



JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE

Mumbai Police

LETTER FROM THE Executive Board

Welcome to the Mumbai Police side of this committee. The other room is D-Company, they'll have their own guide and their own chair, and you don't need to worry about their internal politics. You need to worry about yours, and trust me, you have plenty.

Here's the thing about playing the police in a story like this. It's tempting to think of yourselves as the good guys by default, because you wear the uniform and the other room doesn't. Resist that instinct. This department, at this point in its history, isn't a clean institution fighting a dirty one. It's an institution under enormous political pressure, staffed partly by genuine reformers, partly by ambitious officers who've discovered that gunning down gangsters makes you famous, and partly by a handful of people whose loyalty to the badge is a lot more negotiable than their personnel file suggests. You'll have informants who are functionally also employees of the people you're investigating. You'll have colleagues you don't fully trust. You'll have a boss whose job depends on you producing headlines, whether or not those headlines represent good policing. That's what makes this fun, honestly. Play it straight and by the book, or play it fast and loose and worry about the paperwork later, or quietly take money from a source you're supposed to be investigating and tell yourself it's for the greater good. All of that is available to you, and all of it costs something, sometimes literally your career, sometimes literally your life. More on that later.

How the room actually works

This is a Joint Crisis Committee, meaning the D-Company cabinet runs in parallel in a separate room, and the two of you are shaping one shared story. What you do here has consequences over there, often before they see it coming, and the reverse is just as true. Your main tool is the directive, your cabinet's way of taking collective action, whether that's a raid, a payment to an informant, surveillance on a target, or something considerably less official. Once passed, it goes to the backroom, who judge how realistic and well constructed the plan is before deciding what actually happens, so a half thought out raid based on bad intelligence can go wrong in ways a well planned one won't, though it still might, because this world doesn't reward good intentions, only good execution. You also have crisis notes, which let you act alone, outside full committee, and this is genuinely where a lot of the interesting stuff in this cabinet is going to happen. Quietly meeting a source. Accepting an envelope you shouldn't. Tipping off a journalist. Passing information to a colleague you trust and withholding it from one you don't. Use your notes aggressively, they're how you carve out your own arc in a room that otherwise moves as a collective.

The History That Got You Here

Bombay's underworld existed long before Dawood Ibrahim, run for years by figures like Haji Mastan and Karim Lala who smuggled gold and ran their rackets with something almost like rules, where territory meant something and there were lines nobody crossed. That changed once Dawood entered the picture. Born in Dongri in 1955 to a police constable, of all things, he built a street crew into a serious criminal operation through the late 1970s and 80s, fighting a brutal war against the established Pathan gang after they killed his older brother. By the mid 1980s D-Company had wiped out the old order and taken its place. In 1986, wanted for a murder your department was never able to make stick in court, he fled to Dubai and never really came back, which should have made your job easier and instead mostly made it more frustrating, since an untouchable boss running an empire from abroad is a much harder target than a boss you could actually arrest.

Late in 1992, the demolition of the Babri Masjid triggered weeks of communal rioting across the country, and Bombay was hit hard. This isn't a footnote, it's essential context for understanding what your department is dealing with now, because a large part of the city's Muslim community, including people close to D-Company, came out of those riots believing the police had failed to protect them, or worse, had picked a side. That perception did lasting damage to trust between your department and communities you still need as sources, informants, and witnesses. One man personally affected was Tiger Memon, whose office was burned down during the riots, and what followed was a retaliatory plan, put together with backing from Pakistan's intelligence services, to bomb the city in response.

On March 12, 1993, thirteen coordinated blasts tore through Bombay, killing two hundred and fifty seven people. Your department's investigation, led in large part by Rakesh Maria, moved fast, tracing the conspiracy to the Memon family within days through forensic work most officers involved still consider some of the best in the department's history. But Tiger, his family, and Dawood himself were already gone. This is the moment your department's entire relationship with organised crime changed. Before the blasts, Dawood was a smuggler you wanted. After the blasts, he was a mass murderer with a foreign intelligence connection, and your bosses stopped treating this as an ordinary law and order problem. It became a matter of political survival for everyone above you, which is exactly the kind of pressure that changes how a police force behaves.

Not everyone inside D-Company was comfortable with what the blasts had done, though. Chhota Rajan, Dawood's longtime deputy, reportedly broke with him over exactly this, and in the years since he's built his own rival outfit, one that frames its violence as revenge for the 1993 attacks rather than ordinary gang business. It's a smart move on his part. Sections of the press, and even a few politicians, have shown real sympathy for Rajan precisely because of that framing, treating him less like a rival criminal and more like some kind of rough folk avenger. For your department this split is genuinely useful and genuinely complicated at the same time. Useful, because two networks trying to kill each other's people saves you some effort and occasionally hands you intelligence one side is happy to leak about the other out of spite. Complicated, because you now have a three sided conflict playing out in a crowded city, and because public sympathy for Rajan makes any operation against his people politically trickier than an equivalent operation against Dawood's. Kill a D-Company man and you're a hero. Kill one of Rajan's and you might get an editorial written about you instead.

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Here's the part of this story that's really about you, though. Under pressure to show results after the blasts, your department built up a small, tight unit of officers, several from the same 1983 academy batch, who became known as encounter specialists. It's a polite name for a blunt practice. These officers have been given real latitude to confront suspects aggressively, and a steadily growing number of gangsters have ended up dead in circumstances that are officially self-defence and, let's be honest in this room even if nobody says it out loud in a press conference, often something closer to a decision made in advance. What makes this genuinely strange is how famous it's made some of your colleagues. Crime reporters compete for access to them, a few officers have started handing out fairly extravagant gifts to journalists who write them up favourably, and there's already talk of films being made loosely based on some of their exploits. Inside the department this has created something close to a status economy, where an officer's kill count functions almost like a batting average, tracked, compared, occasionally exaggerated. It's genuinely useful for the department's image. It's also, if you think about it for more than a minute, a fairly alarming way for a police force to be operating.

None of this happens in a vacuum either. A few names in the department have lifestyles that don't obviously match their salaries, and informant relationships that occasionally look less like intelligence gathering and more like a business partnership with better plausible deniability. This is your department. These are your colleagues. Possibly, depending on how you play this, that's you.

Both networks have found new frontiers worth your attention too. The film industry has become a favourite target for extortion calls to producers and music executives, serious enough that a prominent music industry figure was murdered by a D-Company enforcer without his own boss's full approval, an episode that briefly made the killer more famous than the man who ordered it and eventually pushed him toward Rajan's camp instead. Real estate is quieter but arguably bigger, with both networks working through builders and local frontmen to muscle into the city's booming property market, particularly around slum redevelopment schemes where intimidation and money move easily behind legitimate looking paperwork. There's also talk at the state and national level of new legislation that would let your department prosecute organised crime as organised crime, going after the whole structure of a gang rather than chasing one murder charge against one gangster at a time. If it arrives, it could be the single biggest tool your department has ever had. It could also, depending on how it's written and enforced, expose relationships some of your own colleagues would very much prefer stayed buried.

YOUR MANDATE

On paper, it's straightforward. Reduce organised crime, protect the public, uphold the law. In practice it's defined by whichever politician most recently gave an angry quote to a newspaper, and by a Commissioner whose own career depends on you producing results he can point to. You're fighting two networks at once while they fight each other, and you need to figure out how much of that infighting to exploit versus how much of it to worry about spilling onto streets full of people who aren't gangsters. You're also, quietly, managing your own department. The encounter squad's growing fame is a genuine political asset, but too much attention on any one officer's rising body count invites exactly the kind of scrutiny that could unravel the whole operation, or worse, get someone above you asking uncomfortable questions about how these operations are actually being run. Corruption within your own ranks isn't a hypothetical threat you need to guard against. It's a live, ongoing situation you're already part of, whether you like it or not.

This is where most of your committee's actual story is going to happen, so it's worth thinking through concretely. The obvious move is the raid or arrest, get a warrant, or don't bother if the target matters enough and you're confident you can manage the paperwork afterward, and go pick someone up. Good intelligence makes this work, bad intelligence gets someone killed or tipped off before you arrive or gets your department embarrassed in the press. Slightly less obvious but just as available is the encounter itself, since your department has already normalised confronting suspects with lethal force and calling it self-defence, and nobody upstairs expects you to stop. It's fast, permanent, and popular with your bosses and a chunk of the public, but it generates no trial, no testimony, no chance to flip a suspect into an informant, and a body that occasionally raises questions from journalists who aren't as friendly as the ones you've been cultivating.

Then there's the slower, less flashy work that's often where the real damage gets done. Both gangs are full of people who can be bought, flipped, or quietly used against each other. You can offer protection to a mid level operator in exchange for intelligence on his bosses, let a small crime slide in exchange for a bigger tip, or play D-Company and Rajan's outfit against each other, feeding one side selective information about the other and watching what happens. It's exactly the kind of arrangement that can blur the line between smart policing and something that looks a lot like collusion if anyone examines it too closely, and you don't have to play a clean officer if you don't want to. Some of the real people this cabinet is modelled on took money, protected sources they should have arrested, and built lifestyles well beyond what their salary explained. If your delegation wants to explore that, the door's wide open, though it comes with real risk, and the press, meanwhile, isn't a neutral backdrop in this story either, it's a tool. Leak a story that makes your operation look heroic, or one that makes a rival officer look incompetent or compromised, cultivate a journalist with gifts and access in exchange for favourable coverage. Public perception genuinely affects your political cover, and political cover genuinely affects how much freedom you have to operate. You're also not obligated to treat D-Company and Rajan's outfit as equally urgent threats. You can lean into public sympathy for Rajan and go softer on his people while hammering Dawood's network, or decide that's exactly the kind of thinking that let Rajan get this powerful in the first place and hit both sides equally hard. And don't forget you also have to manage each other. Some of you are more famous than others. Some of you think the famous ones are reckless glory hunters. Committee sessions are a great place to jockey for credit, deflect blame, or throw a colleague under the bus if it serves your character's interests, and none of that is a distraction from the crisis. It is the crisis, just as much as anything happening on the streets.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU SCREW THIS UP

Every choice in this cabinet has a downside, and we want to be upfront about that instead of letting you find out the hard way, though honestly, finding out the hard way is more fun for everyone watching.

Order too many encounters too fast with too little to back them up, and you're not going to get a medal, you're going to get a magistrate's inquiry, a suspiciously well informed journalist asking why three gangsters in a row died resisting arrest in the exact same lonely stretch of road, and possibly a very uncomfortable meeting with the Commissioner where the word "optics" gets used a lot. Historically, officers who got too trigger happy without the paperwork to match ended up suspended, transferred to some godforsaken traffic post, or worse, investigated by their own colleagues who were only too happy to see a rival stumble. Consider that your in-universe equivalent of a red card.

Take money from the wrong person, and eventually somebody is going to notice your new car, your new flat, or your suspiciously generous new hobby, and it will not be a sympathetic somebody. It might be Internal Affairs. It might be a colleague who wants your job and finally has the leverage to take it. It might, worst of all, be a crime reporter who decides your story is more interesting than your favourite officer's this week, and there is nothing more humiliating in this committee than getting exposed not by the law, but by a slow news day.

Feed bad intelligence to your own raid, and people can die who did not need to, including possibly your own. Feed good intelligence to the wrong side by mistake, and you may find out the hard way that D-Company and Chhota Rajan's people do not appreciate being played, and neither of them has ever felt strongly about due process. Get caught playing both gangs against each other too obviously, and don't be surprised if you become a target for both of them at once, which is the kind of bipartisan attention nobody actually wants.

And if your cabinet, collectively, lets the whole thing spiral so badly that Bombay looks like it's descended into open gang warfare on your watch, expect a very public reckoning, the kind that ends careers, launches inquiry commissions, and, if history is any guide, eventually gets turned into a moody Bollywood film where the actor playing you is better looking than you actually were.

None of this is meant to scare you into playing safe. Quite the opposite. Half the fun of this cabinet is deciding how much risk your character is actually willing to carry, and watching what happens when you guess wrong. Just don't say we didn't warn you.

A NOTE ON RESEARCH

Everything here is grounded in real events and a real institution, though this is a simulation and you have genuine room to make choices your historical counterparts didn't. Reading further on the 1993 blasts, the Chhota Rajan split, and the rise of Mumbai's encounter squads will help, not so you can recite facts, but so you get a feel for how tangled this period actually was for the people living through it. Nobody in this story, on either side of the law, was working from a clean script. You shouldn't feel like you need one either.