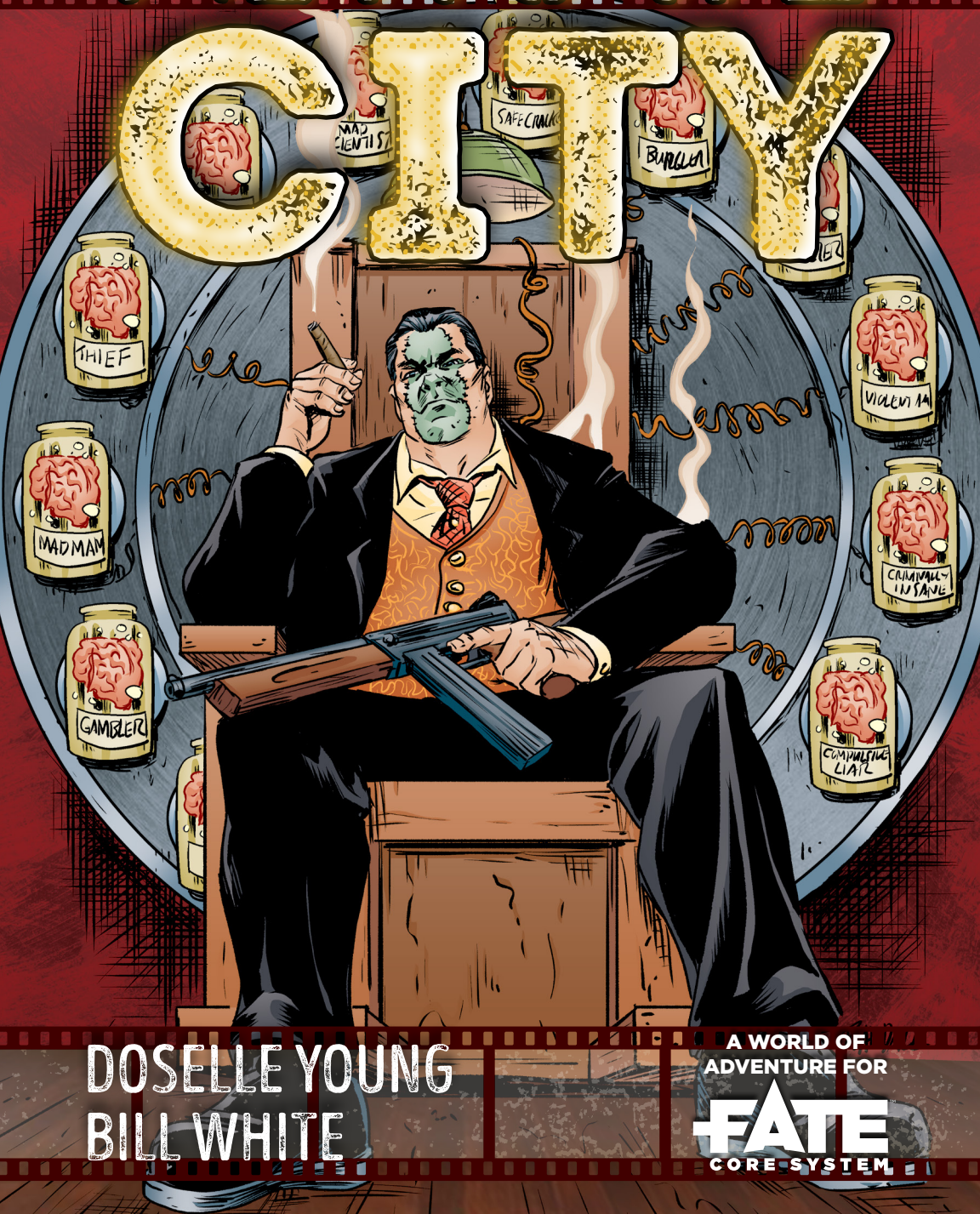


NITRATE

CITY



DOSELLE YOUNG
BILL WHITE

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE
CORE SYSTEM

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NITRATE CITY

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE CORE SYSTEM

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Nitrate City

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For those working at a copy shop and not at all sure if this means the person standing at your counter can make copies of this thing, they can.
This is "express permission." Carry on.

This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible, impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, private eyes with ferocious patter, creatures of the night, gangsters, werewolves, movie starlets, or reanimated corpses is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

Doselle's Dedication

*This game is dedicated in eternal gratitude to Carrie Harris,
a relentless talent without whom none of this would have been possible.*

Every roll of the dice we share with you.



CONTENTS

These Mean Streets	3
Issues	4
Faces.....	6
...and Places	7
Characters: Neither Tarnished nor Afraid	10
Aspects	10
Stress and Consequences.....	14
Approaches	14
Refresh and Stunts.....	18
Running Adventures: In Search of a Hidden Truth	19
Adventure: The Blood Dahlia.....	21
Hooks	21
The Secret.....	21
Persons of Interest	22
Development and Resolution.....	26
Coming Soon.....	26
Non-Player Characters.....	35
A Nitrate City Rogues Gallery	36

The Santa Ana winds slipped through the city like a knife that night in late October 1948. Precise. Surgical. A scalpel in the hands of some mad surgeon hell-bent on playing God, those hot desert winds unspooled the city's nervous system like a length of copper wire. It unstitched her streets at the seams and replaced the blood and bone beneath with something altogether unexpected. That night in late October 1948, seven days before the last Halloween, the city went spiraling off its axis at 24 frames per second as the private detectives, mad scientists and monsters of the silver screen came to life in the City of Angels, bringing the twisted physics of their black and white world with them. That night in October, their world became our world and our world became theirs—here in the flickering city.

—from *The Flickering City: An Informal History* (1955) by Austin Crawford

Take Route 66 west and you'll find it teetering on the razor's edge of the Pacific: a sprawling city built on the bones of old Hollywood and illuminated by sodium light. Folks used to call this place the City of Angels, but these days it sports a new name, taken from the explosive chemicals used in black-and-white film, flash paper, and guncotton, and evoking the volatile human chemistry of this strangely transformed landscape. Today, most people call the place Nitrate City.

Nitrate City is an urban jungle of raw nerves and heightened emotions, where mad scientists, chalk-skinned vampires, werewolves, swamp monsters, and the reanimated dead exist alongside—and as—private detectives, femme fatales, Don Juans, and gun-toting gangsters of every stripe. It's a city whose heart pounds to the rhythms of black magic and mad science, noir-fueled crime and political corruption. It's a place where the boundaries that separate monster from mobster and cops from living corpse blur with every flicker of the lamp-light. It's a place where everyone has a secret to keep.

Even you.

Here in Nitrate City, ordinary citizens often find themselves at the mercy of the various Powers That Be: dirty politicians, mad scientists, suit-and-tie sorcerers, and criminal masterminds vying for a bigger piece of the pie. It's a place where the blood runs red hot and icy cold. It's a place where the battle for truth and justice is fought, not by the cops alone, but by those rare individuals, those monsters, mutants and average Joes and Janes with the grit to get the job done.

THESE MEAN STREETS

“Take me out of here, Rose,” Marilyn said as the last of the fire trucks pulled away. I felt a spark as she clutched my hand to her cheek.

“Alright,” I replied. “I will.” We were alone and I tried to do my best to ignore it but I’d been sloppy and a speck of blood had remained just above the bow of her otherwise perfect lips. I pulled my hand from her cheek. I licked the tip of my index finger then dabbed at it until it finally disappeared. “I’ll take you wherever you like but I need you to tell me: exactly where do you want go? I need you to tell me where you’ll feel safe.”

And it was a fair question, no doubt. After all, there were countless roads and numerous highways leading in and out of Nitrate City. There was a vast ocean churning at our backs, the blue Pacific edged by an expansive coastline stretching north and south with equal grace. There were mountains, hills, sprawling valleys and unearthly places, hidden in the stitches that joined one neighborhood to the next. There were views of downtown from the Parsons Observatory at dusk that made all lovers—whether young, old, dead, and alive or, like Marilyn herself, somewhere in between—go weak in the knees. And everything, almost every aspect of the silver city, seemed to go on forever at odd angles. Marilyn had already died violently—twice. I didn’t want to be the one responsible for getting her lost in that hall of mirrors a third time—not without a few conditions.

—From *The Jigsaw Girl* (1959) by Leigh Highwater

Nitrate City is late-1950s Los Angeles transformed in a burst of dark magic and mad science. Mixing the atmospheres of monster movies and film noir, the sordid crimes of vice lords, villains, and petty crooks form the backdrop for desperate and deeply felt action by flawed heroes struggling not to be monsters.

To support this feel, *Nitrate City* uses a variant of the approaches from *Fate Accelerated*. These **cinematic approaches** (page 14) encourage players to think about how their characters’ actions reveal something about them, rather than being strictly about achieving particular goals, ends, or objectives.

Nitrate City games operate on the personal scale. The heroes investigate crimes or mysteries affecting individuals or small groups. However, in true film noir fashion, their adventures may lead them to face problems that matter to larger groups or the city as a whole—political corruption and the plans of fat cats and power players, for example. Some characters may even find themselves digging into the cosmic mystery of what created Nitrate City in the first place, or the secret conspiracy determined to keep it the way it is. On the whole, however, *Nitrate City* stories are about individuals and their problems.



Issues

These issues (*Fate Core*, page 22) push the tone of *Nitrate City* toward gritty or at least dramatic rather than campy, despite the use of Universal movie monster archetypes as character types. It's more Anne Rice or Sookie Stackhouse than the Munsters.

In play, the monstrous nature of the characters might make some players more willing to engage with some of the darker elements of noirish fiction than they might be otherwise, but of course the members of your group should talk about what kinds of thematic content they're comfortable with. More importantly, your group may wish to plan for how you'll correct course or otherwise renegotiate fictional elements that aren't enjoyable or somehow cause discomfort.

The Flicker Effect

Ever since that bizarre day in 1948—more than ten years ago now, when Los Angeles was torn apart and stitched back together in a strange new way—sometimes the world goes black and white and everything seems to flicker almost imperceptibly, like a strobe light flashing just faster than the eye can register. This “Flicker Effect” is stronger and more frequent the closer one gets to Old Hollywood, but there is nowhere within *Nitrate City* that is immune. Reputable scientists generally regard the Flicker Effect as localized “aftershocks” of the Big Flicker Event of 1948.

When the Flicker Effect starts, strange things often happen. They may be subtle or they may be screamingly obvious, but they usually involve some intrusion, arriving out of nowhere, from the alternate realms depicted on the silver screen: a troop of anachronistically costumed extras, lighting that produces dramatic chiaroscuro or stark lens flare, or even cinematically charged hallucinations—such as the voice of a disembodied narrator or seeing oneself act as if an audience member, possibly in slow motion or from an unusual angle. Some scientists have tried to understand the Flicker Effect as a kind of energy field that responds to concentrated mental emanations of the human imagination and which is capable of perceptual effects. The ability of sodium-vapor lamps to temporarily suppress the Flicker Effect is not well understood.



Monsters Among Us

One of the most noticeable consequences of the Big Flicker Event of 1948 the arrival—some say immigration—of people with strange powers and abilities, sometimes freakish in appearance, in its aftermath. Labeled monsters by the popular press and the public at large, they evoke creatures from cinema and the myths and legends upon which they draw. Many were people who transformed during the Big Flicker Event of 1948 or its aftershocks, and who remember their pre-Flicker lives, but some “immigrants” recognize themselves instead as strangers in a strange new world with no way home. Still others have no memory of their origins, or remember themselves as having always been present in our world, even if there’s no record or trace of their presence before 1948. The proliferation of mad scientists in Nitrate City during the 1950s has also contributed to the increasing presence of so-called monsters, as their experiments escape or are released into the wild.

There are also cases of entire communities seemingly out of myth, legend, or fiction that appear to have been stitched into the fabric of Nitrate City during the Big Flicker. Popular belief and prejudice attribute the recent spike in violent crime in Nitrate City to the arrival of “the monsters,” and so they are naturally regarded with fear and suspicion, which has isolated those transformed or transported by the Flicker Effect. The canyons of the Hollywood Hills are notorious as the refuge of monsters and those who are fascinated by them, a bizarre demi-monde whose louche denizens embody all that the daylight world of workaday Angelenos seeks to repress.

Faces...

The Crime Consortium

The Crime Consortium is the name used by the press to refer to a conglomeration of gangs and other criminal outfits throughout Nitrate City, with ties to organized crime in other cities, that hold influence in the halls of power in the city and county government. It includes Mexican street gangs, Italian Mafiosi crews, Chinese tongs, and the UGH, a secret society of movie-monster hoodlums energized by the Flicker Effect. The more lurid tabloids connect it with a conspiracy of “Secret Masters” supposed to manipulate Nitrate City from a secret desert stronghold once ruled by an ancient race of lizard people, or alternately to strive against each other from elemental towers of mastery located at cardinal points within Nitrate City.

But the undisputed leader of the Crime Consortium is Victor Stitch (page 40), a reanimated man created by an unknown mad scientist in the early days of Nitrate City and founder of the UGH. Aggressively moving to dominate the criminal gangs active in the city, Stitch used his monstrous goons to bring the various vice rackets, dope-smuggling rings, fencing fronts, and other organized crime activities largely under his control. He has a fearsome reputation, but he is increasingly regarded by many monsters as their unofficial mayor, the protector of monstrous Nitrate City, particularly in the face of political corruption in the official municipal and county government and heavy-handed police tactics more likely to dispense brutality than justice.

The Night Squad

Chief William Parker of the Nitrate City Police Department has responded to news accounts of the activities of the so-called Crime Consortium by creating a special outfit called the Night Squad, made up of officers touched by the Flicker Effect. Belonging to the Night Squad is an obvious way for PCs to become involved in Nitrate City adventures.

The Night Squad is an official police outfit, and its members are treated as cops as they make their inquiries and confront suspected bad guys. Of course, corrupt elements within the city government or the police force itself may provide challenges and difficulties. To put pressure on them, give them a demanding superior officer (perhaps Lt. Isaac Silverman, page 46) and a suspicious internal affairs investigator (perhaps Det. Simon Sinn, page 48). They might fill all sorts of roles—the heroic maverick, plucky rookie, cynical veteran, and so forth—but be sure they’re working as a team.

If your PCs are not members, the Night Squad can serve as their rival, foil, and goad, able to confront them on their own terms and keep them on the straight and narrow. Such characters may be private detectives, skip-tracers, bounty hunters, repo men, or insurance investigators, so they’ll deal with the police and with criminals on a regular basis. Other characters may be regular Joes or everyday Janes, hiding their transformation and about to be caught up in the tangled web of business machinations, criminal conspiracies, and political corruption that shapes Nitrate City.

...and Places

Nitrate City is a neon city where towering Art Deco towers and Atom Age architecture collide in a sprawling landscape of brilliant color and deep shadow. A patchwork metropolis centered on Old Hollywood and stretching fifty miles in every direction, Nitrate City is stitched together by a network of Great Boulevards—including the notorious Sunset Boulevard—that stretch across the city's diameter. The boundaries of Nitrate City extend even into the Pacific Ocean, touching part of the Channel Isles just over the horizon. Despite many changes, much of what was old Los Angeles remains part of the new city. They still make movies there, though much of Old Hollywood has been given over to weird projections from within the silver screen that no amount of yellow-tinged sodium-vapor light can drive away, and the draconian Johnston Code strictly limits what may be depicted in order to avoid providing the impetus for the most dangerous projections.

The “boroughs” of Nitrate City and the highways and boulevards that connect them are as follows.

Old Hollywood

This is the heart of Nitrate City, with infamous Sunset Boulevard slicing through its center and connecting fashionable Beverly Hills and the Shores to the west with Arroyo Vista to the east. Old Hollywood includes the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the bustling Fairfax District, “Downtown” (formerly downtown Los Angeles), China Heights, and the Brick Park jazz district to the south. The burnt-out remnants of the Hollywood sign are visible from the streets below. The Night Squad has its offices in a basement level of the Nitrate City Police Department headquarters, an Art Deco skyscraper in Downtown.

The Shores

Positioned along the coast to the west of Old Hollywood, the Shores includes everything from Santa Monica—a wealthy coastal resort town known for its casinos, boardwalk, marina, and beaches—to the industrial shipyards, docklands, and grimy harbors of Acetylene Beach to the south. Wilshire Boulevard runs eastward toward the southern edges of Old Hollywood and into Downtown.

Arroyo Vista

Arroyo Boulevard merges with Route 66 to snake through the dry eastern boroughs and desert beyond. Colorado Boulevard runs southeast through the district out of Bell Valley then turns south towards the Groves. Arroyo Vista is well known for its hipster enclaves and beatnik Happenings, and a number of strange new religious sects and lunatic fringe cults have established compounds and other experiments in communal living in isolated areas within the borough.

Bell Valley

A halogen glare permeates the sunlit vistas of this modernist playground where the days are hotter and the nights are brighter; Bell Valley is the Gateway to the Sun and home to many of the remaining heavily policed movie studios. Vice-riddled Van Nuys Boulevard splits the valley in two, connecting the glamour of Old Hollywood to the south to the neo-futurist Rocketville and the high desert in the north.

Rocketville

Highway 118 runs west across the width of Bell Valley and into this northern borough where Atom Age experiments take place on a daily basis. If there's a robot on the loose or an unidentified flying object overhead, chances are this is where it came from. No surprise there's a permanent hint of rocket fuel in the hazy desert air.

The Groves

A popular tourist attraction south of Arroyo Vista, the Groves includes miles of irrigated vineyards and citrus groves, sprawling ranch homes, and various carefully monitored themed amusement parks, including the long-abandoned Enchanted Kingdom, now surrounded by a perimeter of huge sodium-vapor lamps to keep its bizarre denizens contained within, although occasional escapes and concomitant cartoonish antics are not unknown. Interstate 5 joins this sprawling southern region of the greater Nitrate City Zone to more northerly boroughs.

The Red Road

This sparsely inhabited desert region in the northeastern quadrant of the Nitrate City Zone is cut by a slim highway of dull red asphalt. Travelers along the Red Road return with tales of eerie encounters with mysterious strangers and unnerving roadside attractions such as blood-drinking cactus plants and cannibal clown carnivals. According to a persistent urban legend, the only way to leave Nitrate City if it wants you to stay is to travel the Red Road to its end.



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CHARACTERS: NEITHER TARNISHED NOR AFRAID

It's a real midnight roller coaster ride, this life as a "howler," Jimmy thought as he took another sip of his martini; the taste of the gin on his tongue like liquid silver, atomic number 47.

In the years since Jimmy Moon had become a wolf man, he'd had plenty of time to discover that his peculiar affliction seemed to come with few hard and fast rules. Many people had come up with various theories, of course, both scientific and otherwise, to explain why this was the case. After all, there had to be some reason to explain why certain people had remained almost completely human after being bitten while others found themselves blitzed out of their minds in tune with the lunar cycle, racing about on all fours—wild and dangerous.

One of those scientist types had done research suggesting the severity of transformations was controlled by an immune response of some kind, while another suggestion gaining some popularity among certain beatnik circles was based on circumstantial evidence linking various manifestations to the afflicted person's astrological sign. Neither explanation had made much sense to Jimmy, however. He was what you might call an outlier; a real freak among freaks. For Jimmy, who had always been a gambling man, every transformation was a game of craps.

Boxcars, snake eyes or Hi-Lo, every roll a matter of life or death.

—From *Red River Runs Black* (1957) by Margaret Towne




Characters in *Nitrate City* combine the gritty desperation of film noir with the melodramatic tragedy of Universal movie monsters.

Aspects

Characters have a **high concept**, an **origin**, a **trouble**, and up to two other aspects.

High Concept

To begin creating your character, devise a high concept that is a mashup of monster movie and film noir archetypes: vampire police detective, werewolf gambler, or zombie starlet, for example.

If no high concept leaps to mind, the following two tables can help. Roll three Fate dice on the Monster Movie Archetypes table and then four Fate dice on the Film Noir Archetypes table. To read your result from a table, begin at the top-left cell and consult the dice. For each , move one cell right. For each , move one cell down. For each , remain in the current cell. You'll find more detailed descriptions of the Monster Movie Archetypes entries after the table.

Combine the results from each table and use them as a prompt to establish your high concept.

MONSTER MOVIE ARCHETYPES

	■	+	++	+++
■	Mad Scientist	Disfigured Skulker	Monstrous Hybrid	Mental Freak
▬	Vampire	Werewolf	Mummy	
▬▬	Zombie	B.E.M./Automaton	Roll 3 Fate dice; move one column right for each +, and down one row for each ▬.	
▬▬▬	Sorcerer			

Automaton: A being built with magic or science to fulfill some purpose or work to some end, such as a golem or robot.

B.E.M.: A bug-eyed monster of seemingly alien origin—maybe a ray-gun toting Martian, self-replicating pod person, or green-skinned alien princess.

Disfigured Skulker: A hunchback, masked phantom, or invisible man, perhaps.

Mad Scientist: An inspired or perhaps delusional genius whose theories go beyond the bounds of human knowledge.

Mental Freak: A brain in a jar, mind-reader, brain transplant, or something similarly bizarre.

Monstrous Hybrid: Some sort of chimerical hybrid creature like a fish-man from the lagoon, man-bat, or fly-headed man. Alternately, roll twice on the Monster Movie Archetypes table and combine your results to inspire your high concept, such as a werewolf mad scientist (a la Jekyll and Hyde) or zombie sorcerer.

Mummy: A long-dead devotee of an antique religion, brought back to life by obscure gods, who seeks to fulfill those beings' inscrutable purpose.

Sorcerer: A black magician capable of dire sorceries.

Vampire: A bloodsucker of one sort or another.

Werewolf: A wolf man or other lycanthropic skin-changer, cursed to transform into bestial shape according to the phases of the moon or some other trigger.

Zombie: A resurrected or reanimated corpse, potentially with cannibalistic inclinations or mismatched parts.

FILM NOIR ARCHETYPES

	■	+	++	+++	++++
■	Working Stiff	Boxer	Lounge Act / Chanteuse	Gambler	Movie Star / Starlet
▬	War Vet	Private Eye	Beat Cop	Gangster / Gun Moll	
▬▬	Cat Burglar / Safecracker	Police Detective	Gripter		
▬▬▬	Saxophonist / Chorus Girl	Newspaper Reporter	Roll 4 Fate dice; move one column right for each +, and down one row for each ▬.		
▬▬▬▬	Politician				

ESTABLISH INVOCATIONS & COMPELS

The high concept does a lot of work in defining your character's abilities and limitations, but you may have some specific ideas about how exactly your character's monstrous identity works. Take some time to establish three invocations and three compels appropriate to your character's high concept, paying particular attention to your character's monstrous side.

Carrie rolls "Werewolf" and "Beat Cop" on the tables above, so she writes in **Werewolf Beat Cop** as her character's high concept. She then writes down three invocations for this high concept:

- ...to heal rapidly from injuries not caused by weapons made of silver.
- ...to display preternatural levels of strength and speed.
- ...to notice things by smell and hearing that are imperceptible to human senses.

And three compels:

- ...to be unable to control the transformation to werewolf form.
 - ...to succumb to the animal hungers of the wolf.
 - ...to have to report for duty at inconvenient times.
-

Origin

This aspect provides a sense of your character's origins or background. For most characters, this aspect relates to where they were on the day ten years ago when the Big Flicker created Nitrate City. Otherwise, it may have something to do with the movie or other fictional setting the character came from, or their original home, background, or prior experience.

- *I Was About to Ship Out When It Happened*
- *I Found Myself Alone in a Strange New World*
- *I Kept Waiting for the Others to Find Me*
- *Just a Kid from the Streets*
- *Woke Up on a Slab with a Madman Standing Over Me*
- *How Come Nobody Else Here Sings to Show How They Feel?*
- *I'm Not from That Kind of Movie*

A character's origin can be compelled to introduce "fish out of water" complications for the character, and invoked to allow the character to draw upon background knowledge appropriate to their original home or perhaps genre.

Trouble

This aspect works just like in *Fate Core*. Here are some setting-appropriate examples:

- *On the Run*
- *Trouble with Dames*
- *Always Gotta Earn*
- *The Chief Is Breathing Down My Neck*
- *Down On My Luck*
- *My Man Done Me Wrong*
- *Looking for the Next Big Score*
- *A Man's Gotta Have a Code*
- *They Don't Understand, Death Is a Lonely Business*

Other Aspects

You may write up to two more aspects, reflecting important connections and relationships; typical gear, weapons, and equipment; beliefs, experiences, and attitudes; and any other features of your character that define who they are and how they engage with the world.

As you're thinking about this, talk with the other players about how your character might be connected to theirs. Here are some possibilities:

- By chance or design, the characters were at the same location during the Big Flicker that created Nitrate City, and have continued to look out for each other ever since.
- The characters come from the same "other place," and so are part of the same community of immigrants or new arrivals. They may or may not recognize this other place as fictional, with the concomitant existential implications such recognition would bring.
- The characters are in the employ of the same client or patron, such as a wealthy businessman, movie producer, or mad scientist. Marilyn Mansfield (page 44) is a good choice for this; Mister Vows (page 38) may also work.
- The characters are partners in the same business or other enterprise. For example, a group of PCs might include a pro boxer, his manager and trainer, his palooka sparring partner, and the fight promoter who's trying to put together a title fight for his favorite contender.
- The characters are all customers or employees of the same hole-in-the-wall gin joint or greasy spoon diner, and are bound by ties of friendship, loyalty, and shared danger.

Stress and Consequences

Player characters begin with *two* stress boxes and three consequence slots: mild, moderate, and severe.

Consequences may be taken in whatever form seems appropriate, depending on the nature of the attack suffered and the surrounding fictional circumstances. Similarly, stress may be physical damage, emotional pain, social ostracism, legal jeopardy, or anything else whose continued application might disable the character.

Approaches

Nitrate City uses a form of **approaches** called **cinematic approaches**, which tie character action to the cinematic genres that spill out into the world because of the Flicker Effect. The approaches reflect your character's efficacy when acting according to the tropes and conventions of the four basic types of narrative: **Action**, **Comedy**, **Drama**, and **Horror**.

Each approach begins at Mediocre (+0). Distribute six ranks among the four approaches, pushing none to higher than Great (+4). You can also lower approaches to a minimum of Poor (-1), each time gaining another rank to distribute.

In general, the player gets to choose how their character reacts to the situation they're faced with, regarding it alternately as a call for urgent and immediate action, an opening for light-hearted repartee or a physical jape, a chance for an earnest and heartfelt tête-à-tête, or a moment of visceral adrenaline-fueled dread or suspense. Players will of course want to play to their characters' strengths, but GMs, you'll want to demand creative and imaginative offerings from each player; if someone goes too often to the same narrative well, encourage them to mix things up.



ACTION

Fighting, shooting, chasing, blowing things up, giving orders, making demands—anything loud and violent or intensely focused on getting things done in an instrumental way, particularly if it involves dealing with adversity in the form of force, time, or distance, as in facing down enemies, working under dangerous conditions, or racing the clock. When a character is using Action, what's typically at stake is whether they can power through to get what they want, although it may be whether the need for action they perceive actually exists. Thus, failing with Action can mean that they're engaged in a bombastic but pointless exercise.



COMEDY

Falling down or breaking wind, being absurd or expressing absurdity, acting with ironic intention or effect, engaging in deceptive ruses or similar conceits, undermining social conventions and upending norms. Sometimes falling in love. Also telling jokes. Comedy is hard, but you'll know it when you see it. For a character using Comedy, what's typically at stake is whether or not they're the butt of the joke. So for a character hanging by their hands from a girder and stepping out onto another girder for safety, failing with Comedy would mean they find the new girder tilting precariously under their weight, causing them to scramble to find purchase along the length of the suspended I-beam.



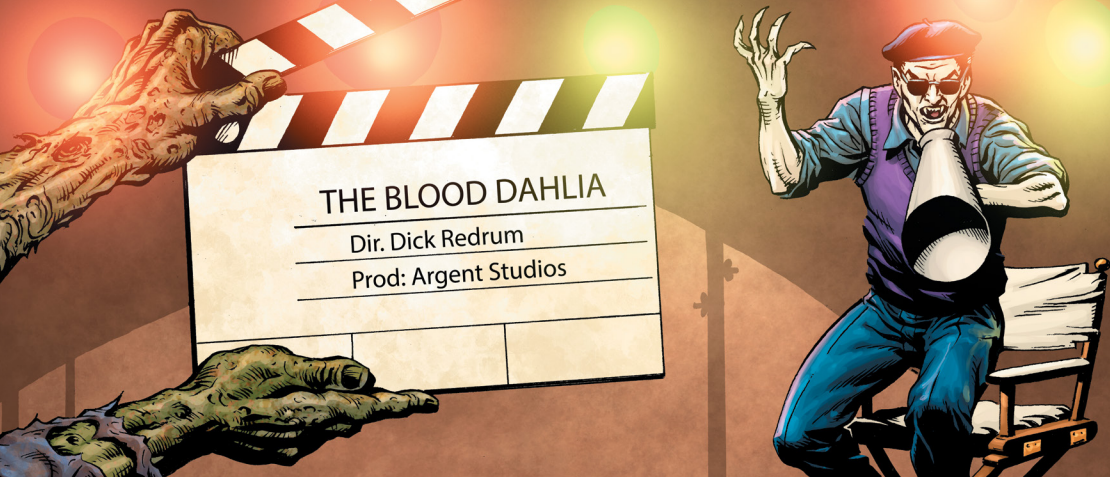
DRAMA

Expressing sincere and serious emotion, or seeming to, particularly in regard to important personal or professional relationships. Drama often takes the form of talking, but any sort of expressive action can be dramatic. Dramatic introspection is also possible. When a character is using Drama as her approach, what's typically at stake is whether or not her expression is taken as sincere and authentic. Failing with Drama usually means that the character doesn't get what they want or need from someone else, or she's forced to reveal uncomfortable or embarrassing truths in order to do so.



HORROR

Confronting primal fears related to death, isolation, the unclean, loss of control or autonomy, and similar matters. Watching without being able to interfere, such as examining the scene of a murder or other horrific crime. For some characters, this might also include preying upon such fears in others. In general, however, it reflects strength of will, steadiness of nerves, and the ability to stay cool under pressure or in suspenseful circumstances. When a character is using Horror as their approach, what's typically at stake is whether or not someone retains their emotional stability or psychological equilibrium. Failing with Horror can mean that the character loses control in some fashion—perhaps they emit a gasp or a shriek—or that the hidden NPC he is trying to find does not.



Cinematic Approaches in Play

The approaches in *Fate Accelerated* add narrative color to the descriptions of success and failure. The main difference between Flashy and Sneaky, for example, is how the actions they're supporting are described in play. A Flashy success is an impressive sight to behold—"Wow! Did you see that?"—while a Flashy failure is a ludicrous spectacle—"Ha ha! What a loser!" Conversely, a Sneaky success is a mystifying surprise—"How did she *do* that?"—while a Sneaky failure is embarrassingly obvious—"Please stop. I can see you, you know." The cinematic approaches in *Nitrate City* work similarly, but they describe situations in terms of what's at stake or in play for the character as they try to do something.

Detective Simon Sinn, vampire cop (page 48) is on the case. He's learned that a key informant is being held in an old warehouse near the docks of Acetylene Beach. Detective Sinn wants to infiltrate the warehouse and free the informant, but as a vampire he can't enter a place without being invited, as stipulated in his high concept. Sinn must try to overcome this obstacle—and he will earn a fate point at the end of the scene for facing this complication, as it was essentially a compel of his high concept. The exterior of the warehouse is patrolled by Crime Consortium goons.

ACTION

Amy, Sinn's player, declares that Sinn sneaks up on one of the goons patrolling the exterior of the warehouse, picks him up by the throat, and says, "Don't you want me to come inside?" Sinn overcomes with Action while the goon defends with Horror, decides the GM. If Sinn succeeds, the goon chokes out a strangled, "Okay, yeah, sure," and Sinn is free to enter the warehouse. If Sinn fails, the goon passes out before he says anything, says the GM, and Sinn will have to try something else. Alternately, the GM may allow success at a cost: the goon chokes out a strangled, "Okay, yeah, sure—" and then stabs Sinn with a silver knife he's surreptitiously unsheathed, inflicting shifts of stress or consequences equal to the margin of failure, "—but you'll have go through me first, bloodsucker."

COMEDY

This time, says Amy, Sinn just goes up and knocks on the door of the warehouse, and then turns into mist when the door opens, and then repeats this routine. Amy and the GM both roll Comedy. If Amy succeeds, the goon opening the door gets exasperated quickly and cries out, “For the luvva Mike, will ya quit that damn knocking and just come inside already?” If Amy fails, the door remains obstinately shut, or more probably the goons patrolling the exterior hear the knocking and get the drop on Sinn: “You tryin’ to get inside, pal? Well, the boss’ll have a thing or two to say about that. Don’t try anything funny now.”

DRAMA

This may be the hardest approach to use in this circumstance, because Sinn and the goons have no real relationship. But this is also when dramatic introspection might be useful. Putting the back of her wrist to her forehead, Amy declares in character, “If only I were not cursed by this terrible inability to enter where I am not invited! Then I could do my job and save the informant. Alas, I fear it is not to be.” Amy rolls Drama to overcome a Superb (+5) obstacle, set by the GM since it’s related to a compel of the character’s high concept. If Sinn succeeds, the GM might say “Well, y’know, I guess if you had a warrant—” and Amy runs with that, saying in character, “That’s it! Do my job! I call the precinct and have the Night Squad boys type up a warrant, get the judge out of bed to sign it, and bring it to me. Now they’re mine!” If Sinn fails, the GM might say, “Yes, you realize that without a warrant there’s no way you can enter that place, and it’ll be dawn before you can get the judge to sign it—unless you’re willing to call in some favors.” This is an invitation for Amy to accept success at a cost in the form of stress, consequences, or a situation aspect representing the bridges that Sinn burns to get his warrant.

HORROR

This time, Sinn stalks one of the goons patrolling the exterior, who hears strange noises in the night as the vampire cop shadows him. Both Amy and the GM roll Horror. If Amy succeeds, the goon loses his cool. “Who’s there?” he cries out in a shaky voice. “Come on out!” From behind, Sinn says, “I’m right here.” The goon shrieks and drops his gun, falling totally to pieces. “Don’t hurt me!” he cries. “I’ll do anything you want!” Sinn grins in the darkness, fangs gleaming, and says, “I know you will, my friend. I know you will.” If Amy fails, the goon holds it together. “Who’s there?” he demands. “Come on out and show yourself!” If Sinn reveals himself, perhaps the goon opens fire and then runs for the door, shouting “He’s coming! He’s coming in after me!” Since Sinn may regard this as a kind of invitation, this counts as success at a cost—the goons inside are now on the alert.

Refresh and Stunts

Each character begins with three refresh and three free stunts. Characters may buy additional stunts by spending refresh on a one-for-one basis.

As in *Fate Accelerated*, these stunts either provide a bonus or are more open-ended. Use stunts to reflect the monstrous or noirish nature of the character.

Bonus stunts are typically expressed as “Because I [can do this cool thing or have this cool quality], I gain +2 to [action] with [approach] when [I behave some way or some circumstances are true].”

Open-ended stunts are typically expressed as “Because I [can do this cool thing or have this cool quality], I [can do this cool thing under certain conditions].” Usually, it can be done either once per session or by spending a fate point.

It’s fine if you use an open-ended stunt to gain one or more extra stress boxes, reflecting enhanced resilience and toughness that comes from not showing the pain one is suffering. Each extra stress box costs one stunt.

Example Stunts

Cat and Mouse: Because I have a wolf’s hunting instincts, I gain +2 to overcome obstacles with Horror when I track my prey in wolf form across the landscape.

They Called Me Mad: Because I am a mad scientist, I gain a free invocation of the Flicker Effect once per session when I am in my lab and have access to my equipment.

By Gad You’re a Character: Because I am loquacious and deceitful, I gain +2 to create advantages with Comedy when I’m trying to sweet-talk someone into joining in on one of my schemes.

Cinéaste Véridiques: Because I am a master of the Flicker Effect, I can spend a fate point to create a provocative or surrealistic situation aspect with a free invocation, but only if the Flicker Effect has been invoked during the same scene.

Transmogrification: Because I am a mad scientist, once per session when I have another character trapped, helpless, or otherwise under my control, I can spend a fate point to prevent that character’s player from calling upon or invoking their character’s high concept until my transmogrification is reversed or neutralized.

RUNNING ADVENTURES: IN SEARCH OF A HIDDEN TRUTH

She turned the corner, a silhouette in the streetlight, and walked rapidly toward where I stood hidden in the shadows, her heels clicking on the concrete sidewalk with an electric rhythm that I could feel in the curve of my twisted spine. Whatever I felt looking at her, I pushed it aside. As she came nearer, I lurched forward, wincing at my body's clumsy movement. She recoiled from me with a little shriek. "Don't be afraid," I told her, my voice harsh and garbled as always in my own ears, and held out my badge where she could see it.

"You're with the police?" she said. "The Night Squad?" Her voice was high and uncertain, a little girl's innocent piping. But there are no innocents in Nitrate City, and no saints either.

"You were with a man earlier tonight," I growled, putting the badge away. "You went up to his room, spent a few hours there. And then you left and came here." I gestured in the direction she'd come from. "Awfully late to be visiting your boss."

"It's not like that," she said.

"Then tell me what it's like," I said, sneering. "Why does Sleznik have you whoring around after some two-bit hellhound with the mange? What's the angle? Were you supposed to give him the clap?"

"You're—you're a *monster*," she said, starting to back away.

I lunged forward and grabbed her upper arm with one hand, pulling her down so her face was level with my own. She gave another little cry, as if I were hurting her.

"I'm not a monster," I spat. "I'm a man with a job to do. And one way or another you're going to help me."

—From *The Blood Dahlia* (1958) by Iago L. King

Like its characters, *Nitrate City* adventures mash up the existential grittiness of film noir with the over-the-top emotional catharsis of monster movies. To run adventures in this setting, you'll want to read authors like Raymond Chandler, James Ellroy, and Walter Mosley and watch movies like *The Big Sleep*, *Chinatown*, and *L.A. Confidential*.

A typical *Nitrate City* adventure is a **case**, in which the player characters are investigating a mystery or other problem and deciding what to do: who to arrest or turn over to the cops, what to confiscate or blow up or otherwise take out of the hands of those who would use it to nefarious ends, or where to go to prevent something bad from happening. The characters may also have their own goals, objectives, and motivations outside the boundaries of the case itself, and that's even better.



In a typical case, the GM will present the players with one or more **hooks**, offering opportunities for their characters to get involved, either officially as part of their jobs or unofficially because they are connected to characters already involved in the case.

At the heart of the case is the **secret**: the solution to the mystery, the motivation for the crime, or the cause of whatever weird occurrences have taken place.

Connecting the hooks to the secret are **persons of interest**, linked to each other on a relationship map that shows the NPCs' attitudes toward and knowledge about each other. Specific NPC actions, reactions, and counter-actions emerge based on what the PCs do and don't do. Absent PC intervention, the GM will envision the **development and resolution** of the initial situation that is about as bad as could be; hopefully, the PCs take actions that make the outcome better, not worse.

The PCs will work the case by bringing their approaches, aspects, and stunts to bear on the persons of interest they encounter. In general, they will seldom fail outright to find information that moves the case forward. Instead, they'll usually achieve success at a cost, leaving them vulnerable to countermeasures by the opposition. When players roll the dice to see how easily or effectively their characters gain relevant and useful information, this is a common procedural "beat" during play, punctuated by conflicts and contests against the adversaries who emerge to put a stop to their investigations. Spending fate points to avoid die rolls—with their potential for causing concomitant complications—is in the spirit of the game, as it permits the investigation to move forward.

ADVENTURE: THE BLOOD DAHLIA

A shocking murder brings the Night Squad into action against a cold-blooded killer, while a teenage runaway holds a deadly secret.

Hooks

If the PCs work for the Night Squad, the first hook is probably all that's necessary. Otherwise, you may have to present one or more other points of entry along the lines shown here.

- The horribly mangled body of a dark-haired young woman (who turns out to be an aspiring starlet named April Ash) is found in a trash can in a seedy neighborhood off of Van Nuys Boulevard in Bell Valley. The PCs on the Night Squad are called in because it looks like she was mauled and partially eaten by a large animal.
- Famous movie director Mitchell Bertram, on location on a movie set, has received word that his house has been broken into during his absence. He wants someone he can trust to look into the matter.

The Secret

Aging movie star Rita Lupino is a werewolf who murders young women to acquire their blood and organs, which an amoral sorceress called the Blood Witch assures her are the ingredients for a youth potion, which will enable Lupino to star in producer Daniel O. Sleznik's upcoming historical epic *Bathsheba*. However, Sleznik is under pressure from werewolf mob enforcer Lou Degair to cast his girlfriend, the aspiring starlet Janet Carter, in the title role. Meanwhile, Lupino's daughter Annie Bertram has run away to find and confront the Blood Witch in a run-down theater in Old Hollywood, an encounter that will no doubt end badly for the girl, although her father—famous film director Mitchell Bertram—will hire detectives to search for her.



Persons of Interest

Each persons of interest leads to one of more other persons, either by one naming the other—or suggesting a connection between two or more others—or by interacting with the other in a way that may be observed by an investigator.

April Ash, Aspiring Starlet and Murder Victim

Ash lived in a cheap Bell Valley bungalow court. The young woman's body, a blood red dahlia still in her hair, was found by a neighbor taking out the trash in the morning. She was messily eviscerated, but several organs (heart, liver, a kidney) were removed with precise cuts, almost surgically. She has animal bite marks on her arms and legs. A cabbie dropped her off near her house around midnight; neighbors may report hearing an argument or struggle around the same time, but no one got involved. Ash was a model and had been taking acting classes in Old Hollywood. She was not seeing anyone, as far as her neighbors know. Her agent can report that she had just landed a part as a harem girl in the movie version of *Bathsheba*. When and if the papers pick up the story, they call her the Blood Dahlia, and note that it's a rare flower.

Annie Bertram, Teenage Runaway

Annie is a pretty blond fourteen-year-old, a precocious *Poor Little Rich Girl with a Chip on Her Shoulder*. She has a history of running away from her divorced mother's home. She typically goes to her father's house, but he reliably returns her to her mother. This time, Annie has no intention of going back, because she discovered that her mother, Rita Lupino, is in league with an evil witch who lives in Old Hollywood. She broke into her father's Santa Monica mansion while he was out of town to get some clothes, cash, and jewelry to pawn, as well as her old man's gun. Now she plans to find the witch herself, a course of action that will almost certainly get her in trouble. She knows she's looking for an old theater, and since she's seen the ritual silver knife the witch gave her mother, with its distinctive crescent moon pommel, she will certainly recognize the similar symbol on Madame Pridux's theater cum drama school.

Approaches: Action +1, Comedy +0, Drama +3, Horror +2

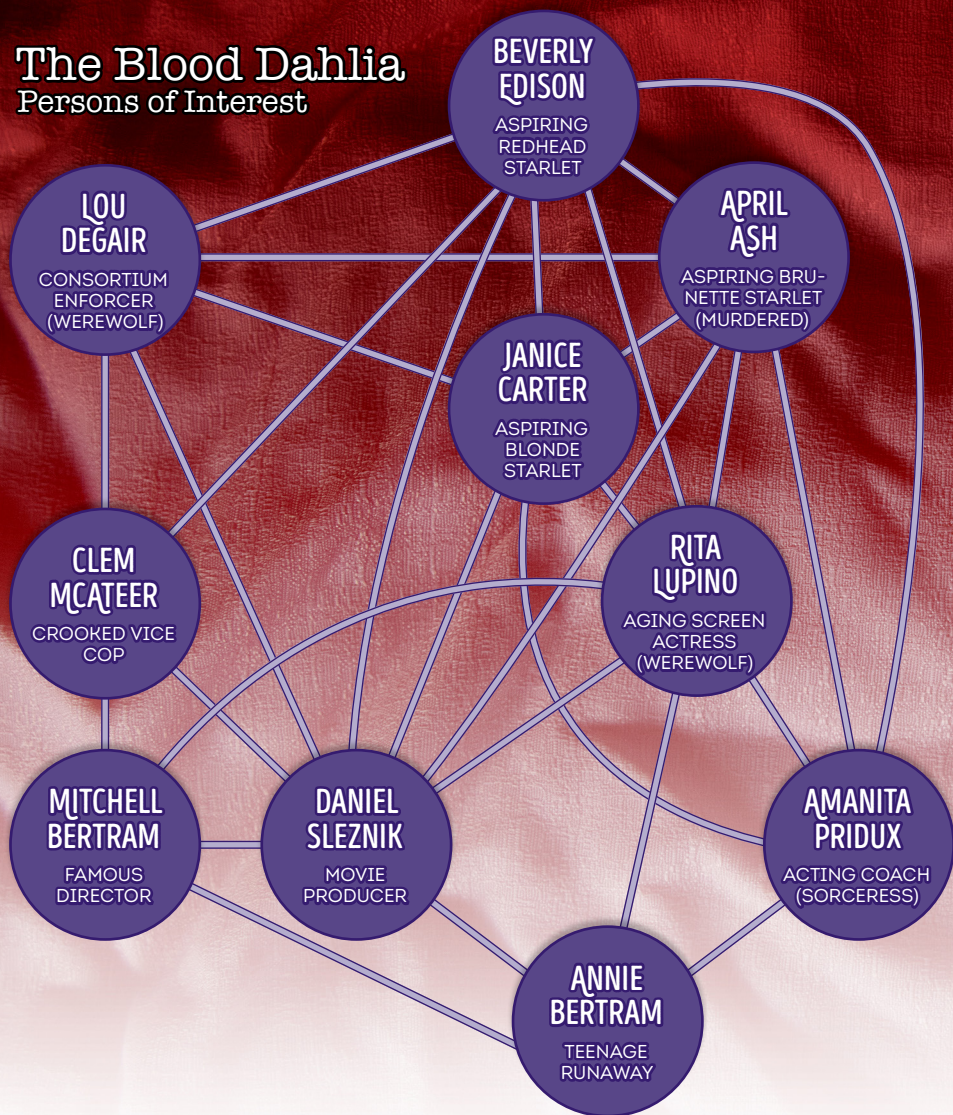
Mitchell Bertram, Famous Director

He has *Expensive Tastes* and a reputation as a *Gambling Man*. He holds *Sleznik's Marker* for a large gambling debt, and though he's currently out of town on location finishing up shooting another picture, he intends to call in that marker to force Sleznik to give him the nod as director and to keep his ex-wife Rita Lupino ("That hag!") off of the picture. He seems only moderately worried about his daughter, whom he left in his wife's custody when they separated in the late 1940s. He doesn't know that Lupino is a werewolf, but can relate how she grew distant and ruthless while their daughter was a toddler.

Approaches: Action +0, Comedy +2, Drama +3, Horror +1

The Blood Dahlia

Persons of Interest



Janice Carter, Aspiring Starlet

Carter is a *Sultry Blond Model* with *Blue Eyes You Could Drown In*. She and Beverly Edison were friends with Ash, and were with her the night she died, celebrating because they'd just gotten parts as harem girls in Daniel O. Sleznik's *Bathsheba*. Carter is seeing Degair, whom she likes because she's a girl who *Likes a Man Who Brings Her Nice Things*, evidenced by the many expensive gifts at her apartment, including an assortment of nice silver jewelry. Among her circle of friends and acquaintances, she is the one generally seen as having the greatest potential to someday be a big, big star.

Approaches: Action +2, Comedy +1, Drama +2, Horror +1



Lou Degair, Werewolf Mob Enforcer

Lou Degair works for Victor Stitch and is an up-and-coming enforcer for the Crime Consortium. He has *Good Self-Control but a Pretty Wide Mean Streak*, and he's *In Love with Janice Carter*. He intends for his Carter to play the lead in Sleznik's new movie and has made no bones about it, using the producer's debt to the Crime Consortium as leverage. He is known as something of a lady-killer, but this time he's fallen hard, and if his girlfriend is killed he will swear vengeance against the perpetrator.

Approaches: Action +3, Comedy +1, Drama +0, Horror +2

Beverly Edison, Aspiring Starlet

Edison is a *Bubbly Redhead with a Thousand-Watt Smile* who always *Goes for the Wrong Type of Guy*. She was friends with Ash, and was with Ash the night she died, along with Janice Carter. April had complained that she felt as if she were being watched, and worried about attracting the wrong kind of fan. Edison met crooked vice cop Clem McAteer at Sleznik's studio a few days ago; she thinks he's sweet but she finds Lou Degair dangerously attractive. He only has eyes for Janet Carter, though. Once Beverly feels she's in danger, she will seek out McAteer's help.

Approaches: Action +1, Comedy +2, Drama +2, Horror +1

Rita Lupino, Aging Movie Star

Rita Lupino was a leading actress and pin-up girl throughout the '40s and early '50s, but now her best years—and best roles—seem to be behind her. She's *Still a Knockout*, though, with raven hair and flashing eyes, and she *Wants One More Juicy Leading Role* to prove that she's still got it. She's heard about Sleznik's *Bathsheba* and wants to play the title role. She has met with Sleznik in his office on a number of occasions, but Sleznik says he wants a younger actress in the role. Guided by Amanita Pridux, she stalked and killed April Ash as a werewolf, then transformed into human form to remove a few organs and drain some blood for Amanita, ritualistically putting a flower in her hair as she was told. Now she is after Edison, and will kill her similarly in a few days, followed by Carter, bringing blood and organs to Amanita Pridux in each case so that she can use them for her spell.

Approaches: Action +1, Comedy +0, Drama +2, Horror +3

FATE: WORLDS OF ADVENTURE

Clem McAteer, Crooked Vice Cop

Detective Clem McAteer is a World War II veteran who worked his way up the ranks of the LAPD over the years. He has a reputation as a *Hothead with a Solid Right Hook*. Transferred to Vice in the mid-1950s, he has been *On Sleznik's Payroll* for many years. He has *A Thing for Redbeards* and is currently making a play for Beverly Edison. He has orders from Sleznik to keep Degair off of his back, and Clem's got *A Lot of Friends on the Force* to help him do it. He will do his best to make sure that Degair takes the fall for the murder of April Ash and any others that Lupino kills.

Approaches: Action +2, Comedy +1, Drama +2, Horror +1

Amanita Pridux, Overdramatic Acting Coach

Amanita runs Madame Pridux's School of Drama out of *A Run-Down Theater in Old Hollywood* called the Red Crescent, where April Ash took acting lessons. Pridux also ostensibly gives private lessons to Rita Lupino, but she is really helping Lupino plot to retain her stardom. She is *Secretly the Fearsome Blood Witch* who commands *Powerful Blood Magic* that feeds on death. After all three girls are dead, Pridux will conduct a magical ceremony at the theater, using their blood and organs to grant Rita Lupino *Renewed Youth and Beauty*. During the ceremony, the stage will of course be bedecked with bouquets of blood red double dahlias, grown in her rooftop greenhouse. Pridux intends to cash in big on Lupino's renewed stardom and use the money to refurbish the theater, intending to stage *A Grand Guignol of Horrific Dimensions* that will attract even the most jaded sensation-seekers among the Nitrate City demi-monde.

Approaches: Action +2, Comedy +1, Drama +2, Horror +3

AMANITA'S MINIONS

Her minions are *Creepy Man-Sized Marionettes* that move seemingly under their own power, but they cannot leave the Red Crescent Theatre.

Approaches: Action +2, Comedy +2, Drama +0, Horror +2

Daniel O. Sleznik, Sleazy Film Producer

Sleznik lives *A Lavish Lifestyle*, with a Beverly Hills mansion and a yacht anchored at the Santa Monica pier, but he's known to have *Unsavory Habits and Peculiar Vices* and there's *A Pile of Unpaid Bills* on his accountant's desk. His bookie spits when he hears Sleznik's name. Nonetheless, the producer has an office on the heavily guarded Cosmopolitan Pictures lot in Bell Valley, where he spends much of his time. The film *Bathsheba* will be his magnum opus, and he is pulling out all the stops and calling in favors to make sure that *This Movie Will Be a Masterpiece*. He is willing to cut any deal, say whatever someone needs to hear, and abase himself in any fashion if it means the picture gets made.

Approaches: Action +0, Comedy +3, Drama +2, Horror +1

Development and Resolution

A number of story questions hinge on how the PCs intervene in ongoing events. Does Rita Lupino get away with murder, and does she get the part? Does Sleznik's movie get made? If so, does Mitchell Bertram direct? Does Degair take the rap for murdering April Ash—or for killing Rita Lupino? Does Annie Bertram survive her encounter with the Blood Witch; and if not, is her death blamed on the Scarlet Dahlia killer as well? In the absence of PC intervention, assume the worst possible outcome: Rita Lupino kills all three starlets and becomes the star of *Bathsheba*, which becomes a box office smash; Lou Degair is arrested for the young women's murder and gets executed by a firing squad shooting silver bullets, possibly engendering criminal reprisals by crime lord Victor Stitch; and Annie Bertram vanishes, her first and last stage role being that of the Innocent Victim in Madame Pridux's underground "Theatre of the Damned."

Night Squad members will have an obvious stake in the outcome, charged as they are with upholding the law and protecting the innocent. Other player characters may be interested in the answers to these questions only insofar as those answers affect their professional or personal interests, so you will want to point NPCs at those PCs in relevant ways. The simplest way is for an NPC to become a client, hiring the PC to investigate the case or provide protection. More generally, you'll want to figure out what NPCs want from the PCs, having the PCs roll against the NPCs to see how badly the NPCs want it.

Coming Soon...

It is worthwhile to have a handful of cases on hand to present to PCs who are at loose ends or otherwise need to make themselves useful. These tables will help you randomly create a situation that can drive an adventure set in Nitrate City.

The Hook

The hook is the surface of the mystery, the obvious problem that sets an investigation in motion or otherwise motivates the characters to action. Roll two Fate dice and consult the following table:

+	+	Someone seeks control of a valuable object, resource, or property.
+	■	Something valuable has been taken.
+	—	Someone has disappeared or is missing.
■	■	Someone needs help to fulfill a dream, goal, or ambition.
—	■	Someone or something has been threatened.
—	—	Someone has been harmed in some way or even murdered.

If you are creating a case specifically for police or other official investigators, you can supplement or replace the basic hook with a crime chosen from the table on the next page. Roll four Fate dice only if you expect that combining random table entries will inspire you.

	■	+	++	+++	++++
■	Kidnapping	Juvenile Delinquency	Drug Trafficking	Forgery	Bribery or Corruption
==	Blackmail or Extortion	Burglary or Theft	Gambling	Prostitution	
===	Fraud	Murder or Manslaughter	Loan Sharking		
====	Smuggling & Trafficking	Money Laundering			
=====	Rape or Sexual Assault				

Blackmail or Extortion: This involves threatening to reveal information—perhaps related to criminal behavior, sexual impropriety, or social status—that is embarrassing or incriminating to the victim. Extortion rackets lure victims into compromising situations and then demand money in order to refrain from releasing evidence to family, business partners, the police, or the press. Protection rackets extort money from victims by threatening injury or damage to the victim their property—usually a place of business—if the victim fails to make regular payouts.

Bribery or Corruption: This involves making payoffs or other rewards to government officials and other authority figures in exchange for favorable rulings, access to public funds or property, and other crooked practices.

Burglary or Theft: This includes breaking and entering, armed robbery, and other efforts to make off with valuable property for use or re-sale. A burglary ring will include the actual thieves as well as middlemen such as fences and sometimes insiders who provide access to or information about the targets.

Drug Trafficking: The production, transport, distribution, and sale of illegal narcotics. In Nitrate City, the major drugs found on the streets are marijuana (controlled by Mexican gangs), heroin (controlled by the Italian mob), and to a lesser extent methamphetamine or “speed” (manufactured locally in mom-and-pop labs by amateur chemists).

Forgery: The fraudulent falsification of valuable documents, including but not limited to counterfeit currencies and other negotiable instruments such as checks and bonds. Forgers also produce fake identification, sham wills, and ersatz evidence intended to incriminate an unfortunate victim or deceive an unwitting assessor.

Fraud: Any criminal misrepresentation with the intent of separating a victim from their money. This includes Ponzi schemes and other fraudulent investment scams, workplace pilfering and embezzlement, no-show jobs, no-bid contracts, kickbacks, tax fraud, bribery, and other corrupt business practices.

Gambling: Various forms of illegal betting, including the local numbers racket, a gang-run down-low lottery common in poorer neighborhoods, as well as high-stakes card and dice games operating out of innocent-looking front establishments.

Juvenile Delinquency: Vagrancy, truancy, vandalism, and related offenses. Youth gangs are a frightening specter for many citizens, emblematic as they are of the idea of young men out of control and the possibility their being enlisted into the army of crime. Efforts to redirect the energy of youth in positive directions exist side by side with tough anti-gang measures.

Kidnapping: Forcible abduction for ransom. Given the seriousness with which the federal government treats such crimes, this is a high-risk endeavor typically only undertaken by the very well prepared or the extremely desperate.

Loan Sharking: Offering to lend money at usurious interest rates, with the threat of violence to dissuade default or delinquency. The victim must usually agree to pay an exorbitant “vig” (interest payment) each week in addition to whatever part of the “nut” (principal) they’re able to hand over, if any.

Murder or Manslaughter: These and lesser violent crimes against one’s person such as assault and battery may happen during other crimes, or they may be ends in themselves, as revenge, warnings, or expressions of passionate emotion.

Money Laundering: Criminal practices intended to mask the source of illegal profits, thereby making the money seem legally obtained. This sometimes involves using a legitimate business that deals in lots of cash transactions as a front. In other cases, it depends on complex financial maneuvering involving duplicitous accounting schemes or crossing jurisdictional boundaries. It might even just be outright smuggling of vast quantities of cash to places with loose banking controls.

Prostitution: The sale of sex, ranging from street-level hookers to bordellos to high-class escort services, is a major element of organized crime, and includes sex trafficking—transporting and coercing individuals, usually women and girls, into the sex trade.

Rape and Sexual Assault: Like murder and assault, these violent crimes against one’s person are sometimes employed as instruments of criminal policy to terrorize and subdue victims. More often, they are expressions of criminal sociopathy.

Smuggling or Trafficking in Stolen Goods: Dealing in contraband of any sort. Smuggling and fencing rings include buyers, couriers, and sellers, and they require places to store and hide the goods as well as places to transact business and reach agreements.



The Secret

The secret is an underlying motivation or force that's shaping the behavior of one or more suspects in the case. Roll two Fate dice and consult the following table.

++	The Flicker Effect has transformed someone or something.
+■	Someone is not who they seem or claim to be.
+—	Someone has been fooled or tricked into believing a lie.
■■	Something has been hidden or concealed.
—■	Someone has betrayed someone else.
——	Powerful interests protect someone or something from interference.

Characters

To determine who's involved in a situation, roll four Fate dice on the Film Noir Archetypes table twice and, if desired, roll three Fate dice on the Monster Movie Archetypes table once (page 11). One of the noir archetypes is the victim or target, and the other is the villain or perpetrator. The monster movie archetype can be a victim or villain, an agent or catspaw of the villain, or a third party otherwise involved. You can also choose characters from the canonical Nitrate City rogues gallery—Victor Stitch, the Silver Flame, Scamp, and Mister Vows, for example—or NPCs specified or implied on a PC's character sheet to serve important roles in the investigation. Reincorporating characters from previous investigations is often useful.

Location

At this point, you may have enough to begin putting the pieces together. However, to flesh out the details, it may be helpful to have some context within which characters are acting. You can choose any key locations, or at least where the situation begins, from the table below. If you'd like to choose randomly, roll four Fate dice.

	■	+	++	+++	++++
■	On a Boat	High-Class Shopping Boutique	Boxing Gym / Muscle Beach	Posh Hotel Ballroom	Cliffside Mansion
==	Factory Floor / Oil Field	Dimly Lit Bar / Greasy Spoon Diner	Gambling Den / Seedy Nightclub	Waterfront Warehouse / Marina	
===	Auto Repair Shop / Junk Yard	Cheap Residential Hotel	Seamy Desert Motel		
====	On the Freeway	Bungalow Apartment Court			
=====	Whimsical Eatery				

Auto Repair Shop: A grease-stained cement floor with a hydraulic lift; tackle and pulley for pulling engines; tools and parts including racks filled with automobile tires. This may be a chop shop, a hangout for low-grade hoodlums, or a smuggler's den.

Boxing Gym: There isn't much more here than the canvas ring where cauliflower-eared palookas try to remember to keep their lefts up; heavy bags and speed bags; jump ropes and iron weights; locker rooms and the shower. Mobsters might recruit muscle from among the fighters who train here, or perhaps they're secretly setting up a would-be great white hope to take a big dive in the ninth round.

Bungalow Apartment Court: A small rental place in the Arts and Crafts style popular in the '20s and '30s, when these places were built, set amid jacaranda trees along a street lined with swordleaf palms. The neighbors are quiet people who mind their own business—some are showbiz hopefuls, hangers-on, and has-beens. They are common in the neighborhoods of Old Hollywood and to a lesser extent Bell Valley.

Cheap Residential Hotel: Narrow hallways and thin walls; doors open to show sagging mattresses in cramped little rooms; the pinch-faced desk clerk asks no questions and doesn't remember a thing until his palm is crossed with a sawbuck. These are easy to find in Old Hollywood.

Cliffside Mansion: This well-appointed home is built in a stark high-modernist style in concrete and steel with futuristic lines and lots of glass. Depending on the house's location, the view may look out onto a canyon, the ocean, or the lights of Nitrate City. Ostentatious wealth lives here: a successful producer, a movie star or other celebrity, an heir to a great industrial fortune. These can be seen all up and down the Shores.

Dimly Lit Bar: The air in this hole in the wall is thick with cigarette smoke. The place caters to its regulars and glowers with suspicion at anyone else who walks in. It serves cheap rotgut to a down-at-the-heels clientele.

Factory Floor: Heavy machinery, conveyor belts and assembly lines, and workers in overalls; this high-ceilinged industrial building may be putting together airplanes or assembling stereos, televisions, or refrigerators to satisfy the demand of consumers in the post-war boom. These are common in Rocketville and also found in Acetylene Beach.

Gambling Den: This could be the back room of a bar, pawn shop, warehouse, motel, or other business where no one pays attention to people coming and going. The owner of the game may be well heeled and well connected, or may be running the game in secret, hoping the local mob doesn't twig.

Greasy Spoon Diner: A low-class joint with a long Formica countertop and a few booths; the waitress chews gum and doesn't have much patience with fresh customers, but she keeps bringing the coffee. Such places can be found anywhere.

High-Class Shopping Boutique: This posh retail store in a downtown shopping district may sell high-end clothing, fancy jewelry, collector's-item books or antiques. The clerks are superciliously snobbish to those without means and fawningly obsequious to the well-to-do. Old Hollywood and Bell Valley are where these places are most easily found.

Junk Yard: Rusted-out cars and piles of metal scattered around the lot in piles, creating a labyrinth of scrap; a snarling dog with a spiked collar straining at the thick chain that keeps him penned up during the day. These are easiest to find in Arroyo Vista.

Marina: Rows of trim sailboats alongside powerful motorboats of various sizes. Commercial and public marinas will have fishing and excursion boats, while a private yacht club will have larger and fancier boats at the dock.

Muscle Beach: Tanned surfers and well-muscled weightlifters posing for their admirers; sun-burned tourists in floppy hats hauling beach chairs across the sand; shaggy beach bums with metal detectors looking for treasure in the quiet morning hours. Such places may be found along the Shores, of course.

Oil Field: Oil wells, pipes, and storage tanks sprawl across a dry and arid landscape; trucks rumble down dirt strips that link the wells to the main road, bringing workers to and fro. These are common in Acetylene Beach, less so in the Groves and Arroyo Vista.

On a Boat: A yacht, probably; a fishing boat, perhaps. Maybe a ferry out to Santa Puerte, once known as Catalina Island.

On the Freeway: The far-flung precincts of Nitrate City are connected by miles of highway, and more is being built each year. The freeways are crowded with cars operated by impatient drivers seeking a bit of open road to take them further and faster.

Posh Hotel Ballroom: This place is high-class, and the event being held here is attended by the nouveau riche or office-seeking politicians seeking to mingle with celebrities or the cream of high society or both. Waiters in bow ties and white gloves glide around bearing trays of fancy hors d'oeuvres and flutes of champagne. "Only the best!" is the motto. Hotels of this kind are found in Old Hollywood, the Shores, and Bell Valley.

Seamy Desert Motel: Nondescript and a little ramshackle; on the edge of town, this is a good place to lie low. The typical occupant is an itinerant laborer here to pick crops or a salesman with a suitcase of shoddy goods. Arroyo Vista and Rocketville are generally where these places are located.

Seedy Nightclub: The band may be slightly out of tune and the lead singer a little off-key, a chanteuse whose best years are behind her. Or the place may crackle with illicit sensuality, a prime place to arrange late-night assignations of the sort that could get you arrested for lewd and lascivious behavior.

Waterfront Warehouse: A cavernous building packed with shipping containers, probably in Acetylene Beach. The local longshoremen are tight-lipped, quick to violence, and suspicious of outsiders.

Whimsical Eatery: Maybe it's a restaurant shaped like a hat, or a pastry shop with a giant doughnut on top. Maybe it's an automat, a cafeteria where you can buy dishes of gelatin and tuna salad sandwiches from behind tiny glass doors with coin-operated slots. Maybe the waitresses are dressed up like movie stars, or perform dinner theater, or sing popular songs cabaret-style. Such establishments may be found anywhere in Nitrate City, but are most common in Old Hollywood, Rocketville, and the Groves.

The Initial Situation: Putting It All Together

It takes a little bit of thought and imagination to combine all these elements to establish the situation making up the case's basic shape. It is often helpful to draw a relationship map, connecting the labeled characters, but your goal is to create the seed of a situation or problem into which the PCs can be enrolled, enlisted, or perhaps even shanghaied. Certain combinations of elements will be more suggestive or resonant than others, so drop out what doesn't work. You'll want to identify important characters, assign them aspects and approaches, and place them in conflictual relationships that will drive them to do awful things, which the PCs can then either prevent or punish.

Development and Resolution: The Worst Possible Outcome

When you need to decide how a situation plays out, begin by imagining the worst possible outcome: what happens if the PCs don't find out about what's going on and take appropriate action. Minimally, start with "He gets away with it," and go from there. This worst possible outcome should be in some way visible to the PCs, even if only through the sadness and grief of a child because her father's killer couldn't be found.

Example Case: A Little Moonlight

The GM needs a *Nitrate City* adventure! Her PCs are a werewolf private eye with a keen sense of smell, a vampire madam, a bartender from a black lagoon, and a psychic stenographer from a romantic comedy. She rolls the following elements:

- **Hook:** Someone needs help to fulfill a goal, dream, or ambition.
- **Crime:** Blackmail or extortion
- **Secret:** The Flicker Effect has transformed someone or something.
- **Characters:** Private eye, cat burglar / safecracker, werewolf
- **Location:** Posh hotel ballroom

The hook involving the fulfillment of a dream combined with the motifs of the Flicker Effect transformation and a posh ballroom remind the GM of Cinderella. The outline of the situation begins to fall into place: There is an elegant ball being held at a swank hotel in the Shores, and all of the PCs are easily compelled onto the scene. The werewolf PI has been hired to work security by his friend, the hotel dick; the vampire madam is to provide escorts for several of the guests; the bartender from the black lagoon is making a little money on the side working the bar; and the psychic stenographer is there as someone's date.

First, the GM thinks about the elements of the safecracker or cat burglar and blackmail or extortion. Clearly, a posh hotel must have a safe, and the safe must contain material being used to blackmail an innocent or at least sympathetic victim, who knows it's there and wants it back. The soiree is thus clearly a *Werewolf Debutante Ball*, hosted by the *Wealthy and Ruthless Financier* Cornelius Vincent (Action +1, Comedy +1, Drama +2, Horror +2) who lives in the penthouse at the Pacific Arms Hotel.

Cornelius is *Fascinated by Werewolves* and considers them the forerunner of a new, better-than-human society of pack-oriented teammates led by a dominant alpha. He has a *File in His Safe* that delineates which families among the rich and powerful of Nitrate City have members afflicted with lycanthropy, and he's threatened those families with exposure to get them to agree to attend his little get-together, intending to indulge in a little selective breeding. His bodyguards are *Tuxedo-Wearing Gunsels* armed with *Guns Loaded with Silver Bullets* (Action +2, Comedy +1, Drama +1, Horror +2). Vincent wishes to find a werewolf bride for his handsome son Chazz (Action +2, Comedy +1, Drama +2, Horror +1), who is a *Prep School Snob* and of course *Loaded With Daddy's Money*.

One of the guests—call him Jasper Penhurst (Action +2, Comedy +2, Drama +1, Horror +1)—is a *Retired Jewel Thief* with some skill as a *Safe Cracker*. His daughter, the werewolf Jennifer Penhurst (Action +3, Comedy +1, Drama +2, Horror +0), is a *Sassy Sorority Girl* who has caught Chazz's eye, but Jennifer has *A Lot of Living to Do First*. Her father will, of course, try to use the opportunity provided by the ball to break into Vincent's penthouse safe.

The case begins at the ball, with Penhurst's efforts to sneak into the penthouse and break into the safe, as well as with Chazz's efforts to woo Jennifer, who in turn may find a player character werewolf PI just too deliciously dangerous to pass up. Once the file is in play, Vincent will do anything to get it back, and things can escalate from there. Without PC intervention, Penhurst steals the file but gets captured by Vincent's bodyguards shortly thereafter, so his daughter unhappily agrees to marry Chazz in order to save her father's life. At the wedding, Jennifer turns into a werewolf and very publicly kills Chazz, only to be cut down in a hail of silver bullets. Penhurst escapes, swearing vengeance on Vincent.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Simon knew the moment he left the precinct house that there'd be no getting to sleep. Not for him, anyway. Not today. Too much had happened. So, while Mad Alice and company headed for home in the pre-dawn gloom, Simon ignored the jangle of keys in his pocket and took a walk instead. It made sense. The cadaver man was thirsty. Turned on. Wired all the way down to the bone. If he *had* gone back to his flop in Echo Park, Simon most likely would have just bounced off the walls. Gone gray behind closed doors and howled something fierce as the sun came up. He might've played hide-and-seek with the rats and other vermin shuffling about in the spaces between his paper-thin walls or, most depressing of all, turned into a mist and drifted around the room, weightless, for hours on end.

So, why not waste the daytime hours at a cadaver-loving bar where the owner kept the window papered over and the lighting dim? Simon thought; he had the next couple of nights off, barring another off-the-books investigation. What could it hurt to stay up?

Get blood drunk and have a little fun.

—From *Cadaver Man Blues* (1954) by Keaton Strong



A Nitrate City Rogues Gallery

The Silver Flame



The Silver Flame is a celluloid superhero who came bursting out of the silver screen with powers and abilities far beyond those of ordinary men.

But with real life comes complex problems and even more complex emotions. In a city where everyday citizens often resemble the monsters he battled on a daily basis, this silver Samaritan often finds himself on the wrong side of conflicts between humans and monsters before circumstances force the hero to discard his many prejudices in favor a more enlightened, realistic perspective.

A lantern-jawed strange visitor from another world, this *Self-Proclaimed Scion of the Seventh Sun* wields the legendary Argent Fire along with a *Deft Right Hook*. He is *Impervious to Incendiary Weapons* and can use the Argent Fire to raise up *Temporary Force Fields* as well as make *Rocket-Powered Leaps* with the force of a V-2. In short, the Silver Flame is one tough customer and he's got no qualms in letting the bad guys know it. There's just one problem: everything the Argent Avenger knows about himself is pure fiction, a *Hodgepodge of Comic Strip Clichés* meant to trade off the success of popular Saturday movie matinees. Getting him to acknowledge this truth will leave him with feelings of grief and anger, resulting in a deep-seated identity crisis that could turn him into a ticking time bomb.

Adventure Use: The Silver Flame is a foil for PC heroes. He is stronger and tougher than they are, and his powers are greater or at least flashier. Against most normal foes, he will be literally untouchable by physical means; you can enforce this by invoking his high concept. However, he's a black-and-white moralist in a shades-of-grey universe, and this should get him into trouble, or at least get him to make a mess that the PCs will have to clean up. Whenever he shows up as a *deus ex machina*, the players should learn that headaches are the result. Unbeknownst to and perhaps even unsuspected by the general public, the Silver Flame maintains a number of secret identities spread out across the Flickering City, and the PCs might encounter him in one of those guises.

The Silver Flame

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Honest-to-Goodness Jut-Jawed Costumed Hero*

Invoke

- ...to display superhuman strength and durability.
- ...to project flashy energy blasts of argent fire.
- ...to fly at amazing speeds, like a jet fighter.

Compel

- ...to be blind to moral nuance or shades of grey.
- ...to want to help unfortunate victims of crime, corruption, and villainy.
- ...to realize his powers are threatening to escape his control.

Origin: *Escapee from an Old Saturday Matinee Serial*

Trouble: *I Must Help Those People!*

APPROACHES

Action: Great (+4)

Drama: Good (+3)

Comedy: Average (+1)

Horror: Fair (+2)

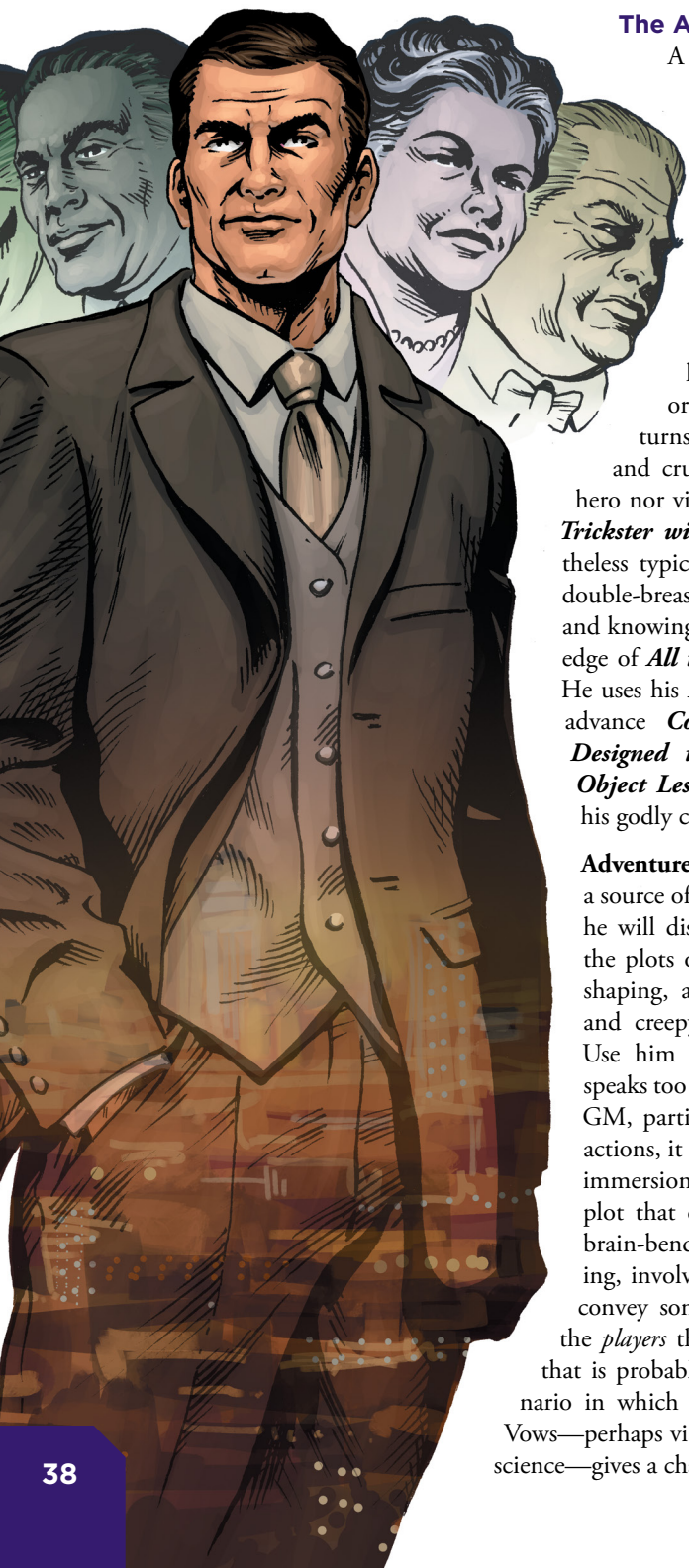
STUNTS

Silver Flame: Because he can manipulate his silver flame into useful forms, the Silver Flame gets +2 when he creates advantages or overcomes obstacles using his Argent Fire.

Extradimensional Empowerment: Because the argent fire is somehow connected to the Flicker Effect, once per session, the Silver Flame can choose to gain a fate point when the Flicker Effect is invoked.

Superhuman Will ×2: Because he is like a force of nature, the Silver Flame has two more stress boxes.

STRESS □□□□



The Angelic Mister Vows

A supernatural entity with the power to reshape reality, the Angelic Mister Vows claims that he sprang into being at the same moment the Flicker Effect transformed Los Angeles into Nitrate City. In certain strange corners of the city, he is worshiped as the soul or avatar of Nitrate City. By turns sadistic, comedic, sardonic, and cruel, Mister Vows is neither hero nor villain, but an *Otherworldly Trickster with Many Faces* who nonetheless typically appears as a man in a double-breasted wool suit, his enigmatic and knowing smile hinting at his knowledge of *All the Secrets of Nitrate City*. He uses his *Reality-Shaping Powers* to advance *Complicated Psychodramas Designed to Impart Mind-Blowing Object Lessons* to those upon whom his godly caprice descends.

Adventure Use: Mr. Vows is generally a source of cryptic information, which he will dispense in order to advance the plots of whichever narratives he's shaping, although he makes a good and creepy villain in his own right. Use him cautiously, however; if he speaks too obviously as the voice of the GM, particularly in judging the PCs' actions, it can detract from the players' immersion or enjoyment. A potential plot that could be fun, if somewhat brain-bending and fourth-wall-breaking, involves Mr. Vows attempting to convey some sort of object lesson to the *players* through their *characters*, but that is probably less enjoyable than a scenario in which gaining influence over Mr. Vows—perhaps via Flicker Effect-related mad science—gives a character GM-like powers.

The Angelic Mister Vows

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Mysterious Supernatural Impresario*

Invoke

- ...to take on a new appearance.
- ...to appear or disappear without warning.
- ...to know secrets he should have had no way of knowing.

Compel

- ...to be misunderstood, and thus hated or feared.
- ...to reveal plot-relevant information as an expository monologue.
- ...to be summoned and possibly controlled via manipulations of the Flicker Effect.

Origin: *Born of the Flicker Effect*

Trouble: *"It's you! You're behind all this!"*

Other Aspects: *Otherworldly Trickster with Many Faces; Reality-Shaping Powers*

APPROACHES

Action: Average (+1)

Drama: Good (+3)

Comedy: Fair (+2)

Horror: Great (+4)

STUNTS

Reality Shaping: Because he is connected to the Flicker Effect, Mister Vows receives a free invocation of the Flicker Effect once per scene.

Supernatural Power ×3: Because he is a supernatural being, Mister Vows receives three extra stress boxes.

"It was you all along!": Because he is a shapeshifting trickster, once per session, you can spend a fate point to reveal that an NPC with whom PCs have interacted is really Mr. Vows.

"You have learned your lesson well": Because the Angelic Mr. Vows is a divine moral arbiter, once per session, you can spend a fate point to advance as if a milestone had been reached.

STRESS ☐☐☐☐☐



Victor Stitch, Frankenstein's Mobster, King of Monsters

The *Head of Nitrate City's Vast Criminal Underworld* and the undisputed albeit self-proclaimed **King of Monsters**, Victor Stitch was one of the first reanimated men to appear in the early days of Nitrate City. What makes him different from his brothers is that he not only killed his creator, but he also used the mad scientist's encephaloscope—a brain transference device—to steal the scientist's intellect for himself. Thus armed, Victor began to seek even greater advantage, hijacking the brains of other master criminals to make himself into an unbeatable adversary. Victor sees himself as the savior of monsterkind. Memories of persecution in the city's early days have dramatically shaped Victor's outlook on how monsters are treated in Nitrate City today. Determined to keep any further atrocities from being committed against his kind, Victor seeks to take over the city in order to create a homeland for monsters: a supernatural city-state over which he can rule. To serve that end, Victor now uses his new and improved encephaloscope to link himself to the living brains of master criminals he continues to add to his growing collection. If Victor has any unique weakness, it is that the constant absorption of new minds sometimes takes its toll on the crime lord's psyche. Victor has been known to absorb dangerous personality traits from his victims that can make Victor Stitch his own worst enemy.

Adventure Use: Victor Stitch is intended as the main villain in a *Nitrate City* campaign. The PCs should encounter him first by reputation, which is ruthless and intense, and then later by his crimes. They should gain sufficient insight into his motives to understand that he sees himself as a champion of a downtrodden people, perhaps even enough to be tempted by any overtures he makes to recruit or suborn them. Eventually they will have to confront him, which is a good climax to a *Nitrate City* campaign arc.

Victor Stich

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Brain-Enhanced Reanimated Gangster*

Invoke

- ...to be supernaturally tough and strong.
- ...to intimidate an underling or a normal person with a glance.
- ...to have an encyclopedic knowledge of the city's criminal secrets.

Compel

- ...to be vulnerable to attacks involving fire or electricity.
- ...to have rivals seeking to undermine or gain advantage over him.
- ...to display peculiar human foibles, idiosyncrasies, or tics associated with former rivals and enemies whose brains he has imprinted upon his own.

Origin: *I Was Made to Cause Trouble*

Trouble: *The Voices in My Head Hate Me*

Other Aspects: *Activate the Encephaloscope!; A Strip of Corpse Skin Down the Center of His Face; Head of Nitrate City's Vast Criminal Underworld; King of Monsters*

APPROACHES

Action: Good (+3)

Drama: Fair (+2)

Comedy: Average (+1)

Horror: Great (+4)

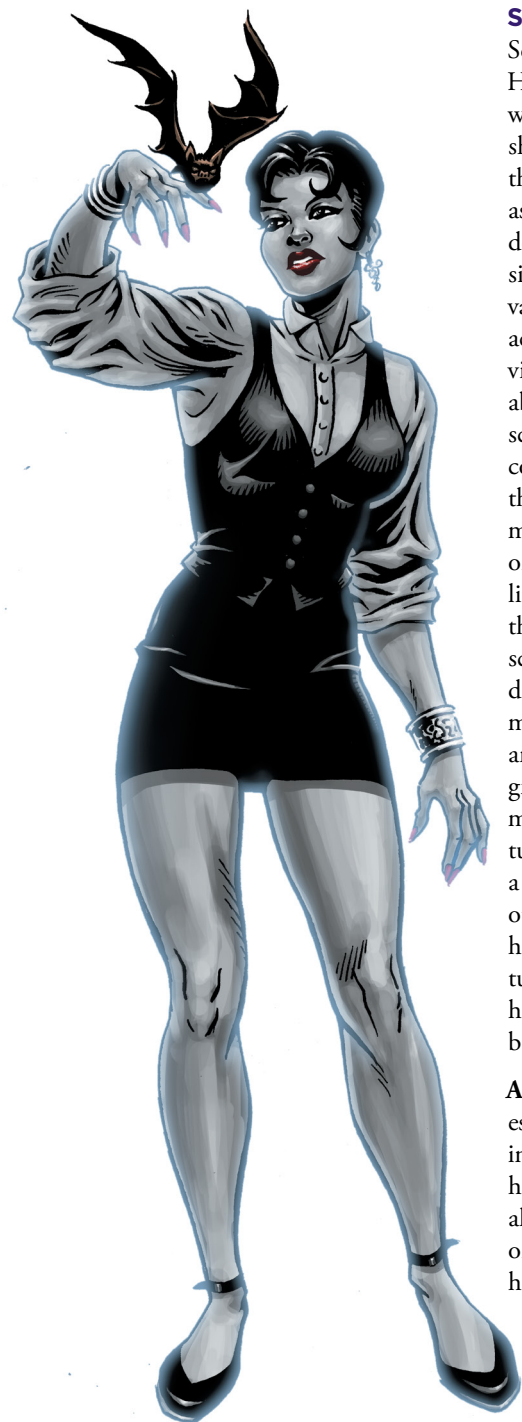
STUNTS

Brain Trust: Because Victor Stich can use his encephaloscope to extract information from the preserved living brains of former rivals including crime bosses and mad scientists, he can spend a fate point to create a situation aspect with a free invocation related to the brain and what it knew, which lasts until this stunt is used again.

Brainstorm: Because of the powerful intellectual capacity provided by his "brain trust" of living brains, once per session Victor Stich can spend a fate point to treat a roll for an overcome or create an advantage action related to a criminal scheme he is carrying out as if he'd rolled **++++**. He may employ this stunt after he's rolled the dice and seen the result.

Incredible Power **×3:** Because of his scientifically enhanced durability, Victor Stich has three more stress boxes.

STRESS ☐☐☐☐☐



Scamp

Scamp is Nitrate City's queen of the vampires. Her skin rendered in photographic black and white, Scamp is both beautiful and lethal as she moves through the midnight streets with the grace of a dancer, her every step as quiet as the grave. While wooden stakes and garlic don't affect her, Scamp shares the same aversion to sunlight that afflicts the rest of her vampire kin. Like any other silent film character, Scamp doesn't talk; rather, she emotes via regal gesture and facial expression. When absolutely necessary, she pricks her finger and scrawls a message in her own blood. Scamp considers herself the guardian of Brick Park, the predominantly African-American community along South Central Avenue where she once lived—but that was long ago and another life. She holds court in a dilapidated old hotel that was the vibrant heart of the interwar jazz scene in old Los Angeles. Scamp protects the disenfranchised by feeding on Nitrate City's most powerful movers and shakers, along with anyone else who tries to take her people for granted. Scamp and Victor Stitch are both motivated to see a change in the power structure of Nitrate City. This has manifested in a mutual if tacit agreement to respect each other's territory—but as those she considers her people leave Brick Park to pursue opportunities made possible by the end of restrictive housing covenants, their interests cannot help but come into conflict.

Adventure Use: Scamp is useful as a villainess in her own right, the solution to a mystery involving the deaths of powerful figures who had been preying upon the powerless. She is also a potential ally against Victor Stitch, but one whose aid will no doubt come at some high cost.

Scamp

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Androgynous Black-and-White Vampire Queen in a Four-Color World*

Invoke

- ...to display preternatural strength and speed.
- ...to command a brood of lesser vampires.
- ...to be dangerously alluring in an unsettling way.

Compel

- ...to hunger for blood.
- ...to be barred from entering a place without invitation.
- ...to sleep without dreaming between dawn and dusk.

Trouble: *Burned by Sunlight*

Other Aspects: *Silent as the Grave; The Midnight Ball; Haunts the Rooftops; Acrobatic; Writes Messages in Blood*

APPROACHES

Action: Good (+3)

Drama: Fair (+2)

Comedy: Average (+1)

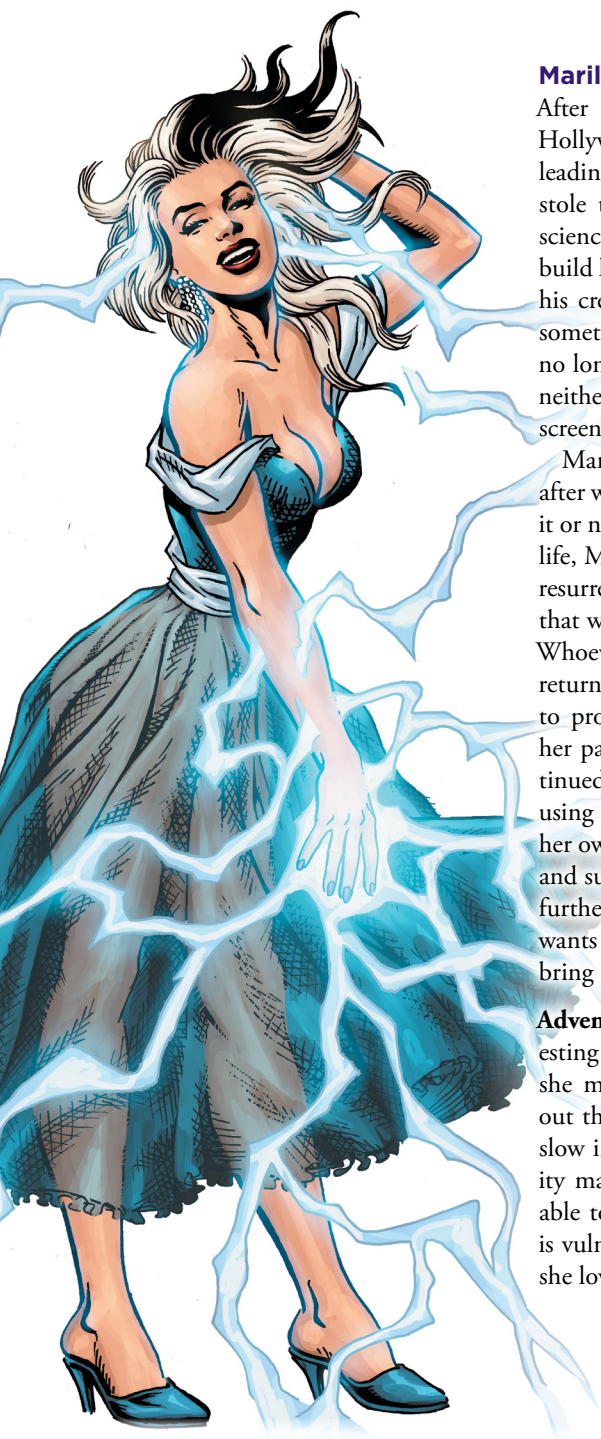
Horror: Great (+4)

STUNTS

Hypnotic Gaze: Because Scamp is an alluring vampire queen, she gains +2 to create advantages with Horror when using her mesmerizing gaze to entice weak-willed mortals.

Supernatural Power ×2: Because Scamp is a being of great supernatural power, she has two more stress boxes.

STRESS □□□□



Marilyn Mansfield, the Jigsaw Girl

After a tragic double homicide robbed Hollywood of two of its most desirable leading ladies, crime lord Victor Stitch stole their remains. Using the same mad science that created him, Victor set out to build himself the perfect mate. Instead, like his creator before him, Victor too created something beyond his control—someone no longer willing to play the role of victim, neither in her own life nor on the silver screen.

Marilyn Mansfield is the most sought-after woman in the world, whether she likes it or not. A talented actress brought back to life, Marilyn Mansfield's story of death and resurrection has created a cult of personality that will literally kill for this electric beauty. Whoever Marilyn was before, she has returned profoundly changed, determined to prove she's more than just the sum of her parts. Marilyn is aware of Victor's continued feelings for her, and she isn't above using the King of Monsters—along with her own newfound wealth, bioelectric, aura and superhuman powers of persuasion—to further her own private agenda: Marilyn wants to find the men who killed her and bring them to their knees.

Adventure Use: Marilyn makes an interesting client—tough and capable though she may be, she cannot take action without the information she needs, and that is slow in coming. Additionally, her desirability makes her a target for powerful others able to resist her persuasive wiles, and she is vulnerable to threats made to the people she loves.

Marilyn Mansfield, the Jigsaw Girl

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Electrified Reanimated Starlet*

Invoke

- ...to regenerate from physical damage.
- ...to be regarded as a paragon of female pulchritude (that is, a “knockout”).
- ...to withstand attacks based on lightning or electricity.

Compel

- ...to be uncomfortable in her own skin.
- ...to be pursued by fans, photographers, and reporters.
- ...to be obsessed with finding the men who murdered her.

Trouble: *Everyone Wants a Piece of Her*

Other Aspects: *Wealthy as a Queen; Magnetic Personality; Strong-Willed and Confident; Electricity Control Powers; I Know Who Made Me. Who Killed Me?; Goddess of Love*

APPROACHES

Action: Average (+1)

Drama: Fair (+2)

Comedy: Average (+1)

Horror: Fair (+2)

STUNTS

Electric Burst: Because she is an electrically charged reanimated woman, Marilyn receives +2 to Action when she attacks by channeling electric currents through her body to produce a powerful shock.

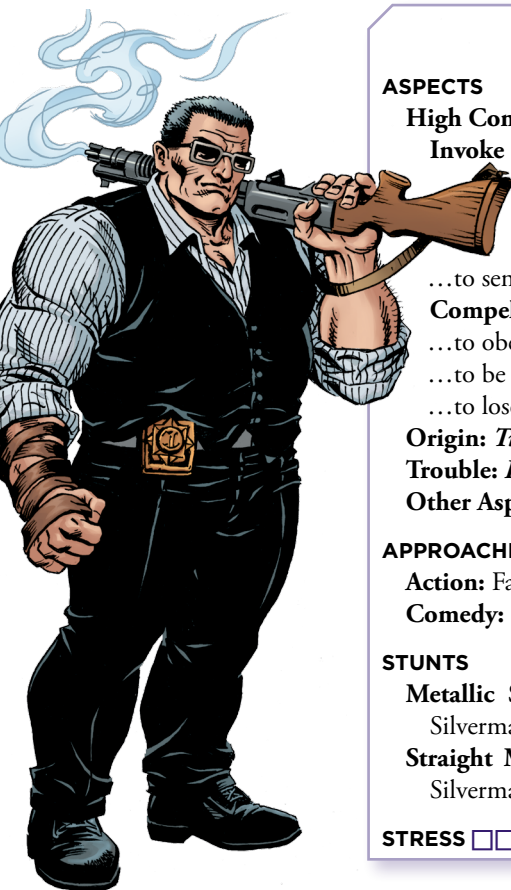
Superhuman Powers of Persuasion: Because her sheer animal magnetism has been enhanced by mad science, Marilyn receives +2 to Drama when she overcomes obstacles involving persuasion or seduction.

STRESS ☐☐

Lt. Isaac Silverman

Silverman was a Los Angeles beat cop who'd been an MP during the war when the Flicker Effect transformed him into a gleaming metallic guardian straight out of Jewish legend. With his spotless record and sterling reputation, he was able to stay on the force despite his altered nature, especially after police authorities realized that he was completely obedient to their commands and could in fact be immobilized by taking his badge away. He has worked his way up the ranks and is now the highest-ranking monstrous officer on the Night Squad.

Adventure Use: Lieutenant Silverman can be the PC's Night Squad superior, or their point of contact with the police if they are private eyes or the like. He can be a source of information, particularly when the imperatives of police work conflict with his sense of moral obligation to protect the weak. If he loses control of himself, though, he could be the rampaging menace that the PCs forced to deal with because no one else can. He is appropriate to use as a pregenerated PC as well.



Lt. Isaac Silverman

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Ambitious Golem Police Lieutenant*

Invoke

...to be superhumanly strong and resilient.

...to have bullets bounce off his metallic skin.

...to sense threats to the Jewish community.

Compel

...to obey commands from lawful authorities.

...to be helpless and immobile without his badge.

...to lose control of himself and go on a rampage.

Origin: *Transformed While Walking the Beat*

Trouble: *Humorless as a Rock*

Other Aspects: *I Protect the Weak*

APPROACHES

Action: Fair (+2)

Drama: Fair (+2)

Comedy: Mediocre (+0)

Horror: Fair (+2)

STUNTS

Metallic Skin ×2: Because of his golem shell, Lt. Silverman has two more stress boxes.

Straight Man: Because of his humorless nature, Lt. Silverman receives +2 to defend with Comedy.

STRESS □□□□

Jimmy Moon, “The Howler”

Jimmy Moon is a smooth customer, an African–American man in his late twenties or early thirties with a reputation for being in the right place at the right time. He regards his lycanthropic affliction as an unlucky break that he has to live with, but he lives for the game.

Adventure Use: Moon can be a client or a witness, caught up in circumstances outside his control and just looking for help to find a way out. He might become a regular contact or source of information on the underworld, particularly because his gambling vice connects him with lots of unsavory characters. He is appropriate as a pregenerated PC as well.

Jimmy Moon, “The Howler”

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Werewolf Gambler*

Invoke

- ...to heal rapidly from injuries not caused by weapons made of silver.
- ...to display preternatural levels of strength and speed.
- ...to notice things by smell and hearing imperceptible to human senses.

Compel

- ...to be unable to control the transformation to werewolf form.
- ...to succumb to the animal hungers of the wolf.
- ...to be vulnerable to damage from silver weapons.

Origin: *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*

Trouble: *I Always Owe Somebody Something*

Other Aspects: *Well-Dressed and Stylish; Smooth Talker; Wolf Eyes and a Werewolf Paw; Moon-Pipped Dice*

APPROACHES

Action: Average (+1)

Drama: Fair (+2)

Comedy: Average (+1)

Horror: Fair (+2)

STUNTS

Gambling Man: Because Moon is an inveterate gambler, he gains +2 to Action in contests when playing a game of chance.

Man-Wolf Hybrid Forms: Because he can transform into any of a variety of man-wolf hybrid forms, Jimmy Moon can spend a fate point to redistribute the ranks of his approaches, to a maximum of Great (+4) in any one.

STRESS □□



Detective Simon “Cadaver Man” Sinn

Simon Sinn is a vampire cop who works the night shift on the Night Squad and spends his days drinking Bloody Marys at a bar that caters to monsters when not holed up in a dingy Echo Park apartment.

Adventure Use: Sinn can be Night Squad contact or colleague, useful as a supporting character or a way of channeling information to PC investigators. He is also appropriate as a pregenerated PC.



Detective Simon “Cadaver Man” Sinn

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Vampire Cop*

Invoke

...to turn into a fog or mist.

...to turn into a bat or rat.

...to see in the dark.

Compel

...to crave the blood of human beings.

...to burn in the light of the sun.

...to be unable to enter a place without invitation—but a welcome mat will do.

Origin: *Creature of the Night*

Trouble: *There's a Drink with My Name on It*

APPROACHES

Action: Mediocre (+0)

Drama: Good (+3)

Comedy: Fair (+2)

Horror: Average (+1)

STUNTS

Supernatural Resilience: Because he is a creature of the night, Simon Sinn has one more stress box.

STRESS ☐☐☐

Roslyn “Rose” Martinez, Private Eye

Tough, determined, and methodical, Private Detective Roslyn Martinez is a former homicide detective compelled to leave the N.C.P.D. after her behavior during a series of race riots caused her superiors to question both her loyalty and her Mexican and Chinese heritage. Angry and disillusioned, Rose went into business handling cases for anyone affected by the Flicker Effect. Rose makes her home on the border between China Heights and the increasingly Latino Old Hollywood neighborhood of Boyle Heights, maintaining numerous informants—human and otherwise—cultivated during her time on the force. It’s through their eyes that the detective maintains a unique perspective on the day-to-day workings of Nitrade City. There isn’t a hole in the wall that Rose doesn’t know about, and there isn’t any place she won’t go to solve a case. The detective has been spotted in the company of film star Marilyn Mansfield on numerous occasions, but it’s unclear what relationship the pair might have.

Adventure Use: Martinez is primarily useful as a foil or rival to PC detectives, but she can also be used as a contact or information source, or as a point of entry into an adventure involving Marilyn Mansfield. She is appropriate as a pregenerated PC as well, her lack of apparent supernatural oomph perhaps offset by her ties to Marilyn Mansfield.

Roslyn “Rose” Martinez

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Jaded Ex-Cop
Turned Private Detective*

Trouble: *I Want Her but I Can
Never Have Her*

Other Aspects: *Network of
Informants; Mexican–Chinese
Heritage; Dragon Tattoo; Two
Shadows*

APPROACHES

Action: Good (+3)

Comedy: Mediocre (+0)

Drama: Average (+1)

Horror: Fair (+2)

STRESS ☐ ☐



Crime Boss

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Gangland Big-Wig*

Trouble: *Keep Your Friends Close and Enemies Closer*

Other Aspects: *I Got Plenty of Muscle*

APPROACHES

Action: Fair (+2)

Drama: Good (+3)

Comedy: Mediocre (+0)

Horror: Average (+1)

STRESS ☐☐

Dirty Politician

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Corrupt Official*

Trouble: *In Somebody's Pocket*

APPROACHES

Action: Mediocre (+0)

Drama: Good (+3)

Comedy: Fair (+2)

Horror: Average (+1)

STUNTS

Connected: Because the dirty politician has done favors for important people, they gain +2 to attack with Horror when calling in those favors to put official pressure on anyone who attracted their disapproving attention.

STRESS ☐☐

Mad Scientist

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Crazed Inventor or Demented Theorist*

Origin: *One Day the Truth Came to Me!*

Trouble: *I'll Show Them! I'll Show Them All!*

APPROACHES

Action: Fair (+2)

Drama: Mediocre (+0)

Comedy: Average (+1)

Horror: Good (+3)

STUNTS

Bizarre Invention: Because they're an insane genius, the mad scientist gains +2 to attack with Horror when revealing the products of their feverish intellect.

STRESS ☐☐

Two-Bit Crook

ASPECTS

High Concept: *Low-Life Thug or Street Tough*

Trouble: *Mean Streak or Known Felon*

APPROACHES

Action: Average (+1)

Drama: Mediocre (+0)

Comedy: Average (+1)

Horror: Mediocre (+0)

STUNTS

Armed and Dangerous. Because the two-bit crook specializes in violence, they receive +2 to attack with Action when armed and engaged in a shootout or brawl.

STRESS ☐☐



NAME

NITRATE CITY

ASPECTS

HIGH CONCEPT

INVOKE IT TO...

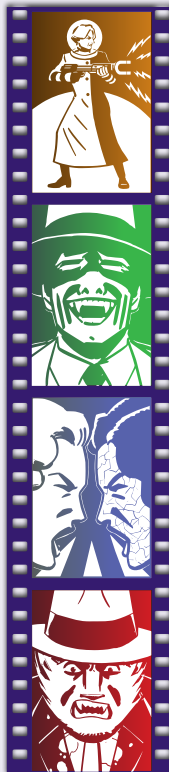
COMPEL IT TO...

ORIGIN

TROUBLE

OTHER ASPECTS

STUNTS



ACTION

COMEDY

DRAMA

HORROR

STRESS

1

2

3

4

CONSEQUENCES

Mild

2

Moderate

4

Severe

6

REFRESH