

Dirt Merchant

a crappy game by Steve A.

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1. Introduction

“So you think you have what it takes to sling a little dope eh? Think you got the skeelz to hustle the Loanshark and get the product out before the cops sniff ya out? Well, that remains to be seen fool (pronounced: 'foo'). I got hoes out back that were busted up trying their hand at what you think is “too damn easy.” Yeah, I've seen lotsa fools go down here in Dope City. I guess the question is... will you be next?”

- Your Supplier Fast Eddie

Welcome to the market economy! Dirt Merchant is a game of drug economics. To put it simply, you want to buy low and sell high (no pun intended). The drug market is just like any other market with current events changing prices by the day. Your job is to get it cheap and sell it at premium. Easy enough? You would like to think so.

Unfortunately Dope City isn't the friendliest place on earth to be slinging some product. Yeah sure, it has its share of wacky Sumerian death cults, and maybe some evil monkeys just to kick it up a notch (bamm!) but with a tough legal system and cops who like nothing better than locking up silly white boys, you will soon see how tough the biz really is.



2. How to Play

“Selling the shit is the easy part. Getting a good price and avoiding the cops is whats tough. I hope ya have a ride cause you ain't getting anywhere without one. Like my daddy (he details cars!) always said, “Son, ya can't knock up no hoe up in the back of ya momma's Taurus.” Course, that was where I was conceived.”

- Your Supplier Fast Eddie

The Title Menu

After starting the game you will be presented with the tried and true Title Menu. To start a new game just click on the “New Game” item. If you want to shut off the crappy animations and sound effects click on “Options”. To see the credits click on the “Credits” item. To exit the game click on “Exit”. Simple eh?

We will get back to the New Game entry in a moment. First, I want to describe the other menu entries.

To use the Options menu just click on the circle next to each option. A green circle filled in with blue is ON. An empty circle is OFF. Click on OK when you are happy with the option settings.

When in the Credits screen you need to press ESCAPE to exit back to the Title Menu.



Starting a New Game

Having selected the New Game item we are now presented with the new game options. Difficulty and Game Length.

The first is difficulty. Click on the difficulty level to change it. There are four difficulty levels. Crackhead(easy), Dealer(Medium), Pimp(Hard), and Drug Lord(Very Hard). Once you have reached Drug Lord, clicking again will cycle you back to Crackhead.

The next is game length. The default is 30 days. Clicking on the + or – buttons will allow you to change this from 10 to 365 days. Use the left mouse button to increment by 1 the right mouse button to increment by 10.

Once you are satisfied with the options click OK to continue.



The “Where to Thug?” Screen

The next screen we see is the “Where to Thug?” screen. Here we have a list of Dope City's several districts. In order to go to a location just click on its name. To insure we are going to the right spot a blue indicator will appear around the locations title. Pressing ESCAPE in this screen will end your current game and return you to the Title Screen. Also, pressing the M key will show us a town map and the current locations of all the town's cops. We want to make sure that we do not try selling or buying drugs in those

locations. At least not until the cops have moved elsewhere.

At the bottom of this screen you will see that you currently have 1 movement point. This is because you are walking everywhere. If you are lucky you may have some options on getting a phat ride later on. This will allow you to travel to more than one location each day. A must if you want to make some real money!

Doin Bin'ness!

Upon entering this screen you may get a series of news flashes. These are recent events in Dope City that are effecting certain drug prices. Its a good idea to remember these as they will give you an idea on what is cheap and what is expensive.

You may also get a window asking whether you would like to buy a vehicle upgrade. If you have enough money then you will be able to choose whether you want to buy it or not.

Once we have passed the events and vehicle upgrades we see the following screen:



Bin'ness:	Sell		Buy	Buy/Sell Price	
Heroin	0	+ -	0	\$9,697	
Speed	0	+ -	0	\$94	Cash
Crystal Meth	0	+ -	0	\$3,825	\$1,950
Ludes	0	+ -	0	\$25	Total Price
PCP	0	+ -	0	\$3,380	\$0
Acid	0	+ -	0	\$3,383	Space
Weed	0	+ -	0	\$553	0 of 50
Shrooms	0	+ -	0	\$752	Lawyers
Ecstasy	0	+ -	0	\$2,239	Buy
Cocaine	0	+ -	0	\$27,453	Jet

This is the screen where we make our money. All the drugs for sale in Dope City are listed on the left hand side in blue. Following the rows across we see the buy column, plus/minus buttons, sell column, and the current price of that drug. At the top of the buy/sell columns we see two toggle buttons. One

called Sell and one called Buy. In order to buy a drug we want to have buy pushed down (like in the picture), if we want to sell then we want sell pushed down.

From here we click on the +/- buttons until we get the quantity we wish to buy or sell. To complete the transaction, click on the buy (or sell) button on the bottom right of the screen (between the Lawyer and Jet buttons). We should instantly see the price deducted or added to our cash total. We will also see the drug quantity purchased/sold in our Space available area.

Caveats/Hints:

Using the right mouse button on +/- buttons will increment by 10 rather than 1!

You can only carry so many drugs at one time. Space reflects this. To get more space buy a vehicle upgrade.

The buy/sell button will switch to reflect which toggle is down.

The buy quantity will not exceed the amount you can afford.

Use the 'B' key as a quick toggle between Buy/Sell modes!

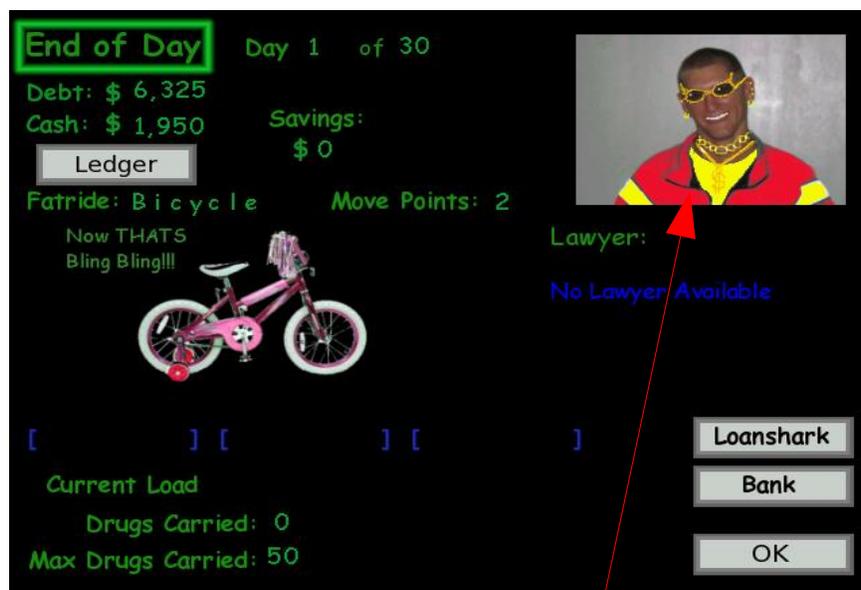
If you click on the Lawyer button you will be shown a list of “Lawyers for Hire” To hire a lawyer click on the hire button next to their name. Once you close the hire window you will not be able to open it again at this location. So don't close it until you have hired one of the lawyers or decided you didn't want any of them.

If you are in an area too long and a cop happens to enter it you may instantly go to the Silence the Witnesses mini game. To avoid this check your map with the M key here to see if any cops are getting close to you. You may have to B-line the fuck oughta there to avoid getting arrested. The cops will only mess with you if you have drugs in your possession though. See Busted! for more details on the mini game and handling yourself in court.

When you are done transacting click on JET to leave the area. Depending on whether you have movement points left or not you will go to the end of day screen or back to the “Where to Thug?” screen.

End of Day Screen

Once all of your movement points are expended then you will see the end of day screen. This screen shows your current situation with debt (and applicable interest on it), your cash on hand, and savings. It also displays your current lawyer, vehicle, and allows you to make Loanshark and Bank transactions. A quick look at the screen:



Fast Eddie says: “Damn bizatch! Now thats some pimpin gear!”

Notice the Ledger button just below your cash and debt listings. Clicking on this will show you a summary of your days transactions and expenditures.

In the bottom left you have Loanshark and Bank buttons. These buttons will take you to the Loanshark and Bank windows.

In the Loanshark window you can borrow more money (depending on how much you currently owe) and make debt payments (important to keep the interest from killing you... literally). Just click on Borrow or Pay and enter the amount in the number pad that pops up. Hit OK to close the number pad and complete the transaction.

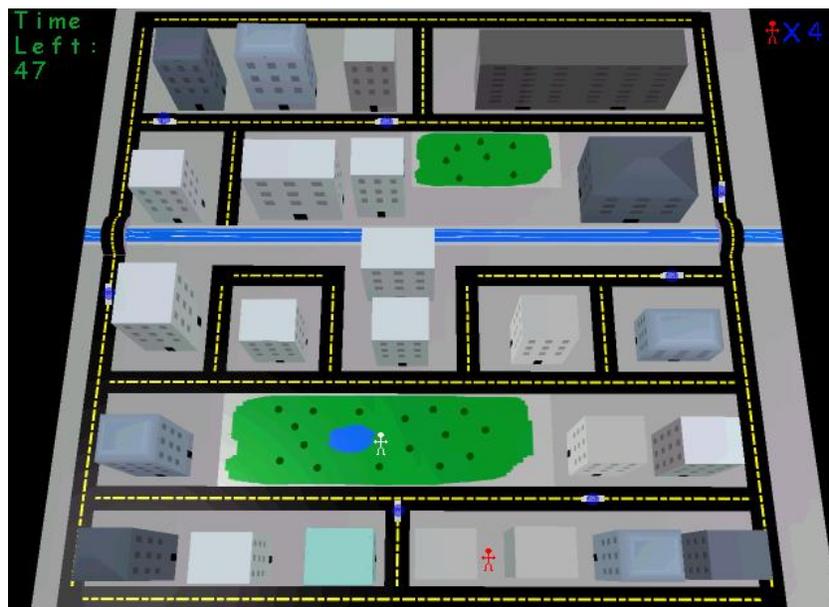
The bank is the same but it allows you to deposit money into a savings account or to withdraw money from your savings. Money in the savings account will accrue a fixed percentage of interest a day. The interest rate depends on the game difficulty. The interest rate for a savings account is ALWAYS lower than the interest rate the Loanshark is charging you. The benefit is that losing a court case will never take money out of your savings. You can only lose cash you have on hand.

Finally, click on the OK button to start the next day. If you are currently IN JAIL because of a court proceeding then your picture in the top right will display this and you will be forced to end each day until you are released. This is so you can track your financial woes while in the slammer. Bank savings will accumulate interest while you are in jail.

Busted!

So the cops sniffed ya out when you where carrying 50 units of Coke eh? No fear, you still have a chance or two to beat this wrap. Your first method is to silence all those fools who are going to rat ya out. You handle this by playing... SILENCE THE WITNESSES!!!

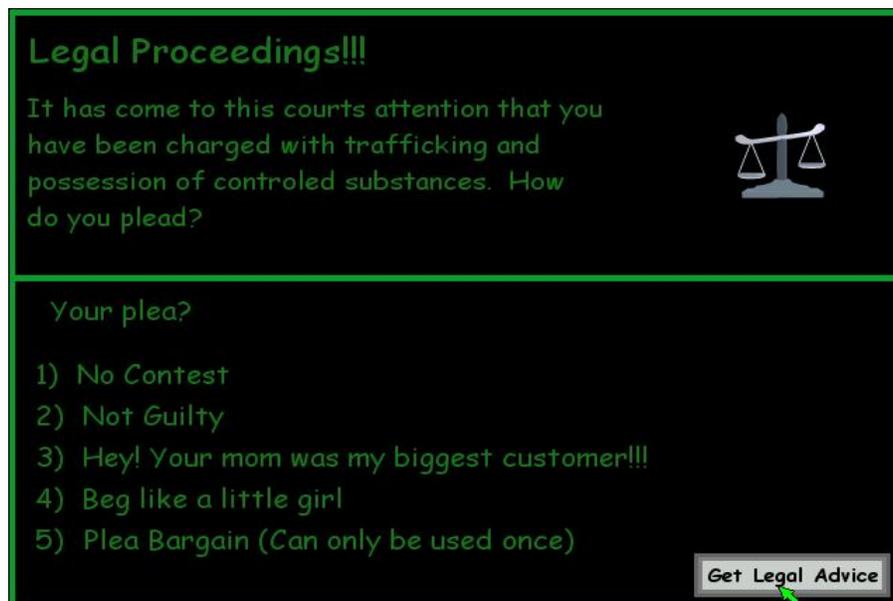
This is a mini game where you are situated on a hack job 3d perspective of the city. It looks like this:



The object of this mini game is to navigate the scrawny white dude (you) and hit all four of the little red dudes (the witnesses!) When you reach each one a brief dialog will pop up showing you intimidating(?) them to keep them quiet. You have a set time limit to catch all four of the witnesses (displayed in the top left of the screen). This time limit is changed according to difficulty. To make matters worse there are cop cars all over the city! You must avoid them or go straight to court! The amount of cars driving around is also changed according to the difficulty. Note that the cops can see for a radius around their cars so you have to be real careful not to get even close to them. (Hint: Use the parks to catch a breather!)

To win just avoid the cops and hit all four witnesses before the time runs out!

Lets just say that you get caught or fail to silence all four witnesses before the time runs out. Off to court we go!!! Did you hire one of those lawyers? No, of course you didn't!



No lawyer eh? Well you are pretty much screwed. But wait! What are all these pleas I see? These are your futile attempts at beating the wrap. With a lawyer (depending on skill and, of course, retainer fee) your chances of getting a reduced sentence (or off altogether!) are significantly increased. Without one you are pretty much hosed.

A quick break down of the different pleas effects:

- 1) No Contest: This typically gives you a better chance at a reduced sentence but since you are basically pleading guilty your chances of getting off altogether are small. Use this if you have plenty of time and no lawyer.
- 2) Not Guilty: Increased chance of getting off altogether but little chance of a reduced sentence if the judge doesn't bite.
- 3) HYMWMBC: Fuck it! You got pride man. You don't need to take no shit from the man. Show your pride, and get whats coming to you...
- 4) Beg Like a Little Girl: A fairly unpredictable outcome. If you have nothing to lose it can be wildly successful or an abysmal failure. A lawyer has the least impact on this kind of plea.
- 5) Plea Bargain: You can use this once per game. You basically “Narc on an associate”. This will get you off the hook altogether but the crime family hires a hitman to take you out. He will appear on your map from now on and wander around the screen looking for you. If he catches you, you lose the game instantly. Better keep your eyes open!

Lastly, you have a Get Legal Advice button. Clicking on this button will prompt words of wisdom from your deadbeat lawyer. Sometimes he will regurgitate words of wisdom that can greatly influence your case. Worth a shot, that is, *if you actually hired a lawyer...*

Fast Eddie says: “Trust me dawg. Silencing fools is a lot easier than messin wit dat judge. That motha fucka will be like straight up, “You goin to jail”, so I be like, “Hell no bitch, i aint done nuttin.“, See thats where rappin can break down cuz usually I wind up behind bars. But it aint no thing as long as you don't squeal or don't owe no one nuttin. Ya got a couple bucks ya can throw a dawg? I need a forty.”

Wrapping her Up

So we have been running around making some bones, running from the cops, and silencing fools. But now we are on our last day. Upon completion of the game length we are displayed the greatest achievement in end-of-game-screen history. It shows us a tally of our achievements and a huge cinematic event illustrating the conclusion of our story. Screenshot? Ah hell no! You

gotta reach this on your own! This ain't no fucking Game Spy review!

I leave you with some words of wisdom from Fast Eddie:

“So anyways I was like BLIZOW! BLIZOW! BLIZOW! And those fools just kept comin a-right? And then my moms like “Eddie when are you gonna get a job?” and I was like “Damn it hoe! I's-a-get-a-job-tomorrow!” And she says, “last job you had was robbin a telephone booth!” so I says “fuck, mom ya just made me lose my Playstashun game!” and she says “you-a-just-a-like ya worthless deadbeat dad!” and I says “dad aint worthless ya ole bitch, hes making fat money detailin cars now!” and she goes ”he ain't detailin nuttin! Hes working at the damn car wash.” So I says, “whateva”, and went down and bought me some cheese-os anna forty”

- Your Supplier Fast Eddie

3. Controls

The game is meant to be played primarily using the mouse (with the exception of the Silence the Witnesses mini game). However, there are some keyboard controls that can be used instead of clicking on buttons.

ENTER key: Closes most pop up windows.

Quick close for Drug Events

Closes STW mini game conversation dialogs

ESCAPE key: Exits out of a game when in the Wheretothug? Window

Skips intro screen on game start

Surrenders in the Silence the Witnesses game

Closes Map screen

ARROW Keys: Moves the character in the Silence the Witnesses game

B key: Used in the Bin'ness screen to toggle between buy/sell modes.

LEFT Mouse Button: Standard button pusher. Increments/decrements +/- buttons by 1.

RIGHT Mouse Button: Used to increment/decrement +/- buttons by 10.

4. Contact Info

Well here it is, Dirt Merchant. After several exhaustive late nights I can say that it is ready for a beta release. It seems pretty stable and I can't find any more bugs (at last!). This is a preliminary beta release so the public at large can chastise and shame me. Also, if your not too busy you can send me a bug report or two. Also, if you have any feature requests that I overlooked or just want to make a comment in general, send them my way. You can “rap” with me here:

emcioranlogic@iname.com

Keep it fly bitches!

Steve A.

Fast Eddie says: “This dude is a punk ass bitch! Kinda like my last girlfriend, but wit mo hair. That girl was scaly n' shit!”

DISCLAIMER: The people and events portrayed in this game are ENTIRELY fictional. If any events or people are similar to you, or your life, then you are really fucked up. Seriously.

5. Credits/Thanks/Shout Outs

This game was made using only the finest in stolen code, artwork, and time. I want to credit everyone as much as possible because, hell, giving credit is free!

Technologies:

Allegro by Shawn Hargreaves and the entire allegro cast. (www.allegro.cc)

PPCOL by Ivan Baldo

EuAllegro by Ray Smith

Euphoria and EU2C Translator by Rapid Deployment Systems

(www.rapideuphoria.com)

Art and 3D Modeling: The GIMP (www.gimp.org) (its free and it rocks!!!)

3D Canvas Pro (www.amabilis.com)

Documentation: OpenOffice.org (using PDF export!) (www.openoffice.org)

Peeps:

Charles Allen (my bro): For pimpin art, modeling, making the witnesses

John "Nasty Thug" Rodgers: For moral support, internet scams, and keepin it real.

Adam "JDAM" Gebhart: Spinning leaf, pimpin the Dart.

Molly Feese: Art work, (pimpin the Clevenger), Beta testing

Geoff Clevenger: Playing the protagonist, voice talent (ha!), inspirational quotes

Anthony Turner: inspirational quotes, you and Geoff were hilarious!

The entire E6M: For keepin it real and taking my shit for a year.

The game is inspired by Drug Wars by John Dell, but I first learned of it playing Matt Lee's PalmOS version: Dope Wars. I tried to add some depth to the previous versions. Failure or success? You be the judge.