities aside.

Rock 'n' roll: For Simon, music is something that can distract people from the trivialities of daily life.

The new drug: When Simon takes the pills, he becomes a stronger leader. Everybody suddenly wants his input and decisions. This gives him a sense of power and control and a feeling of being important. At one point Simon starts feeling burdened by responsibility and he starts to become paranoid. References: Roger Waters, John Lennon and Brian Wilson.

STEVE – GUITAR PLAYER

Steve is Simon's younger brother and the band's creative force. He is the band's best musician. **Steve's mission is to create great art.** He feels frustrated that especially Paul and Johnny lacks the necessary skills, and therefore they stand in the way of him realising his artistic vision. He also fears that Simon and Malcolm's commercial ambitions will wash out the band's uniqueness. Steve has a bad health and in the end, it may stand in the way of his art. However, currently his health serves as an excuse, as he hands over responsibilities to Simon and his girlfriend Emily who works for their record label.

Sex: Steve has lost his sex drive. He is afraid that he may lose his girlfriend Emily.

Drugs: For Steve, drugs are about inspiration. He is especially fond of psychedelic drugs.

Rock 'n' roll: For Steve, music is a divine, supernatural power that exists outside of man. Musicians are just vessels that must be kept open in order to channel inspiration.

The new drug: When Steve takes the pills, his current state is amplified. His guitar playing becomes even more expressive and his physical condition gets worse. He starts to feel that he himself and others stand in the way of the true art. He feels dwarfed by his own mortality and every human interaction seems threatening. References: Ian Curtis, Kurt Cobain and Dave Gahan.

MALCOLM – MANAGER

Malcolm is insightful and he sees the band's commercial potential. **Malcolm's mission is to promote his own carrier.** Malcolm is well respected by the band members, but deep down he feels like an outsider. When it comes to strengthening the band's mass appeal, his greatest ally is Simon. However, Malcolm is still hurt because he was thrown out of the band and he only trusts himself. If he could launch Johnny as a solo artist, it would do just fine. This is made a little more complicated due to the fact that Malcolm has hired Johnny's little sister as an assistant and that he is starting to find her attractive.

Sex: Usually, Malcolm picks up the groupies that are left over when the band members have had first pick. Right now he is trying to charm Johnny's sister Valerie.

Drugs: For Malcom, doing drugs is a ritual that you do to build relationships.

Rock 'n' roll: Rock 'n' roll is about creating stories about legendary people and events.

The new drug: When Malcolm takes the pills, he becomes more charismatic and persuasive. He also becomes more result-oriented and less worried about other people's feelings. At one point in time Malcolm starts feeling that everybody is working against his master plan. References: Ari Gold from Entourage, Richard Nixon and Silvio Berlusconi.

JOHNNY – LEAD VOCALIST

Johnny is good looking and he has a brilliant singing voice. His problem is that he lacks confidence and a sense of purpose as a songwriter. He feels awkward on stage. This gets worse as Simon keeps pressuring him. **Johnny's mission is to find his purpose as front man.** Paul is Johnny's best friend and they always party after the concerts and they always compete about who will take home the hottest chicks. Johnny dislikes that Malcolm has hired his little sister. He is afraid that Paul will end up fucking her.

Sex: Johnny is very interested in picking up chicks, but he has severe performance anxiety issues and he sometimes gets impotent.

Drugs: Cocaine boosts his confidence. Viagra boosts his sexual performance.

Rock 'n' roll: For Johnny, music is a way to communicate to a lot of people on a deep level. Right now, he is just unsure about the message.

The new drug: When Johnny takes the pills, he becomes aware about social issues and he starts seeing himself as a saviour. At one point, his condition approaches megalomania. References: Sting, Michael Jackson and Bono.

PAUL – DRUMMER

Paul is a technically skilled drummer and a naturally charismatic person. However, he struggles living up to the brothers' musical taste level. Musically, he feels like an elephant in a porcelain shop. **Paul's mission is to chase the rush of extraordinary experiences.** For Paul, music is a channel that leads to ecstasy. In time, it is also a road that leads to fortune and fame. Paul has a decent relationship with Steve who is trying to educate him musically. He is less fond of Simon and his dominating leadership. Paul often uses the awkward Johnny as a wingman when he picks up chicks. Johnny is good looking, but Paul's charisma and coolness seems to always bring home the bacon.

Sex: Paul has an easy time picking up chicks, but sexually he suffers from premature ejaculation.

Drugs: For Paul, drugs is for enhancing experiences and an excuse for being alone with chicks at parties. .

Rock 'n' roll: For Paul, music is the path to ecstasy.

The new drug: When Paul takes the pills, everything becomes more intense. He understands music and other people on a deeper level. Conflicts and sexual chemistry become stronger. However, the intensity becomes habitual and Paul starts crossing lines in his search for danger, conflict and sex. References: Jim Morrison, Prince and Michael Hutchence.



4. THE PLOT



OVERALL PLOT

This is the story about a Liverpool band who breaks the U.S. market while they are on tour in the states. As they gain success, the band members gradually start losing their minds and their personal relationships start to fall apart. In the band members perception of the events, their success and lurking madness is triggered by a new drug. However, the exact effects of the drug remains somewhat unclear.

Before the first scene, the band has already enjoyed some success in the U.K., but they are hungry for more. The U.S. tour starts off as a disappointment. The venues take poorly care of them, and concert-goers do not really respond to the music. In the prologue the band members find themselves backstage after a really bad gig. They are frustrated and disappointed.

After that, we follow the band as their tour through four different locations.

WILLIAMSBURG

After a bad support gig for a local act the band attends a party. It is obvious that the locals do not respect them. They are met with some skepticism by the evening's main act, some local girls and a drunk roadie. Later in the evening Malcolm meets his colleague Shane who recently led the Sheffield singer Billy Silver to a massive breakthrough in the U.S. Shane explains that the key to Billy's success is a chemical substance that unleashes creativity. He hands Malcolm a small glass of pills that we can try out with his own band.

How the drug works

Shane explains that the drug was developed to cure Alzheimers disease. The drug makes the body produce dopamin, which makes the brain create new connections. The new connections let the patient think outside of old patterns and ex-perience the world in new ways. That way the drug removes mental blocks and lets the patient become more free and creative. The side-effect is a minor personality disorder, but Shane has only seen Billy become more confident and hard working. Shane has also exsperimeted with the drug himself. He feels that it has made him come up with better ideas for promotion activities.

The real effect of the drug is irrelevant to the rest of the plot. When the band starts taking the drug, they become succesful and their personality disorders become gradually worse.

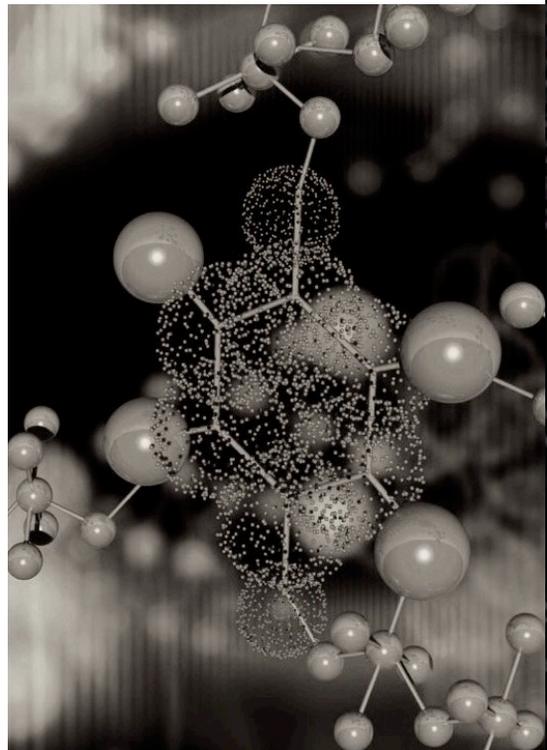
The characters experience the pills for the first time in the tour bus on their way out of Williamsburg. In the bus, they try to finish the lyrics for their new songs that is to be recorded in a few days and played on the rest of the tour. The writing process is going poorly, so Malcolm chooses to give them the pills. They experience a creative breakthrough and after that, they play a bunch of really good concerts.

The experiences in Williamsburg show the players that the band is far from successful in the states, but that it pays to take a shortcut.

AUSTIN

The band arrives in Austin to play a gig at the festival South By South West. At the arrival they see Billy Silver perform and they are struck by performance anxiety. Malcolm gives a pep talk and hands them another round of pills. They play an awesome show and the crowd goes wild. At the afterparty, they start to experience how the drug affects more than the music. During an interview, Steve and Simon get in an argument, Johnny picks up the singer and sex-symbol Wendy right under Paul's nose, and Malcolm has sex with Johnny's little sister Valerie in an empty backstage dressing room.

The experiences in Austin gives the band a sweet taste of success, but they also foreshadow some alarming consequences.



LOS ANGELES

The band travels to Los Angeles to record their new single. The expectations are building. The record company wants a hit and the band is offered a place on the waiting list of the world's largest music event, Earth Aid, a charity concert to raise money for environmental research. The concert is set in Madison Square Garden a few weeks later and it is transmitted worldwide. The band has had a short break from the new drug and they have a hard time performing in the studio. The band gets a visit from Steve's girlfriend Emily, who works for their record company. This spawns new conflicts. The band members end up taking a new round of pills and they manage to lay down some good tracks.

After the recordings, the band is invited to a party at Billy Silver's. The party is a disaster. Emily lets Simon know that she is pregnant with his child. Johnny causes a scene making a bold political statement. Paul's sex game with the singer Wendy ends up with her getting seriously hurt, and Malcolm talks Billy Silver into committing suicide, leaving a spot open at Earth Aid.

The experiences in Los Angeles show that the band's career has reached a new level. The pressure for commercial success is increased and it triggers artistic conflicts. At the same time, they experience stardom, luxury and madness. They are now completely aware that the drug may have dangerous side-effects.

MANHATTAN

Billy's death gives the band a spot at Earth Aid. The band goes to Manhattan to give a Rolling Stone Magazine interview and Johnny gives the music press a glimpse of his escalating megalomania.

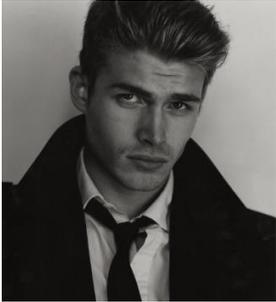
After the interview, the band goes to the legendary Chelsea Hotel and everything starts to fall apart. The drug distorts the characters' sense of reality, and nobody knows what is really going on. A fan breaks into their suite. Is he a messenger from God or a CIA agent? Paul is seduced by Johnny's sister, or is he really trying to rape her? Valerie is in love with Malcolm or is she just trying to sabotage his relationship with Johnny? Emily wants Simon to step up and come clean as their baby's father, or is she just out to pick on Steve?

The next day the band is backstage at Madison Square Garden. They have realised that the drug is the cause of their troubles. Now they must decide whether they should take another pill before the show. The scenario ends with a sequence where the players talk about the concert and the future of the characters.

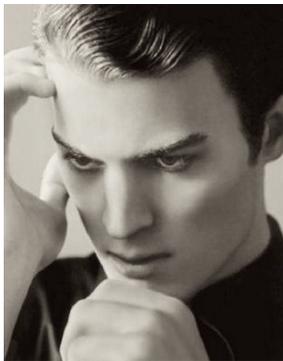
The experiences in Manhattan lets the players resolve the story's conflicts and play with the characters' insanities. Chelsea Hotel houses a desperate climax, but Madison Square Garden is the arena where the resolution is played out. Will the characters try to go back to the way things were before, or will they sacrifice a normal life and dedicate their time on Earth to inspiration and utter insanity?

5.

NPCs

**SHANE**

Shane is Malcolm's manager colleague who has had some success using the drug. Shane's role is to kick off the action. He motivates Malcolm to introduce the drug to the band members.

**BILLY**

Billy Silver is an English musician who is doing well in the U.S. He is the band's idol, especially Simon's. Billy's success shows, that the drug works. Later, the characters meet Billy again. This time his is gone mental. This serves as an indication of what is happening to them.

**ANNA**

The journalist Anna works for Rolling Stone Magazine. Her presence symbolises public interest. In the beginning, she is skeptical. Later, it is an honour for her to speak to them.

Gender

It is worth mentioning that the NPCs are filtered through the band members' perception of reality. The male NPCs are positive role models. The female NPCs serve as objects of the main characters' desire or competition.

NPCs



WENDY

Wendy is the lead singer of the all-girl band Lucky Lips. She is a huge media sex symbol. Johnny and Paul sees her as the hottest woman in the world , thus she becomes a prize in their competition. Later on, Wendy becomes a symbol of the consequences they face when things go too far, as she is hurt during a sex act with Paul.



EMILY

Emily is Steve's girlfriend and an employee at the band's record company. Her love is an asset that ends up coming between the two brothers. As an industry representative, she fuel their dispute about the band's musical direction. As Steve's girlfriend she is chal-lenging his low self-esteem and Simon's sense of responsibility.



VALERIE

Valerie is Johnny's little sister. She works as Malcolm's assistant. She represents the trust between Paul and Johnny. When Paul tries to have sex with her, he betrays Johnny. For Malcolm, her affection is a symbol of success, but as he becomes increasingly mad, he sees her as a threat to his career.

6.

CENTRAL THEMES

CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS

Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll is about the rock music cult of the creative individual. In order to gain success you will have to live up to the myths and clichés of the culture's excentric star archetypes.

DRUGS

In the scenario, the key to success takes the form of pill that causes insanity. Don't see this a moral crusade against drugs as a whole. In the scenario, any drug use should be presented as totally acceptable and just a part of everyday life.

ROCK VS. POP

Between Steve, Simon and Malcolm there is the possibility of playing around with the ancient conflict Rock vs. Pop and Commercial vs. Artistic. This conflict is not central in the main plot. When the band members take the new drug, they become successful no matter which artistic direction they chose. Make room for artistic discussion between Steve, Simon and Malcolm because it help the players portray the characters, but don't let the discussion affect the plot in general.

SUBJECTIVITY

On a more abstract level the scenario is about how different people see the world in different ways. In the game, the band members start experiencing the same events in different ways, e.g. filtered by the bass players paranoia or the lead singers megalomania. It is a strong point that noone knows what is actually happening. Make sure to tell that to the players. Otherwise they will follow their own character's logic even though they act as a supporting role in another character's reality.

7.

PLAYING THE SCENES

MECHANICS

Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll can be run as a regular tabletop game or semi-live. The story is divided into scenes: The relevant players receive a written brief before the scene, and they then improvise until you stop the scene.

Things change a bit, as the characters start taking pills. From that moment, their perception of reality is distorted in different directions. In an advanced state of madness, Johnny will see the crowd as worshipers while Simon will see the large crowd as a threat. The players make this happen as they play supporting roles to reinforce each others insanities by being threatening towards the paranoid band member or in awe of the megalomaniac. In some scenes, this works in a traditional way as the players take the roles of NPCs. In other scenes, they play their own characters in a distorted version. If Paul is a part of Steve's or Simon's reality he will act more threatening than he is defined in his own character description. This dynamic may be quite a challenge and it may seem a little chaotic some times.

I have chosen a tight scene structure. It is completely scripted how the different scenes move through the different characters' reality. The scenario consists of eight main scenes that are tied to different locations and points in time: A backstage party, a festival, a studio session e.g. Start these with briefing everybody about time and place. The main scenes are divided into sub-scenes that jump between the different realities. The sub-scenes make it possible to deliver a precise brief about roles and realities, so that the players are not challenged to remember all the characters' delusions.

On paper, the scenes are scripted very tightly, but if your group is strong, let other characters enter the scenes and improvise.

How to run a sub-scene:

- ✓ Give a short verbal brief about the situation.
- ✓ Hand out the short written briefs (if there are any for the particular scene) to each of the players. A brief explains the character's drive in the sub-scene and in what reality it takes place. The written briefs are in a separate document.
- ✓ Halfway through the scene, you give a cue (bang on a glass e.g.). If the scene changes to another reality, you announce this.
- ✓ The players will now continue the scene following the second half of their written brief.

8.

GETTING STARTED

EXPLAIN THE VIBE AND PREMISE

Read the following out loud or rephrase it in your own words: “Sex, Drugs & Rock ‘n’ Roll is a satire about the cult of the creative individual. In the Western world, the notion of genius and madness are not too far apart, and the excentric artistic people are seen as a bit more crazy than other people due to their creativity in itself. This narrative is strong within rock culture. The scenario is set in the music business, and you are to play rock stars who become gradually more crazy as you reach the top of your career. It is satirical because this archetype has now become a cliché. In the scenario the premise is: In order to be successful in rock culture, you must live out rock culture’s clichés and become one of its archetypes. It is your job to play with these clichés and at the same time endure the troubles of being a rock archetype in a normal life. Comedy is welcome, but remember all great rock stories are almost always tragedies.”

EXPLAIN THE PLOT

“You are **Spruced Up** – an upcoming rock band from Liverpool. You have had a bit of succes and people in the U.K. know who you are. Now, your are touring the states. You where supposed to have released an album here before the tour, but your guitarist was hospitalised and the release was delayed. Up until now, the tour is a failure. You play poorly and people don’t show up to your concerts.

Over the course of the scenario, you are offered some pills that will help you become succesful. They will help you overcome different obstacles, but they will also affect your general psyche – you will become insane. The story is played out as different points in time as you visit respectively Williamsburg, Austin, Los Angeles and Manhattan. It is your job to manage your development as the tour progresses.”

PRESENT THE FRAMEWORK

“You should continue to take the pills until the end of the scenario. When you take the pills, you become succesful, but you may still not be pleased with yourselves or each other. At the same time, your personalities will gradually change and you will turn into rock archetypes.

The characters will experience the world in different ways, and we will mix up in whose reality the different scenes take place. When a scene is not played in your character’s reality, you take a supporting roles. Your behaviour does not necessarily match your own character description. You will be briefed one scene at the time so you do not have to keep track of all the different realities.

In most scenes there is a turning point. At this point we will sometimes change reality. The turning point happens when I gives this cue [demonstrate your cue]. By then, I will also announce what reality we change to.”

HAND OUT CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

You may take the players outside the room and answer their questions. Let Simon know that his affair with Emily has to be kept a secret to the other players. Also, let Malcolm know that his attraction to Valerie is secret.

WARMING UP

Explain the band's musical style:

- Rock, but not too heavy.
- Traditional instruments: Guitar, drums, bass.
- Guitar-based compositions.
- Hit songs with catchy hoklines.
- Serious attitude, and not too commercial.

Let them talk about musical references and agree on a sub-genre. It could be bands similar to: Oasis, Blur, Suede, Pulp, Kings of Leon, Band of Horses, Editors, Interpol, Coldplay, U2, Green Day or Franz Ferdinand.

Let the players talk about the band: How do they look? Talk about some of the events on the timeline (in the character descriptions). How are they handling their success in the U.K.?

If you play with a Scandinavian group you may remind the players that all names are pronounced in English. Inspire them to use British or American slang and phrases .



HANDOUTS

NPCS

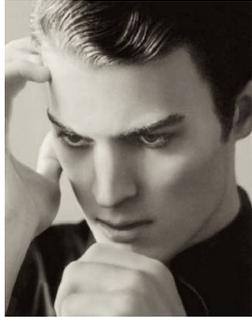
LYRICS FOR 'UNTITLED'

PILLS (TIC-TACS, CALCIUM TABLETS, E.G.)

HANDOUT: NPCs

BILLY

British musician who has had a big breakthrough in the U.S.



SHANE

Malcolm's friend.
Billy's manager.



ANNA

Journalist,
Rolling Stone
Magazine.



EMILY

Steve's girlfriend.
Manager at the
band's record
label.



VALERIE

Johnny's little
sister.
Malcolm's
assistant.



WENDY

Lead singer
in the all-girl
band Lucky
Lips.



HANDOUT: LYRICS

UNTITLED

Gonna feel me
Gonna feel me deep, yay!

Gonna steal me
Gonna steal me away!

Gonna make me
Gonna make me say

CHORUS:
Gonna let
Gonna let the fires burn
Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Gonna make
Gonna make my motor run

Gonna shake me
Gonna shake 'till I come undone

CHORUS:
Gonna let
Gonna let the fires burn
Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Unfolding your precious love
Let it run over
Let it run hot

Gonna feel me - Let it run hot
Gonna feel me - Let it run hot

(repeat to fade)