

# FATE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3  
JUNE 2016

# CODEX

## THE ILLEGALS

SECRET SOVIET SPIES AND  
DETERMINED FBI AGENTS PLOT  
AND SCHEME IN THE 1980S  
AMERICAN HEARTLAND

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### THE MOD BAR

HAVE A DRINK AT  
THIS UNDERGROUND,  
CYBERPUNK,  
BODY MOD BAR



MAGPIE GAMES

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**FATE**

# FATE CODEX

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3 JUNE 2016

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# ABOUT *THE FATE CODEX* – VOL. 3, ISSUE 3

by MARK DIAZ TRUMAN

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One of my favorite parts of editing *THE FATE CODEX* is seeing all the weird, unusual, and downright innovative stuff that people submit. Fate Core is a toolbox—not a specific one-size-fits-all system—but some tools push the boundaries a lot more than others. It's one thing, for example, to take out stress or reframe aspects; it's another to upend the very concept of how scenes are framed in a Fate game or bring some truly weird setting materials to Fate's pulp ethos.

This month's issue is all about these kinds of innovations. From Steve Radabaugh's musical conflicts—seriously, who wouldn't want to sing out their battles?—to Kira Magrann's new cyberpunk Building Block, Issue 3.3 is pushing boundaries in new ways. And I love it! Fate has so much potential, and I can't wait to see what our readers do with all these new tools.

I'm especially excited by Philippe Saner's lifepath system, a new way to generate characters that turns random rolls into interesting characters. I was extremely skeptical that it was possible to create a system that would both center around randomness and stay true to Fate's "character first" norms, but he knocked it out of the park, delivering a system that's both specific and interesting. I think it's exactly the kind of thing *THE FATE CODEX* should publish every month.

As unique as Philippe's piece is, I think it's easy to overlook how effortless Nicole Winchester's Quick Start flaunts the rules as well. She's set up a system of scenes in which players alternate between secret agents and the FBI detectives assigned to catch them, effectively setting up the players *as their own antagonists* without sacrificing the tension and drama that a Cold War setting can produce. Amazing stuff.

Thanks again, patrons, for making this all possible. Our writers and staff very much appreciate your support!



Editor in Chief  
Mark Diaz Truman



## MUSICAL CONFLICTS

by STEVE RADABAUGH

The musical has been a staple in Western theater for over a hundred years; iconic musicals like *Oklahoma* and *West Side Story* have even become integral parts of Western culture. Music enhances the emotion, action, atmosphere, and mood of a stage performance in a way that words can't match, especially when musical numbers are strategically placed—at emotional highpoints and key moments when dialog alone is no longer enough.

You might want to simulate a musical number at your table because you are doing an entire campaign that is based on a Broadway musical, or you simply want to do something a bit different for a session—like the musical episode in *Buffy* in which a demon forced everyone to sing all the time. Perhaps the player characters are actually on stage performing for an audience!

In this article, I'll show you how to add musical conflicts to your game, mimicking the structure of songs found in Broadway shows and rock operas alike to model new and interesting conflicts for your gaming group. If you've always wanted to run a gang fight as a musical show tune, you've come to the right place.

## Strict Structure

Make sure that you explain to your characters that they are doing a conflict as a musical number before the conflict starts. The structure of the song gives the conflict a stricter pacing than other Fate conflicts. Players need to be aware that a song is happening—and why it's happening—before they start.

## CONFLICT AS A SONG

Songs are a performance; the player characters may or may perform for an actual audience, but an audience is assumed. Thus, conflicts that happen in the form of a song both need to be resolved and stand up as a performance for an audience. Additionally, both the song and the conflict itself need to come to a conclusion simultaneously.

Show tunes are typically divided into four sections. Sections one, two, and four are each a verse and a chorus. Section three is a bridge. There are, of course, variations on this structure, but for the sake of simplicity this article is going to stick to this format. Once you get the hang of this type of song, you can try alternative structures with more complicated patterns.

While the song is a group activity, each of the verses is performed by a single character. The chorus, on the other hand, is a chance for many characters to get involved at once.

## The First Verse

To start the conflict, one character sings a verse describing the situation and setting up the conflict. This verse describes how things are, identifies what's at stake in the conflict, and creates a verse aspect that describes the situation. This serves as the introduction to the conflict for the audience.

As an option to give the players more buy-in, the GM can bring in a template to build the lyrics to a song. Take a sheet of paper and mark out space to do four lines for each verse and chorus. The choruses will all be the same. To make it simple, just have the second and fourth lines of each verse and chorus rhyme. When each player does a verse—and the first time through the chorus—have them write the lyrics that they are singing. Let the players collaborate as much as needed on this.

## MUSICAL CONFLICTS

To sing the first verse, one of the players creates an advantage to describe the situation that the song will address. The GM sets the passive difficulty for the roll, and the player generates invokes for success or success with style as normal.

Jefferson and the prince are in love, but the king, who wishes a more traditional marriage for his son, has decreed that the prince instead should marry Princess Snyder. Lunser, one of Jefferson's friends—another player character—starts out by singing a verse describing the forbidden love that Jefferson and the prince share, creating the aspect ***Forbidden Love, Traditional Marriage***.

### The Chorus

Once the first verse concludes the other characters attempt to add more free invokes to the verse aspect by singing the chorus. The chorus picks up the theme of the song that was started in the first verse and reinforces it.

Since everyone in the chorus is singing the same thing, they need to be working on the same aspect, and rolling the same skill/approach against a passive difficulty set by the GM. A success adds one free invoke to the verse aspect; a success with style adds two free invokes.

Jefferson and two of his other friends, Alan and Trinity, lead the nobles of the court in the chorus as they sing about Jefferson's love. The two friends sing in harmony, each lending their unique voice to make the song more vibrant and interesting; Alan adds one free invoke, and Trinity adds two free invokes.

### The Second Verse and Chorus

The character who is the main soloist for the song sings the second verse. This character is empowered to do something about the conflict—as opposed to the first singer who just set things up. If the story doesn't have a single character that should be the one to act, then the players should choose someone.

That character creates a second verse aspect that explains how they will resolve the conflict. Then the rest of the characters attempt to add free invokes to the new aspect during a second chorus.

Jefferson steps forward and sings—to the king and the audience—about his love for the Prince. He calls out Princess Snyder as being unworthy of the Prince's beauty. The chorus again features Lunser and the nobles singing about Jefferson's love and the scandal involved.



## The Bridge

The bridge is where the actual conflict is resolved. The two main characters involved in the conflict roll opposed overcome rolls using the aspects created in the previous two verses. The character who gets the highest overall roll is the winner of the conflict.

Princess Snyder and Jefferson duel with rapiers while singing a duet. They each make their opposed roll to see who the winner is.

## The Third Verse and Final Chorus

In the third verse, the conflict has been resolved. Where do the players go from there?

The character who won the conflict in the bridge sings this verse, describing how things are going to be different and creating an aspect describing the new normal. The player does not need to roll: this right is granted to the player by the victory in the bridge.

In the final chorus, the other characters again get a chance to add free invokes to that aspect. Since this is likely the end of a scene, that aspect and those free invokes persist on into the next scene.

## FAILURE IN MUSICAL CONFLICTS

Sometimes the character creating the aspect in the verse will fail their roll. To keep the song entertaining for the audience, the GM gets to create an aspect that can be compelled against the players. The characters in the chorus can then try to make up for it by adding free invokes to some other aspect.

During the bridge, if the soloist isn't able to overcome the obstacle, it isn't a simple failure as normal. The song is still going to end, but the GM determines the final aspect. If it's a song about a hero taking out a villain and they fail, that means that the villain wins and perhaps pushes the hero into a worse situation than they were in before.

## Altering the Structure

There can be a few reasons to change the structure of the song. Three choruses may be too many if you don't have very many characters involved. You can reduce the number of choruses, or cut them out completely, if it makes more sense for your game. This is especially true if there is only one character. "Let it Go" from *Frozen* is a great example of a character overcoming internal conflict in a song without any side characters adding their voices.

## CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO PCS

Depending on your game, the song may detail a conflict between two different players. In this case the first verse goes to the player(s) on one side of the conflict, and the second verse goes to the player(s) on the other side. The two players still do an opposed roll using the aspects available to complete the bridge; the winner of this opposed roll gets to define the aspect created in the third verse.

During the choruses of these songs, if the rest of the players are neutral, they can either work to put free invokes on an existing aspect or create a new aspect that reflects the nature of the conflict without choosing a side. Any players who have a stake in the conflict can choose to work with the chorus, or sit it out.

## WHAT DO I ROLL FOR A SONG CONFLICT?

If you're using this with Fate Accelerated, you use the approach that reflects the aspect that you are working to establish, your singing style, and the overall mood of the song.

For Fate Core, there are two options depending on the campaign: Rapport or varying skills. If the musical is just something that the characters are doing as part of a larger campaign—and it's not a regular occurrence—use the Rapport skill to represent their singing and performance ability. If the entire campaign is based around a musical, then the Rapport skill would get overused. Instead, have the players use the skill that reflects what that verse of the song is about, e.g. roll Fight to sing a verse in which one character scraps with another.

## EXAMPLE SONG CONFLICT: DIESEL AND MOOSE

Tiger, Ice, Diesel, and Mouthpiece are members of a teenage gang in New York in the 1950s. Over the last few scenes, Diesel has been building up tension with Moose, a member of a rival gang. When the group runs into Moose with three of his buddies, a fight between the groups breaks out. The players and the GM agree that since the game they've been playing is a musical, this fight needs to be a musical number rather than a traditional Fate conflict.

Mouthpiece volunteers to take the first verse: he's not the one directly in the conflict. The rest of the group agrees. He sings about all the ways that Moose has wronged Diesel over their last few interactions and about how Diesel is not someone to mess with.

The GM decides that this is a Flashy approach against a Fair (+2) difficulty. Mouthpiece rolls his Flashy (+2) and gets ++00 for a total of (+4) Great for a success. He creates the verse aspect *Moose Has It Coming* with one free invoke. During the first chorus, Tiger, Ice, and Diesel each

## MUSICAL CONFLICTS

roll their Flashy approach to try to add invokes to that aspect. One of them succeeds so it gets one more free invoke.

Since Mouthpiece had the first verse, Diesel takes over for the second verse to respond. He sings about the time that Moose stole his girlfriend... and that he is going to bash Moose's face in. Everyone agrees that this is a Forceful verse. The GM sets the difficulty to (+3) Good. Diesel rolls his Forceful (+3) and gets 0--- for a total of (+0) Mediocre. The GM creates the aspect **All Bark and No Bite** to show that Moose is unimpressed.

During the chorus, the rest of the players add two free invokes to one of Diesel's other aspects, **My Gang Has My Back**, as they try to recover from Moose's dismissal of Diesel's threats.

Since the conflict is between a PC and a specific named NPC, they do an opposed overcome roll during the bridge. Diesel rolls his Forceful (+3) and gets ++00 for (+5) Superb. Moose is good at fighting (+2 to any roll involving fighting) and rolls +++0 for (+5) Superb. Both the player and the GM spend some fate points and their free invokes—invoking “My Gang Has My Back” and “Moose Has It Coming”— and the roll ends up at (+9) Legendary for Diesel and (+7) Epic for Moose.

With Diesel being the victor, he creates an aspect **Don't Mess with Us** that gets carried forward in the story. The rest of the players roll Flashy for the Chorus, and get to add two more free invokes to that aspect. The gang gets to carry this new aspect into future scenes, and everyone knows that Diesel won his conflict with Moose. 🍻



## RANDOM CHARACTER CREATION IN FATE CORE

by PHILIPPE SANER

Ever wish that you could literally roll up a Fate character? Roll some dice, consult some tables, and watch a character take shape before your eyes? If so, today's your lucky day! In this article, I present a lifepath system that creates a character from four simple rolls and a series of tables.

The system presented here has four primary goals: speed, surprise, interest, and balance. In other words, the lifepath system quickly produces characters that are consistently interesting, fun to play, and more or less equally viable and effective. Let's get started!

### Venture City Tables

If you're playing a *VENTURE CITY* game, I've done all of the work you need to use the lifepath system. If you want to create characters in another setting, you need to spend some time making tables, which can be pretty fun if you like to tinker with tables.

### THE SYSTEM

There are five phases to creating a character in this system. In each of the first four phases, you roll four fate dice and use your result to pick a cell on a table like this one:

## RANDOM CHARACTER CREATION IN FATE CORE

VENTURE CITY POWERS				
Negator	Telepathy	Telekinesis	Regeneration	Doppelganger
Shapeshifting	Brick	Speedster	X-Ray Vision	Flamer
Chameleon	Ghost	Metalhead	Insect	Oracle

If you roll **0000**, pick the top left cell. For each + you roll, move one cell to the right. For each - you roll, move one cell down. For example, if you roll **++-0** you'd end up at *Speedster* on this table.

### Adding Aspects

In your chosen cell, you'll find a prompt like *Flamer*, *Telepathy*, or *Regeneration*. You can use this prompt directly as one of your character aspects, but I encourage you to reword and reshape it to suit your character better.

Tomas rolls **+-** on the Venture City Powers table and gets *Insect* for his prompt. He decides to create the aspect **Part of the Hive** to represent his connection to the insect kingdom.

### Adding Skills

In addition to helping you create aspects, each prompt also corresponds to a set of skills. Perhaps a *Flamer* has Good (+3) Provoke and Good (+3) Shoot. Although the skills vary with each prompt, you get the same skill points from each table; e.g., the first table will always grant you one skill at Fair (+2) and three skills at Average (+1). If you roll through all four phases, you can count on getting three Good skills, three Fair skills, and four Average skills.

Tomas looks at the full prompt for *Insect* and finds that it gives him Good (+3) Notice and Good (+3) Physique. He notes those both down on his character sheet.

### Other Details

It's likely that you'll get some duplicate skills. If you do, don't add them together. Just note that you got a duplicate. You'll address those in the final step of character creation.

Sometimes a prompt gives you a stunt or extra in addition to filling in your skill slots. For example, a *Flamer* might get the Flamer superpower directly from VENTURE CITY.

On occasion, a prompt also affects how you roll during the following phase or phases. I'll explain more about that in a moment.

## Finalizing the Character

Regardless, the first four phases are fairly simple. Roll, consult the table for your prompt, follow the instructions, then move on to the next phase and next table.

The fifth phase is a bit more complicated. There are five parts to it.

1. 1. Raise one of your Good (+3) skills to Great (+4).
2. 2. If there are duplicate skills on your sheet, erase all but the highest entry for each skill. This opens up some empty spaces in your skill pyramid; for each empty space, add one to a skill from the level below it. This opens up another empty space; fill it the same way. Repeat until you have ten different skills.
3. 3. Buy stunts (if you have slots available).
4. 4. Decide on a high concept for your character and fiddle with your other aspects until you're satisfied with them.
5. 5. Look over your character sheet as a whole, and change whatever you think needs changing. It's your character, so feel free to tweak the results the system gives you.

And that's it! A quick four rolls, and you've got a new Fate character ready to go. Read on for some examples that show you how the system works in greater detail.

## VENTURE CITY TABLES

The following tables can be used to generate a superhero or a supervillain in VENTURE CITY. They're here partly so you can use them, and partly so you can see how lifepath-based character creation works.

### Phase One: Upbringing

The first phase tells you what your childhood was like and whether you're a have or a have-not. It gives you a Fair skill and three Average skills.

This table has a special corporate mechanic: If you get more + than -, you're part of the corporate hierarchy. If you get more - than +, you're not. If you get an equal number of each, you can decide whether or not you'd like to be corporate.

## RANDOM CHARACTER CREATION IN FATE CORE

UPBRINGING				
Recent Immigrant	Raised by a Corp	Athletic Child	Self-Made Success	Corporate Heir
Mafia Family	Wageslave Family	Professional Family	Academic Child	Criminal Child
Underclass	Rural Family	Wash-Out	Anarchist Family	Homeless

### ACADEMIC CHILD

You were a bright child, and you were educated well.

+2 Lore, +1 Crafts, +1 Investigate, +1 Resources

### ANARCHIST FAMILY

Your parents were genuinely anti-corporate, and raised you accordingly.

+2 Lore, +1 Contacts, +1 Empathy, +1 Will

### ATHLETIC CHILD

You displayed real athletic potential as a child, and once aimed at professional sports.

+2 Athletics, +1 Physique, +1 Stealth, +1 Will

### CRIMINAL CHILD

You've been stealing since you were small. Maybe you learned it from your parents, maybe not.

+2 Burglary, +1 Deceive, +1 Notice, +1 Stealth

### CORPORATE HEIR

At least one of your parents was highly ranked in a major corporation. You were raised to be like them.

+2 Contacts, +1 Deceive, +1 Rapport, +1 Resources

### HOMELESS

Your parents were homeless. You slept in shelters or on the streets, with one eye open either way.

+2 Notice, +1 Burglary, +1 Stealth, +1 Will

### MAFIA FAMILY

Your parents were criminals. The kind that belong to a very scary organization.

+2 Contacts, +1 Provoke, +1 Resources, +1 Will

### **PROFESSIONAL FAMILY**

Your parents were middle-managers or other ordinarily well-off people.  
+2 Resources, +1 Contacts, +1 Lore, +1 Physique

### **RAISED BY A CORP**

You grew up in a privately-run orphanage. It was rough, and it made you tough.  
+2 Provoke, +1 Notice, +1 Physique, +1 Will

### **RECENT IMMIGRANT**

You grew up a long way from Venture City.  
+2 Empathy, +1 Notice, +1 Rapport, +1 Will

### **RURAL FAMILY**

You grew up in the rural area around Venture City and came to the big city in search of opportunity.  
+2 Crafts, +1 Athletics, +1 Drive, +1 Physique

### **SELF-MADE SUCCESS**

You started out with nothing and fought your way to a decent life within the corporate hierarchy.  
+2 Will, +1 Provoke, +1 Rapport, +1 Resources

### **UNDERCLASS**

Your parents were like wageslaves, but without the security or the comfort.  
+2 Physique, +1 Athletics, +1 Crafts, +1 Will

### **WAGESLAVE FAMILY**

You were raised by corporate drones. It was weirdly normal.  
+2 Drive, +1 Contacts, +1 Empathy, +1 Resources

### **WASH-OUT**

You had opportunities. You pissed them away, despite other people being very willing to help you.  
+2 Rapport, +1 Contacts, +1 Deceive, +1 Empathy



## Phase Two: Career

The second phase tells you either what you did before you got your powers or what you do now, depending on what you roll. There are two tables here; the first is for corporate characters and the second is for non-corporate ones. They both give you a stunt, a Good (+3) skill, a Fair (+2) skill, and an Average (+1) skill.

CORPORATE				
Lucky Nobody	Researcher	Corporate Security	Corporate Spy	Excellent Worker
Doctor	A-List Hero	Manager	PR Specialist	Experiment
Bought Powers	B-List Hero	Private Police	Anti-Hero	Politician

### A-LIST HERO

You're one of the ones in the lime-light. A crime-fighting mascot.  
+3 Rapport, +2 Contacts, +1 Will

**Famous (Rapport):** Add +2 to Rapport when you create an advantage related to your excellent reputation.

### ANTI-HERO

You're a superhero who, for branding reasons, is expected to be gritty and badass and not a boy scout.  
+3 Provoke, +2 Physique, +1 Will

<stunt>**Famous (Provoke):** Add +2 to Provoke when you create an advantage related to your fearsome reputation.

### B-LIST HERO

You're a hero too, but you're less about publicity and more about accomplishing things.  
+3 Will, +2 Notice, +1 Physique

**Indomitable (Will):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 127.

### BOUGHT POWERS

You're rich, and one day you decided to buy yourself some powers. Simple, eh?  
+3 Resources, +2 Contacts, +1 Lore

**Money Talks (Resources):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 123.

## CORPORATE SECURITY

You're a soldier, using your powers to protect and serve upper management.

+3 Burglary, +2 Notice, +1 Contacts

**Security Specialist (Burglary):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 99.

## CORPORATE SPY

You were hired and empowered secretly, to help your employers in ways that can't be made public.

+3 Stealth, +2 Deceive, +1 Burglary

**Corporate Backing (Contacts):** Once per scene, you may spend a fate point to ask your corporate masters three questions. They will respond with the best information they have on hand.

## DOCTOR

You were a doctor, one of the many that the creation of superheroes requires.

+3 Lore, +2 Resources, +1 Will

**Medic (Lore):** Add +2 to Lore when you help someone recover from physical consequences or injuries.

## EXCELLENT WORKER

You were a wageslave. A very loyal one. When the corp needed someone reliable, your name came up.

+3 Will, +2 Contacts, +1 Resources

**Undying Loyalty (Will):** Add +2 to Will when your loyalty to the company is tested.

## EXPERIMENT

You were a subject in experimental bodily-enhancement research. You're lucky to be alive.

+3 Physique, +2 Athletics, +1 Notice

**Hard to Kill (Physique):** You have an additional mild physical consequence slot.

## LUCKY NOBODY

You're the spouse, friend, or adult child of someone important enough to give you powers as a gift.

+3 Rapport, +2 Empathy, +1 Contacts

## RANDOM CHARACTER CREATION IN FATE CORE

**Benefactor (Rapport):** You may use Rapport in place of Resources when you attempt to convince your benefactor to pay for something.

### MANAGER

You're pretty high up on the corporate ladder, and have powers mostly as a privilege of rank.

+3 Contacts, +2 Resources, +1 Rapport

**Minions (Contacts):** Once per session, you can spend a fate point to create an extra called “Minions” with a physical skill (Fight, Shoot, Stealth, etc.) equal to your Contacts. This extra can undertake a single task separately from you or join you in a single scene, after which they return to whatever they were previously doing.

### POLITICIAN

Voters are shallow, powers are popular. So you got yourself some.

+3 Contacts, +2 Deceive, +1 Rapport

**Political Connections (Contacts):** Add +2 to Contacts when you reach out to government personnel.

### PR SPECIALIST

Your job is to control the public's impressions, both of your company and of your company's enemies.

+3 Deceive, +2 Contacts, +1 Resources

**Public Relations (Deceive):** Add +2 to Deceive when you manipulate public opinion with mass media.

### PRIVATE POLICE

You fight crime. And you have powers. But you're a police officer, not a hero.

+3 Investigate, +2 Notice, +1 Contacts

**The Power of Deduction (Investigate):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 113.

### RESEARCHER

You were once a corporate scientist, until a strange laboratory accident empowered you.

+3 Lore, +2 Investigate, +1 Resources

**Specialist (Lore):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 115.

## RANDOM CHARACTER CREATION IN FATE CORE

NON-CORPORATE				
Mad Scientist	Independent Hero	Journalist	Priest	Lottery Winner
Thief	Totally Average	Activist	Laborer	Thug
Watch Member	Taxi Driver	Vagrant	Handyman	Crime Lord

### ACTIVIST

You have a vision for society, and you're determined to make it real.  
+3 Will, +2 Lore, +1 Rapport

**Indomitable (Will):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 127.

### CON MAN

Before getting your powers, you made money by scamming other people out of theirs.

+3 Deceive, +2 Rapport, +1 Empathy

**Lies Upon Lies (Deceive):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 104.

### CRIME LORD

You don't just do crime: you run crime.

+3 Contacts, +2 Resources, +1 Will

**The Weight of Reputation (Contacts):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 101.

### HANDYMAN

Until the accident that empowered you, you were a plumber, an electrician, or something like that.

+3 Crafts, +2 Physique, +1 Lore

**Always Making Useful Things (Crafts):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 103.

### INDEPENDENT HERO

You're a superhero, but your refusal to toe the corporate line has made you an outcast.

+3 Athletics, +2 Will, +1 Physique

**Run from the Cops (Athletics):** Add +2 to Athletics when you are running away from someone chasing you.

## JOURNALIST

You're something rare in Venture City: a genuinely independent reporter. It's hard, but powers help.

+3 Investigate, +2 Rapport, +1 Lore

**Journalist (Investigate):** You can use Investigate instead of Lore when you attempt to write informational, entertaining, or convincing pieces.

## LABORER

Before getting powers, you did hard manual labor.

+3 Physique, +2 Will, +1 Drive

**Tireless (Physique):** Add +2 to Physique when you defend against exhaustion, infection, or the effects of drugs.

## LOTTERY WINNER

You were nobody. Then you won the lottery and bought yourself some powers.

+3 Resources, +2 Rapport, +1 Empathy

**Trust Fund Baby (Resources):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 123.

## MAD SCIENTIST

You have some...interesting ideas. They could've killed you, but they gave you powers instead.

+3 Lore, +2 Crafts, +1 Will

**I've Read About That! (Lore):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 115.

## PRIEST

Ever since God appeared to you and gave you powers, you've been preaching a rather unusual doctrine.

+3 Will, +2 Lore, +1 Empathy

**Preacher (Will):** Use Will instead of Rapport when you give speeches or convince people to believe in your doctrine.

## TAXI DRIVER

You used to drive a taxi. Maybe you still do.

+3 Drive, +2 Empathy, +1 Rapport

**I Know This Town (Drive):** Add +2 to Drive when you navigate or make declarations about the area's geography.

## THIEF

You use your powers to steal things. You probably stole things before you had powers.

+3 Burglary, +2 Stealth, +1 Deceive

**Talk the Talk (Burglary):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 99.

## THUG

You're a tough guy, a legbreaker. Even without powers you'd be scary; with them you're terrifying.

+3 Provoke, +2 Physique, +1 Notice

**Okay, Fine! (Provoke):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 120.

## TOTALLY AVERAGE

You're likable, but have no other notable skills or qualities whatsoever. It's really strange.

+3 Rapport, +2 Empathy, +1 Contacts

**Blend In (Rapport):** Use Rapport instead of Stealth to avoid notice when you disappear into a crowd or use other people as a distraction.

## VAGRANT

You're a homeless drifter. Or at least you were, before the accident that gave you powers.

+3 Notice, +2 Stealth, +1 Will

**Danger Sense (Notice):** FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 117.

## WATCH MEMBER

You belong to the Neighborhood Watch, and fight to keep the city safe.

+3 Contacts, +2 Investigate, +1 Notice

**On the Watch (Contacts):** Add +2 to Contacts when you investigate trouble in your neighborhood.

## Phase Three: Superpowers

The third phase tells you what superpowers you have. Everyone rolls on the same table here. It gives you two Good skills and a superpower. See page 7 in *VENTURE CITY* for more on superpowers in Venture City.

SUPERPOWERS				
Negator	Telepathy	Telekinesis	Regeneration	Doppelganger
Shapeshifting	Brick	Speedster	X-Ray Vision	Flamer
Chameleon	Ghost	Metalhead	Insect	Oracle

### BRICK

+3 Fight, +3 Physique

### CHAMELEON

+3 Physique, +3 Stealth

### DOPPELGANGER

+3 Deceive, +3 Investigate

### FLAMER

+3 Provoke, +3 Shoot

### GHOST

+3 Burglary, +3 Stealth

### INSECT

+3 Notice, +3 Physique

### METALHEAD

+3 Crafts, +3 Empathy

### NEGATOR

+3 Fight, +3 Will

### ORACLE

+3 Notice, +3 Will

### REGENERATION

+3 Physique, +3 Will

**SHAPESHIFTING**

+3 Fight, +3 Will

**SPEEDSTER**

+3 Athletics, +3 Fight

**TELEKINESIS**

+3 Will, +3 Will

**TELEPATHY**

+3 Investigate, +3 Will

**X-RAY VISION**

+3 Investigate, +3 Shoot

**Phase Four: Trouble**

The fourth phase tells you what your problems are. Everyone rolls on the same table, but corporate characters set one die to + and non-corporate ones set one die to – before rolling. The table gives a stunt and a Fair (+2) skill.

TROUBLE				
	Image Mismatch	Moral Qualms	Corporate Politics	Genetic Killswitch
Wanted Criminal	Hero Complex	Dark Secret	Something to Protect	War on the Corps
Debilitating Injury	Horrible Temper	Widely Hated	Drug Addiction	Supervillain

**CORPORATE POLITICS**

You're tied up in corporate politics. Unpleasant but unavoidable, if you want to wield real power.

+2 Contacts

**Corporate Connections (Contacts):** Add +2 to Contacts when you attempt to contact members of your company.

**DARK SECRET**

There's some secret that would destroy you if it were made public.

+2 Deceive

**Keeping Secrets (Deceive):** Add +2 to Deceive when you are defending against interrogation or torture.



## DEBILITATING INJURY

You got hurt bad, and it weakens you to this day.

+2 Will

**No Pain, No Gain (Physique):** You have an additional mild physical consequence slot.

## DRUG ADDICTION

You're addicted to something. Maybe the superdrug, maybe just a regular drug.

+2 Will

**Numb to Pain (Will):** The first physical consequence you take in a scene does not generate a free invoke for your opposition.

## GENETIC KILLSWITCH

You've been fitted with a genetic killswitch. Your bosses could give you cancer with a button-press.

+2 Rapport

**Sucking Up (Rapport):** Add +2 to Rapport when dealing with your superiors.

## HERO COMPLEX

You're self-destructively heroic.

+2 Will

**Self-Sacrificing (Will):** When acting in a heroic and noble way, you may fill your lowest consequence slot to invoke an aspect without spending a fate point. Powers can't help recover consequences taken this way.

## HORRIBLE TEMPER

Sometimes you just lose it.

+2 Provoke

**Berserk (Fight):** Once per conflict, you can create a *Berserk!* aspect with two free invokes. You cannot refuse the first compel on this aspect, but you can overcome the aspect with a Great (+4) Will roll before the conflict ends.

## IMAGE MISMATCH

The image your company has given you doesn't really resemble the actual you.

+2 Deceive

**Faking It (Deceive):** Add +2 to Deceive when you attempt to uphold your image by lying to someone about your actions.

## MORAL QUALMS

You have serious moral reservations over your company's actions. But you're not sure what you can do.

+2 Empathy

**Moral Principles (Will):** Add +2 to Will when you defend against attempts to make you behave immorally.

## SOMETHING TO PROTECT

There are people relying on you for protection.

+2 Contacts

**The Rewards of Heroism (Contacts):** Once per scene, you may spend a fate point to receive unexpected help from someone who owes you a debt or who respects you for your good works.

## SUPERVILLAIN

You're actually a supervillain. You commit real crimes in a bizarrely flamboyant way. Why?

+2 Provoke

**Famous (Provoke):** Add +2 to Provoke when you create an advantage related to your fearsome reputation.

## WANTED CRIMINAL

You live in hiding, because you're wanted by the police. And they're serious about it.

+2 Stealth

**Criminal Ties (Contacts):** Add +2 to Contacts when seeking criminal connections.

## WAR ON THE CORPS

You're a communist or anarchist or something like that, and you're aiming to bring down the whole system of the world. Good luck!

+2 Lore

**Fight the Power (Provoke):** Add +2 to Provoke when you try to rile people up against the powers that be.

## WIDELY HATED

The public despises you and wants you dead. Maybe you deserve it, maybe not.

+2 Provoke

**Easy to Hate (Provoke):** Add +2 to Provoke when you try to make someone angry with you.

## SUPERPOWERS

### Brick

VENTURE CITY, page 14

### Chameleon

VENTURE CITY, page 18

### Doppelganger

VENTURE CITY, page 20

### Flamer

VENTURE CITY, page 12

### Ghost

VENTURE CITY, page 15

### Insect

VENTURE CITY, page 22

### Metalhead

VENTURE CITY, page 24

### Negator

**Powers:** You can create an anti-power field, adding +4 to the opposition whenever anyone in your zone uses a power. If there's no opposition, the user must make a Great (+4) Will roll to use their power. When you touch someone, you can shut down their powers completely until the end of your next turn. This requires a Fight attack if they're resisting. In addition, you can tell if someone's powered and roughly what their powers are.

**Special Effects:** Inflict a Condition, Forced Movement

**Drawback:** *Exhausting*

**Collateral Damage Effect:** You cause a helpless person's powers to go wildly out of control for a moment and then disappear for a week.

**Cost:** 3 stunts

**Breakdown:** Basic Power Nullification, Master Power Nullification, and Full Nullification

## Oracle

VENTURE CITY, page 26

## Regeneration

VENTURE CITY, page 23

## Shapeshifting

**Powers:** You can transform into any sort of creature, rolling with Will to create a *Creature Form* advantage. The difficulty is generally Mediocre (+0) but may be higher for huge, tiny, or complicated forms. When you do so, select a skill and add +2 to that skill for as long as you remain transformed. You can also grow wings to fly with Athletics, sprout blades for a +2 bonus to “unarmed” Fight attacks, and harden your skin to gain Armor:2.

**Special Effects:** Area Attack, Physical Recovery

**Drawback:** *Really Creepy*

**Collateral Damage Effect:** You cause a part of your body to split off and become a monster. Unfortunately, you have very little control over creatures created this way.

**Cost:** 6 stunts

**Breakdown:** Basic Shape-Shifting, Master Shape-Shifting, Skill-Shifting, Basic Flight, Basic Natural Weapon, Basic Super Toughness, Corruption Power Theme

## Speedster

VENTURE CITY, page 16

## Telekinesis

VENTURE CITY, page 13

## Telepathy

VENTURE CITY, page 13

## X-Ray Vision

**Powers:** By bathing everything you look at in x-rays, you can see through objects. This lets you see in perfect darkness and ignore physical obstacles when using Notice or Investigate. You get +2 to Investigate when using your vision. You may use Shoot to attack targets within three zones with a concentrated x-ray beam.

**Special Effects:** Area Attack, Inflict a Condition

**Drawback:** *Gives People Cancer* Collateral Damage Effect: If you're willing to do some damage, you can release a huge burst of x-rays that will permanently damage the health of everyone nearby.

**Cost:** 3 stunts

**Breakdown:** Basic Super Senses, Basic Energy Blast, new Super Senses Enhancement to see through objects

## FULL EXAMPLE: TAYLOR WILLIAMS

Let's put those rules into action. We'll call our sample character Taylor Williams.

### First Roll: -++-

The Upbringing table says Taylor had a *Rural Upbringing* and gets +2 Crafts, +1 Physique, +1 Drive, and +1 Athletics.

Since we rolled an equal number of + and -, we can choose which table to roll on for the second roll. Let's go with the Corporate table.

### Second Roll: +0++

The Corporate table says Taylor is a *Corporate Spy*. She gets +3 Stealth, +2 Deceive, +1 Burglary, and a stunt letting her spend a fate point to receive information from her corporate masters.

### Third Roll: +--+0

The Superpowers table says Taylor is a *Speedster* and gets +3 Fight and +3 Athletics. She already has +1 Athletics, but the skills don't stack. She'll pick which one she wants in the cleanup phase.

### Fourth Roll: Automatic + and Random +0+

The Trouble table says Taylor is mixed up in *Corporate Politics*. She gets +2 Contacts and a stunt adding +2 to her Contacts rolls within the company.

## Cleanup

So now we've got to weave all this together into a character. Let's say Taylor grew up unsatisfied in a small town with no prospects. She practically sold herself to Mitsuhamama just to get away from her boring hometown. They erased her identity, gave her powers, and trained her as a covert operative.

That was years ago, and now Taylor is one of Mitsuhamama's top agents. She still looks and acts like a small-town girl, but underneath that facade

## RANDOM CHARACTER CREATION IN FATE CORE

she's one of the deadliest people around and a major player within the company. Let's change *Rural Upbringing* to *Not Just a Hick*, and *Corporate Spy* to *Erased Identity*. We'll pick *Adrenaline Junkie* as her power aspect. Her trouble works just fine as *Corporate Politics*, so we'll leave that alone.

Her skill pyramid looks like this:

**GOOD (+3):** Athletics, Fight, Stealth

**FAIR (+2):** Contacts, Crafts, Deceive

**AVERAGE (+1):** Athletics, Burglary, Drive, Physique

She has Athletics twice. We erase her Average Athletics and give her +1 Will to replace it. To emphasize her deadliness, we'll pick Fight as her apex skill.

For Taylor's high concept, *Top Mitsuhamama Agent* seems fitting.

HIGH CONCEPT: TOP MITSUHAMAMA AGENT

TROUBLE: CORPORATE POLITICS

OTHER: NOT JUST A HICK | ERASED IDENTITY | ADRENALINE JUNKIE

### SKILLS

---

**GREAT (+4)**      Fight

**GOOD (+3)**      Athletics, Stealth

**FAIR (+2)**      Contacts, Crafts, Deceive

**AVERAGE(+1)**    Burglary, Drive, Physique, Will

### STUNTS

---

**Corporate Connections:** Taylor adds +2 to Contacts when she attempts to contact members of Mitsuhamama. (page XX)

**Corporate Backing:** Once per scene, Taylor may spend a fate point to ask her corporate masters three questions. They will respond with the best information they have on hand. (page XX)

### NOTES

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Speedster

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## THE MOD BAR

by KIRA MAGRANN

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### DYSTOPIA, BABY

It's 2075 and the world is a fucked up dystopian mess. Extreme splits between the haves and have nots created massive class differences, and everybody's got chrome, guns, and mohawks. Cities are high on population overflow and have begun sprawling into large urban stretches. Corps have more power than governments, and the claustrophobic oppression pushes people to desperation and excess to escape the everyday. Militaries, doctors, corps, and artists have developed all manner of cybernetic implants and body parts that enhance the human experience. Most of this "cyberware" is provided by employers, but some can be found on the black market; illegal, experimental, and unsafe tech is easier to access than the 1% would prefer.

### Mods, Mods, Mods

Humans now have all kinds of metallic, plastic, and implanted body modifications. Improved metal-plated skeletal strength for heavy lifting, eye implants that can see in various spectra, HUDs that unfold from behind the ears, wireless implants and CPU added to brains--the list is extensive. Some people have turned extreme modification into a lifestyle though, altering their bodies to neo-radical levels of human performance identity. People mod their skin to change colors like chameleons, become sensitive to light and have fangs like vampires, and add downright alien-like features to their otherwise totally human bodies. They want to look different. Some of them need to. This is just who they are. And where they go to be among humans like them is...



## The Mod Bar

The Mod Bar is an interconnected underground bar that is actually ten different dive bars linked together. Imagine walls covered in band stickers, broken mirrors, and terrible acoustics, walls painted pink with bubbly plastic bio-luminescent bar counters, walls covered in video installations and retro disco balls, rooms that seem to be made of nothing but smoke and lasers. There's cheap beer and strong cocktails and people taking over bathroom stalls to fuck or do hits of Lyte-m. The only rule to get in is that you have to be modded, no skins allowed. The owner is mysterious and goes by the name Devi8. It's said they're always hanging in the Mod Bar, but they change looks so often, you'd never know it was them. "Live the performance, love your selves" is lit in neon pink at the entrance to the stairs leading downward.

Nightly Mod performances and competitions are one of the huge draws to this underground sprawl. The categories range from "best body construction" to "most accurate clone job" to "creatures of the night". Biological bodies aren't prized here. It's not what you're born with, but what you dream you can be. The dream is often all that's left to the humans who hang at the Mod Bar. They prize a "live fast, die leaving a beautiful corpse" attitude, because they know it's not long before someone in power out there in the real world will have their number. In modification, they can build a better world together, one that doesn't rely on some fucked up status quo.

### MOD BAR

HIGH CONCEPT: SUBVERSIVE SELF EXPRESSION

TROUBLE: CORP INSTIGATED INFIGHTING

#### STUNTS

**Freedom in Camaraderie.** When a player creates an advantage in order to help someone express their identity, add an extra invoke to the aspect created.

#### SKILLS

**COMMUNITY PROTECTION:** Good (+3)

**KIKI\*:** Fair (+2)

## ROOMS:

**Stage-stravaganza:** This is the room where dueling acts take center stage. Multiple stages in one large room provide a multi-performance setting. Any kind of stage imaginable is in here, with any kind of cyberpunk props to aid characters with their performance.

**The Pink Room:** Curious about new mods? Patrons can get them here, or show off the ones they've already got through various social media, interactive multiplayer sims, or videoboosts.

\*Kiki: definition - catching up on the gossip

## FRONT: AQUARIAN BLACKMAIL

Lil Syke has been trying to take over Mod Bar for years. Ze is another prominent figure of the Mod Bar scene, queen of a group called Aquarius, who are styled as punk rock sea creatures and sell the corp drug Halcyon. Despite zir loyalty to the Mod Scene, Lil Syke is trying to cash in on corp drugs and use the scene to do it. Ze and zir crew keep digging for something they can use against Devi8 to kick them off the Mod Bar throne. Finally Lil Syke hears a rumor that Devi8 is working with Medusa to install new security tech, and Medusa is embarrassingly legit corp realness (the Modders at the bar think corp styles are too mainstream but they do get really neat tech). Lil Syke hopes to catch some scandalous footage of the two making a deal and make it public so Mod Bar turns against Devi8 for good. This will also make it super easy for Syke to sell zir Halcyon with less social fallout. The deal's going down tonight; Lil Syke just has to keep on Medusa to find out where.

### What Is a Front?

A **front** paces the plots and schemes of villains or the terrible doom awaiting the PCs if they don't engage with the problems emerging within the setting. Think of a front like a train, hurtling down the tracks toward a brick wall, ready to smash through everything unless the PCs get in the way.

Each front features a **countdown clock**, a prescriptive and descriptive measure of both what will happen if the front is left unchecked and how much time is left until the front is fully realized. If the front is ignored, you tick down each section of the clock until it reaches the doom that awaits the PCs (prescriptive); if something achieves a portion of the front's future plans early, move the clock directly to that section (descriptive).

As the clock gets closer to midnight, the action becomes more elevated and the stakes become more dire. If the PCs can stop the front early, they may be able to avoid the worst of the consequences, whereas waiting to intervene until the clock is nearly exhausted means that the front will have permanent effects on the setting even if the PCs manage to stop it.

## Cast

Devi8, mod chameleon and owner of Mod Bar; Lil Syke, Aquarius Queen and aspiring business owner; Medusa, security systems operative corp; Pony, a scenester who knows just about everyone in this place. Devi8's identity is extremely difficult to locate, and some imagine they are just a projected illusion, an old folk tale, or an actual deity for the modded out weirdos who haunt this city. Devi8 is actually just a really good modder. They've figured out ways to manipulate their skin, build, style, walk, and are an expert at switching from one mode of presentation to another. Devi8 is all genders, a cyborgian masterpiece, and a model for many of the people in the Mod Bar who meet them without realizing they have. Medusa is a corporate modder, with pristinely implanted eye cameras on a full 360 about her shaved head.

## Countdown Clock

**12:00 - 3:00:** Lil Syke and the Aquarius crew get into a fight with the Glamazons, whose mod show they keep interrupting with their ridiculous untrained and dramatic spy tactics.

**3:00 - 6:00:** Medusa meets with Devi8 in a secret back room that Lil Syke slips into unnoticed. They make their deal. Lil Syke records it.

**6:00 - 9:00:** Lil Syke hands the recording off to a corp representative of Halcyon so it gets the most views possible.

**9:00 - 10:00:** The deal between Devi8 and Medusa goes viral, trashing Devi8's rep as a modder and putting the ownership of the Mod Bar at risk.

**10:00 - 11:00:** Halcyon reps, modded way cool with all the hot new shit (but definitely corp), come in and throw down a challenge to Devi8 for ownership of the Mod Bar. Devi8 needs a crew to back them up.

**11:00 - 12:00:** After losing the challenge, Devi8 is exiled from their own bar, and new corp ownership is in charge. It becomes way less hip, and way more dangerous.

## Special Rules

In addition to a countdown clock, fronts also contain a number of special rules revisions that focus play on the important themes of the setting:

**No Guns Allowed:** Violence isn't really allowed in the Mod Bar, so if there's any kind of disagreement, you have to prove you're a better modder than someone else. Have a dance off using the Contest rules (FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 150), and whoever wins the dance wins the argument.

**Altered Consciousness:** When doing a hit of the hottest drug in the bar, characters gain

- a negative aspect that describes how they're under the influence, and
- two separate +1 modifiers to any social skills a character might have (player's choice).

## Fronts in Play

When events in the front tick down toward the 12:00 doom, make sure the PCs are aware of the events. Depending on their position in the fiction, they might hear about something through the grapevine or directly witness one of the NPCs making a move. Give them chances to interrupt and get mixed up in the plot!

## WAYS TO ENGAGE

The Mod Bar is a metaphor for a queer bar. Everyone is trying on different mods as though they are different identities. Experimentation and expression are very important there, as well as it being a place to escape systemic oppression of the cyberpunk setting. Lots of different types of encounters and characters could exist there, but the ones that bring out those themes work out best!

## Short Staffed

Someone who works at the bar needs assistance with something bar-related and pulls in the PCs to help. It could be a bouncer who needs help with security, a bartender who needs help serving a high maintenance group of patrons, or performers backstage trying to wriggle into various costume mods. After helping with this job, the PCs could become insiders.

**Examples:** bartenders, hosts, stand-ins, performers, security.

## Hang Out, Drama Llamas

The bar is a central place for modders to hang out, meet people in the scene, find information on hot new mod trends and drugs before they are released to the public, etc. It could even be a useful spot to hide out, although it wouldn't be long til the community starts lovingly gossiping about someone.

**Examples:** the regulars, drug sellers, private investigators, someone on the run.

## Fierce Corps

There are many groups that would like to capitalize on the modding community. Corps want to own the space for their own uses, mod sellers want to come in and make everything expensive and legal, and hipsters want to get in on the cool hangs. They want to invade, colonize, and buy identities that aren't for sale.

**Examples:** mod sellers, corps, designers, hipsters.

## ADAPTING THE MOD BAR

*Three different settings with a stunt to match each one.*

The Mod Bar is built to function in an urban Cyberpunk dystopia, but it could easily function as a queer bar metaphor in any game. Here are some ideas for adapting the Mod Bar. Note the additional stunt that would make the Mod Bar a more natural fit for each alternate setting.

## 1940s Pulp

The Black Cat is an apt name for a secret gay bar in the '40s at the end of World War II. It was still illegal to be queer of any sort in public, so these secret bars were essential for other queer people to meet, socialize, and form communities. Some easy opponents would be military or local police looking to get some people arrested or shut the bar down. All genders usually gathered at these bars, since women were just starting to go out alone at night during the war, and queer soldiers would often socialize there too.

## ALTERNATE STUNT

**Passing.** Gain a +2 to Stealth when trying to look straight instead of queer here if you need to protect yourself or your friends.

## Urban Fantasy

A queer bar in a modern day urban fantasy setting would be an easy fit! Instead of modders, there could be all manner of supernatural creatures here. They're the outsiders of their clans, though--the kind werewolf and the shy fairy would fit into this bar well. The Sanctum is a safe place where all the supernatural creatures can get along and hide from the oppression of their different clans. Hunters could come here to disturb the peace of the bar, or there could be clan politics that disrupt their space.

### ALTERNATE STUNT

**Truce.** While inside this space, supernatural creatures must put aside their family/clan drama and get along with each other. Take +2 Rapport when choosing to talk out a conflict instead of fighting.

## Superheroes

In a superhero setting this could be the bar where the superhero weirdos go to hang out. The Headquarters Bar is a place where villains and heroes neutrally meet and express themselves. Their powers are expressed in the bar in all manner of delightful ways, and they don't have to worry about the burden of protecting the people or destroying the world. Perhaps they can even come to some kinds of agreements on what it means to be a little more than human over a drink. This is a great PvP setting, but antagonists could easily be "normal" people who want to judge them.

### ALTERNATE STUNT

**Confession.** When a character admits to something they've done in their past with their powers that they're not proud of, they get a +2 to spend on their next roll. 🗡️

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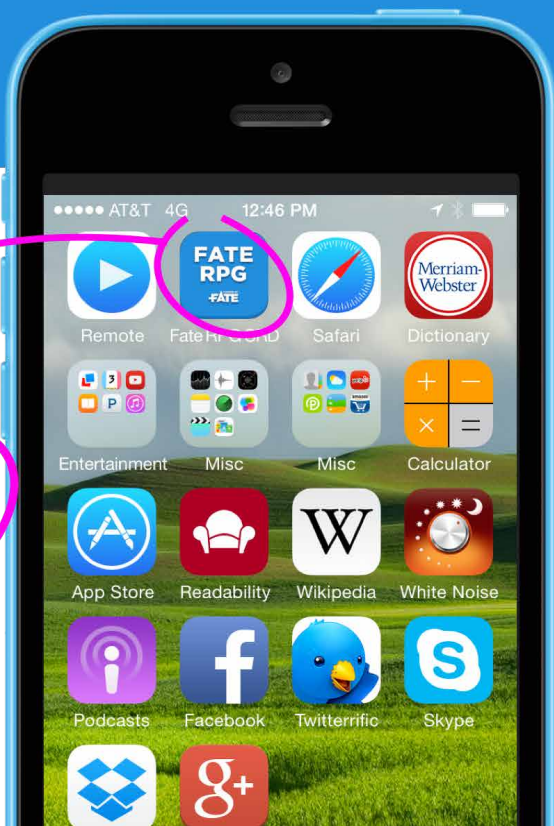
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# THE ILLEGALS





## THE ILLEGALS

by NICOLE WINCHESTER

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*“I live like them, but I am not one of them. Perhaps they could see it, if they looked for it. Americans are like children. They believe that happiness comes with new shoes, a cheeseburger, a shiny car. We know that happiness is fleeting, and it makes us stronger— strong enough to resist the decadence that surrounds us, to do our duty to the Motherland.”*

—Catherine Harrison, KGB Agent, Illegals Program

*“It’s like chasing ghosts. Names from tombstones. Apartments that have never been lived in. When we have caught up with them, it hasn’t been great in terms of results. It’s an abandoned safehouse, or a low-ranking officer hung out to dry—a designated scapegoat. We know what’s happening, but fighting a war against shadows is exhausting. We’ll take victories where we can get them.”*

—Lawrence Matthews, FBI Agent, Counterintelligence

## THE COLD WAR

The end of World War II put the East and West into a state of lasting tension, a Cold War that lacked a front or major combat between the United States and the Soviet Union. Instead, the war was fought in a dozen different ways, across the globe: in proxy wars where each side funded its ideological equivalents in other countries; in academic conference rooms where officials worked to politicize scientists and results; on the field of play in international sporting competitions; through technological and military innovation; with propaganda, with espionage. Everything possible was framed as a battle between East and West.

## Imperialist Superpower and Evil Empire

In 1983, President Reagan called the Soviet Union an “evil empire”—and that’s exactly what most Americans believed. Most Russians likewise believed that America was an “imperialist superpower” intent on dominating the world. Generations raised on propaganda saw to that, as well as large populations that weren’t widely travelled. It’s likely one of the

reasons why the defections that came through the Cold War were from amongst those likely to travel for professional reasons—the artists, athletes, scientists, spies, and soldiers of each country used to prove superiority over the other. It might have been for power, for money, or because they became true believers in the cause, but the defections over the years gave each side the opportunity to put a few in the “win” column, ideology-wise. Some defections were more costly than others—those in intelligence circles were rare, and rarely welcomed.

## The Illegals Program

The agents of Directorate S were known as the Illegals, and the process of building sleeper agents, trained to live undetected as the citizens of foreign countries, was the only program of its kind in international espionage. Candidates were chosen as young adults, out of hundreds of applicants. They were chosen for bravery, focus, will, quick thinking, resistance to stress, linguistic ability, adaptability, and a sense of adventure. The candidates were then given psychological screening to ensure they were prepared for the grueling training, then an isolated life in a foreign country. Illegals were trained individually, never meeting other agents. They learned to operate in a cell that may only consist of themselves, their partner (if they had one), and their handler. There was no contact with anyone from their past life.

Illegals were trained in espionage, politics, finance and economy, several professions, and three or four languages to native fluency. One major general who ran the program called his recruits *wunderkinds* for their remarkable capabilities. To build credible covers, the KGB found records of deceased foreign babies and used those identities for the Illegals. Over the years of training, the Illegal was transformed into a person by that name, artificially created by the Directorate—an entirely different person, to whom Russia itself became foreign. And once they were that person, the Illegal was ready to “go home” and start the mission. Their job was twofold: to aid in managing KGB assets, and to act as sleeper cells for a possible war between the US and Russia.

## Sleeper Cells

The number of KGB sleeper agents that were, or are currently, residing in the United States is unknown. Russian agents were found to be active as recently as 2015 in New York City. The FBI’s efforts to find and stop them are approximately as underfunded, understaffed, and beset by bureaucracy and security clearance blockades now as they were in the 1980’s. Competing operations and priorities are a constant issue, and in 1983, the War on Drugs occupied a lot of resources.

## Living in the 80's

Michael Jackson performed the first Moonwalk in 1983. Return of the Jedi completed the Star Wars trilogy. Sally Ride was the first American woman in space, and Vanessa Williams was the first black Miss America. 1983 was also the year the world came close to nuclear disaster, when the Soviet early warning system malfunctioned and reported American missiles launched at Russia. The *Illegals* is set in the early 80's—an era often characterized as one of big hair and shoulder pads, synthesizers and skinny ties. It's not always remembered as a time of paranoia and dread, when the people lived under the shadow of nuclear annihilation.

## SETTING CREATION

*The Illegals* is a Quick Start with everything you need to get right into your first session. Before you begin, talk about the broader setting with your group, maybe even reading aloud Cold War, Imperialist Superpower and Evil Empire, The Illegals Program, Sleeper Cells, and Living in the 80's so everyone is on the same page. At the start of play, explain the **current issue** to your players and ask them to fill in one or two additional faces associated with *The Cold War in the Heartland*. These additional characters will provide new plot hooks and twists that will tie your players more deeply to the lives they're about to lead.

Then ask your players to choose from one of the two available **impending issues**: *Managing Assets* or *Family Drama*. Have them fill in one or two additional faces for their chosen impending issue as well, rounding out the larger cast of characters with their suggestions.

## Current Issue: The Cold War in the Heartland

Since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan several years ago, relations between the USSR and the US have deteriorated. Both sets of partners are feeling the pressure from their superiors, as the political stakes are higher than they can remember. On one hand, there's the perfect American couple, secretly Illegal Russian agents, living a quiet life somewhere that's useful to the Motherland, waiting for contact from the Center—sometimes for years. On the other, a pair of FBI agents work to find spies that were hand-picked to be the best of the best at living as normal Americans, with inconsistent help from their own government and their own agency.

### Faces:

Marge Fisher: Code Name: *Grandma*. KGB Handler. When word comes or goes from the Center to the agents, it's through Marge. Kind, but tough.

## THE ILLEGALS

Special Agent Paul Campos: Code Name: *Shaggy*. FBI Supervisor, Counterintelligence. In charge of operations in the area. Smart, no-nonsense, occasionally willing to look the other way.

### THE COLD WAR IN THE HEARTLAND

#### MARGE FISHER

Code Name: Grandma

#### SPECIAL AGENT PAUL CAMPOS

Code Name: *Shaggy*

### Impending Issues:

In addition to *The Cold War in the Heartland* and the conflicts it causes, there are a number of other impending issues that can impede our agents' missions, including:

#### MANAGING ASSETS

##### WILLOW DUFRESNE

Young, passionate peace and anti-nuke activist. Sympathetic to communist ideals.

##### ANTON MALIKOV

Mid-level Rezidentura (Embassy) official. He wouldn't want to go home.

#### FAMILY DRAMA

##### STACY HARRISON

Twelve year old daughter, loves baseball and Michael Jackson.

##### MICKI MATTHEWS

Wife and doctor in one of the busiest emergency wards in the area.

## MANAGING ASSETS

Both KGB and FBI agents must manage relationships with multiple assets. Assets are most often weaknesses in bureaucracy or society: relatives of high-ranking officials, disaffected or lonely government workers, anti-nuclear activists, communist sympathizers—anyone who can be manipulated for information, or to take action on the agent's behalf. These relationships can range from casual friendships or paid arrangements to more intimate situations depending on the demands on the contact, the agent's abilities, and their moral flexibility. The KGB relied on the MICE formula for manipulating and managing assets: Money, Ideology, Coercion, and Ego. Illegals often work their assets under other identities, in disguise, or both.

### **Faces:**

Willow Dufresne: Young, passionate peace and anti-nuke activist. Sympathetic to communist ideals.

Anton Malikov: Mid-level Rezidentura (Embassy) official who has been in the US for over a decade. He wouldn't want to go home.

## FAMILY DRAMA

Almost all Illegals are married to their partners, and they may have a family after being undercover for so long. Many FBI agents are also married (though not usually to one another) and have families. Living a double life, or even chasing those who do, takes more time, effort, and energy than a "normal" job, and takes a toll on personal relationships. Spouses that know nothing of the work may have questions or suspicions. Children need their parents present and engaged—and are far more observant than people think. Managing and maintaining family relationships can be as difficult as managing assets, and far more emotionally dangerous.

### **Faces:**

Stacy Harrison: Twelve year old daughter, loves baseball and Michael Jackson. Does not love having to babysit her little sister all the time. Why do you always work late?

Micki Matthews: Wife and doctor in one of the busiest emergency wards in the area. You don't have much time together. When you do, you're both stressed about work, and only one of you can talk about it.



## CHARACTER CREATION

*The Illegals* works best with Fate Core characters, as spies tend to specialize in ways that traditional skills illustrate clearly. If you choose to use Fate Accelerated approaches, players will find they have agents with very similar approaches and capabilities, and only stunts to differentiate them.

In *The Illegals*, players take on the roles of KGB agents in the Illegals program, living as regular American citizens as they execute covert missions to undermine US plans on behalf of the Center, their superiors in Moscow. At the same time, they also play the FBI agents in the Counter-intelligence unit that's tasked with tracking, uncovering, and arresting the Russian spies hidden in plain sight, in the heartland of America.

### Hang On...We're Playing Two Characters?

Yes! Each player takes on the role of both a KGB deep cover agent and an FBI agent. Agents generally work in pairs, so you'll still be working together—as FBI partners, and married KGB spies. You'll also be working against yourselves, replaying scenes as the “enemy” after you've played out the first side's actions. Who are the “good guys”? That's up to you.

While outsmarting yourself might be fun, the point of playing both spies and spycatchers is to see how these characters and partnerships develop over the course of their missions and operations. To examine the choices they make and the effect it has on their relationships: with their co-workers, sources, family, and one another. The alternating scenes can be played out with either pair of agents going first—choose by rolling a die, flipping a coin, or deciding what pair might be most interesting to kick things off. Though corresponding scenes might have some details determined due to what was roleplayed previously, feel free to “edit”

the previous scenes to add something more interesting or more fun for the story.

## What If My Group Has an Odd Number of Players?

If you have two or four players, this dual narrative works well—just assign a KGB and FBI agent to each player. But what do you do with an odd number of players? A possible dual role for a third player could be the faces from the current issue: the KGB handler and the FBI Counterintelligence supervisor. In that case, the Relationship Then and Relationship Now aspects for those characters would describe the relationship with each set of agents as a pair, not as individuals. Another option is to step out of the dual narrative to play a particularly important asset: a double agent trying to play both sides for their own benefit.

Players should select a high concept and a trouble. In choosing a high concept, consider the reason you decided to train as a KGB or FBI officer at the height of the Cold War. What made you choose a life with such sacrifice? Was it patriotism? A need for excitement? Poverty? Idealism?

Instead of the first aspect of the phase trio, players choose a code name aspect for their agent, such as Grandma, Harpy, Foxtail, or Intrepid. Code names are always in the spirit of the spy genre, and usually reflect how their coworkers and fellow agents see the character. It might be fun for players to suggest cool code names for one another's agents!

Rather than completing the last two phases of character creation as usual, begin by creating a Relationship Then aspect that describes the relationship that your character had with their partner when they first met. Did they become fast friends, or start out on the wrong foot? Was there attraction? Or was the partnership strictly platonic?

Finally, use a Relationship Now aspect to illustrate how the relationship between the partners has changed over the months or years they've been working together. Has it improved or deteriorated? Has it developed into something different than it was before, or has the status quo been maintained? Is there anything that gets in the way of working together successfully?

## Skill List

*The Illegals* uses just a few modified skills from traditional Fate Core. These skills aren't new, but have been renamed and contextualized to ensure that they fit the setting. The other skills (Athletics, Burglary, Contacts, Deceive, Drive, Empathy, Fight, Investigate, Notice, Physique, Provoke, Rapport, Resources, Shoot, Stealth, and Will) remain unchanged. *The Illegals* also adds Language, a skill from a previous spy-themed Quick Start.

## REPAIR (CRAFT)

Agents often learn how to handle basic electronic and mechanical repairs. They also learn the finer points of sabotage. Repair can be used to cut brakes, cut off communications, and otherwise cause problems for the other side as long as there's machinery or technology involved.

## INTEL (LORE)

All agents are briefed on their missions, but some do extra homework—or unauthorized digging—to make sure they're well informed. Intel is what you know about operations—yours and everyone else's. Whether you have high clearance or friends in high places, you get to read all the good stuff.

## LANGUAGE

*The Illegals* uses the Language skill developed in *Camp X* in THE FATE CODEX, Volume 2, Issue 3. Agents use Language to blend in with the local populace, to read and listen to surveillance, to communicate with potential assets in immigrant communities, and to send and decipher codes.

## OPENING SCENE: DEAD DROP

**Illegals:** A transmission has come through with a new operation, the first in months. An American scientist with top secret nuclear plans for US missiles—in space!—has been instructed to drop film of the plans in a local park. It's likely that the scientist, who is known to have been struggling with the morality of his work, is under surveillance by the FBI. The agents must get the plans and deliver the film to Grandma without being noticed.

**FBI:** The agents have recently been assigned to watch a nuclear scientist assigned to the Strategic Defense Initiative, one of the Pentagon's top secret projects. Though the scientist has no record of communist sympathies, general surveillance has shown that his conscience has been bothering him, and he's uncertain about continuing his work. If he makes some contact that implicates him in espionage, the agents must try to take him in for questioning.

**Opening Aspects:** *Broad Daylight, Public Park, Innocent Bystanders*

## SKILL CHALLENGES:

In evading or conducting surveillance, the characters might encounter a number of obstacles. In general, selecting roughly two challenges per character gives everyone a chance to show their skills. Here are a few challenges the agents may need to make to carry out their mission:



**Stealth:** The FBI needs to conduct surveillance of the target and the location without being spotted, while the Illegals need to go unnoticed and retrieve the film while potentially under surveillance. The urge to give in to paranoia will be difficult to fight, but these characters are professionals. Difficulty: Good (+3) to Great (+4)

**Deceive:** Illegals make extensive use of disguise to ensure that their American identities are never associated with their identities on missions. Deceive allows them to create disguises that are barely recognizable. Difficulty: Good (+3)

**Notice:** Agents, particularly those trained for surveillance, have remarkable observational skills. Notice is important for any spy, but the FBI and Illegals both need to look for anything in the park that might indicate the mission is blown. Difficulty: Good (+3)

**Athletics:** If the FBI spots the scientist and moves in, he might run. Giving chase will require some athletic ability. Difficulty: Fair (+2)

**Shoot:** When these situations go downhill, they often end in a shootout. The Illegals probably won't open fire, but they may not have a problem with returning it, while the FBI have a badge and a gun they're encouraged to use. Difficulty: Fair (+2) to Great (+4)

## MIDDLE SCENE: INFILTRATION & INTERROGATION

**Illegals:** Whether the film is successfully retrieved or not, the agents must infiltrate the scientist's facility to obtain more information about the secret plans, as he's now in FBI custody. The building is massive, protected with the latest security technology, and staffed with security 24/7. With the FBI on to them, there's no time to groom an asset that works there, so they'll have to break in.

**Opening Aspects:** *High-Tech Security, Cover of Darkness, Endless Hallways*

**FBI:** Whether he's arrested at the park or brought in as a suspected leak, the agents question the scientist. He can't be held long on suspicion alone, but he can be held long enough. Though the agents aren't able to interrogate their suspects in the way KGB officers might, intimidation and threats can go a very long way. The sentence for treason is still death, and this scientist isn't a trained spy, just a man with a crisis of conscience.

**Opening Aspects:** *Tiny Interrogation Room, Middle of the Night, Video Camera*



## FINAL SCENE: PRISONER TRANSFER

**Illegals:** Grandma contacts the agents to let them know that the FBI is transferring the scientist to a more secure facility that night. They must drop everything and race to intercept the prisoner transport so he can be exfiltrated to Russia, his knowledge used to further the Soviet cause.

### FACILITY SECURITY GUARD

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Minimum wage night-time security guard at a scientific facility. More pay would result in more attention paid to the job. At the moment, does as little as possible. Not the person to play hero.

ASPECTS: CLOCKWATCHER, SHIFT-WORK TIRED

#### SKILL MODES

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<b>GOOD (+3)</b>	Facility Knowledge
<b>FAIR (+2)</b>	Security System, Video Surveillance
<b>POOR (-1)</b>	Paying Attention to Detail

#### STRESS

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□ □ □

## CHARLES BLACKBURN

Nuclear Scientist now working in a facility contracted to the Pentagon. Assigned to the Strategic Defense Initiative. Very conflicted about the way his work contributes to the proliferation of nuclear arms. Was recruited by another set of agents at work in the area. Believes his actions will help maintain peace and protect his family.

ASPECTS: BRILLIANT NUCLEAR SCIENTIST, NERVOUS

Code Name: *Beaker*

### SKILL MODES

**GOOD (+3)** Nuclear Science, Puzzles

**FAIR (+2)** Facility Knowledge

**POOR (-1)** Keeping His Cool

### STRESS

□ □ □

Their only opportunities to stop the transfer will be on the drive from FBI headquarters, or at the small nearby airport, where the scientist will be flown out by private plane.

**FBI:** After they question the scientist, Agent Campos comes to tell the agents that their scientist has attracted CIA interest, so they must give him up and transfer him to a more secure facility for further interrogation. Though the FBI technically have jurisdiction, the CIA have classified the entire investigation due to the security of the research. The agents will accompany the scientist by private plane to a CIA facility, then return home, minus one lead on the Illegals.

Depending on the outcome of the scenes, the scientist might be successfully transferred to the CIA facility, exfiltrated to Russia, somehow miraculously run free of both his keepers, or end up killed in the attempt to intercept him, in a CIA prison, or eliminated by the KGB. Whatever happens, he's likely going to regret his decisions.

## PLOT HOOKS AND MISSION SEEDS

The players have completed this operation, for better or for worse, but the Cold War is ongoing, with attendant impending issues at work. Here's a few plot hooks and mission seeds to continue the story of the Illegals and the FBI agents that hunt them:

## The Leak

Suspected KGB operatives have foiled FBI operations more than once, and Agent Campos confides in the agents: he believes there's a leak in the Counterintelligence division. Someone that they work with every day has turned, supplying the Russians with information that could cost them their lives. Who is it? Why would they do it? And what will the agents—and the Illegals that have turned them—do when they find out?

## Family Business

The Center sends new orders to the Illegals through Grandma: they are to recruit their child into the program. A second-generation Illegal, a native citizen of the United States, is far more valuable to the KGB than even the highly skilled first-generation agents. If they protest, the message is clear—it is not a negotiation, it is an order. As parents, how do they react? As agents? Is it an operation they can go through with? What happens if they go against orders? And what happens if they decide to tell their child the truth about who they are?

## Defector

An acclaimed Russian ballet company is coming to the city for only two performances, and the intelligence community is rife with rumor of a possible defector in one of the featured dancers. Both the Illegals and the FBI are ordered to put the visiting company under surveillance, as close as possible. The ballet company will be under heavy KGB security, and aiding the rumored defector will be difficult. If the Americans can find a way to free the dancer, the Illegals will have to work fast to neutralize them—one way or another.

## SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Here are two sets of characters created just for this Quick Start, built as partners. Ideally, two players should take the roles of both the Illegals and the FBI, one player choosing an agent from each side. However, if you have four players dying to fight out the Cold War on American soil, they can each choose an agent and start playing right away:

## CATHERINE HARRISON

Catherine applied for the Illegals program because she was poor and she was idealistic. She truly believed that she might go out and change the world, and the money she could send home to her family was a blessing, even if she may never see them again. Once paired with Michael and sent to America, she was shocked and disgusted at what they took for granted. The excess and waste only confirmed her belief in the Soviet doctrine, and the work they've done has hardened her. She loves her family, and wouldn't give them up for anything, but she is still Mother Russia's.

HIGH CONCEPT: MOTHER'S GOOD SOLDIER

TROUBLE: I AM ABOVE YOU

CODE NAME: QUEEN

RELATIONSHIP THEN: I AM HIS SHIELD

RELATIONSHIP NOW: MY GREATEST WEAKNESS

### SKILLS

<b>GREAT (+4)</b>	Fight
<b>GOOD (+3)</b>	Language, Rapport
<b>FAIR (+2)</b>	Deceive, Notice, Will
<b>AVERAGE (+1)</b>	Burglary, Drive, Intel, Shoot

### STUNTS

**New BFF.** You ingratiate yourself into people's lives with remarkable ease. Add +2 when you use Rapport to handle assets one-on-one in a scene.

**Ruthless Brutality.** When you fight, you fight with brutal efficiency. Once per scene, add an additional free invoke to an aspect of your choice when you make a successful attack with Fight.

**Lady of 1000 Looks.** You are extremely skilled at disguise. Add +2 to overcome or create an advantage with Deceive when you're in one of your disguises.

### STRESS

Physical:      Mental:

### CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):            Moderate (4):    Major (6):

### NOTES

Refresh: 3

**MICHAEL HARRISON**

Michael applied for the Illegals program with a sense of adventure, and even he would say that he was naïve. He didn't really consider what he'd be asked to do, or the consequences it would take on his mind and soul. Michael didn't miss his family in Russia, glad to give up the old for the new, but the missions have worn on him and left him in doubt about the morality of his job. He also enjoys the comforts of the West a little more than Catherine, and isn't sorry for it. What father wouldn't want his children to have heat and electricity and fresh food?

HIGH CONCEPT: CONFLICTED KGB ASSASSIN

TROUBLE: I AM A MONSTER

CODE NAME: BADGER

RELATIONSHIP THEN: SHE'S UNTOUCHABLE

RELATIONSHIP NOW: SHE'S TOO GOOD FOR ME

**SKILLS**

<b>GREAT (+4)</b>	Deceive
<b>GOOD (+3)</b>	Notice, Shoot
<b>FAIR (+2)</b>	Drive, Fight, Intel
<b>AVERAGE (+1)</b>	Athletics, Investigate, Language, Stealth

**STUNTS**

**Five-Dollar Disguise.** You can create a convincing disguise out of found items, or a few things bought at a drugstore. Once per scene, add a +4 bonus to Deceive when using an improvised disguise.

**I Have a Bad Feeling About This.** Your instincts have become highly attuned to danger over the years. Add +2 to Notice when attempting to defend against surveillance or ambush.

**Skilled Sniper.** You've been trained as an assassin, and sniper attacks are one of your specialties. Gain an aspect instead of a boost when you succeed with style at any long-range Shoot attack.

**STRESS**

Physical:  Mental:

**CONSEQUENCES**

Mild (2):      Moderate (4):      Major (6):

**NOTES**

Refresh: 3

## LAWRENCE “LARRY” MATTHEWS

Lawrence came from a law enforcement family: his mother was one of the first women on the force and that’s where she met his dad; his dad’s brothers were cops; their dad was a cop; and so on. His education and background attracted attention from the FBI around college graduation, and he was an easy sell. He’s been married to Micki since she was in medical school and they have a good relationship, but his inability to talk about his work makes him feel as if he’s living only half a life at home. He was partnered with Jamie about two years ago, and highly respects both her intellect and skill—though he didn’t always.

HIGH CONCEPT: <ASPECT>MY BLOOD RUNS BLUE</ASPECT>

TROUBLE: <ASPECT>I CAN SAVE YOU</ASPECT>

CODE NAME: <ASPECT>CHECKMATE</ASPECT>

RELATIONSHIP THEN: <ASPECT>SHE NEEDS A MENTOR</ASPECT>

RELATIONSHIP NOW: <ASPECT>SHE’S SMARTER THAN ME</ASPECT>

### SKILLS

<b>GREAT (+4)</b>	Physique
<b>GOOD (+3)</b>	Investigate, Notice
<b>FAIR (+2)</b>	Deceive, Intel, Drive
<b>AVERAGE (+1)</b>	Athletics, Contacts, Repair, Shoot

### STUNTS

**Eagle Eye.** You have a keen eye that can pick out details others might miss. Any time you create an advantage with Investigate, create an additional situation aspect. If you succeed with style, add a free invoke to the additional aspect.

**Bad Cop.** You might work *mostly* by the book, but why should you let the perps know that? Use Deceive instead of Provoke whenever you’re intimidating a suspect or witness into giving you the information you want.

**Inter-Agency Cooperation.** You’ve spent enough time with the Bureau to make friends in other departments, even a few officers in the CIA. Get a +2 when using Contacts within the local law enforcement and intelligence community.

### STRESS

Physical:  Mental:

### CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):            Moderate (4):            Major (6):

### NOTES

Refresh: 3

## JAMIE TRAN

Jamie had planned to be a social worker. That's how she wanted to help people. It wasn't until she went to a career fair with a friend in her final year of college that she even considered law enforcement, swayed by a convincing FBI recruiter. An idealist, she was excited by the thought of helping and protecting people—victims of crime—through work as an agent. Though her parents worry constantly about the danger she's in, she's fully committed to the job. Jamie dates, but finds it difficult to meet people on her erratic hours. Lawrence is her first partner, and she's finally feeling like it might work out.

HIGH CONCEPT: GUARDIAN OF THE PEOPLE

TROUBLE: I AM THE LAW

CODE NAME: FISH

RELATIONSHIP THEN: TYPICAL CONDESCENDING OLD COP

RELATIONSHIP NOW: HIS EXPERIENCE IS MY BENEFIT

### SKILLS

<b>GREAT (+4)</b>	Empathy
<b>GOOD (+3)</b>	Intel, Rapport
<b>FAIR (+2)</b>	Deceive, Fight, Will
<b>AVERAGE (+1)</b>	Drive, Physique, Provoke, Repair

### STUNTS

**Good Cop.** You can develop an instant connection with anyone you're questioning, due to both your training and sincerity. Gain a +2 to Rapport whenever you're trying to get a witness or suspect to open up to you.

**Old Wounds.** Your knowledge of people is uncanny, as is your knowledge of their weaknesses and failings. Once per session, when you force an opponent to take a mental consequence due to a Provoke attack, you can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe).

**I Sense Hostility.** Use Empathy instead of Fight to defend against physical attacks, provided you've observed your attacker for at least a few minutes prior to the attack.

### STRESS

Physical:  Mental:

### CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):      Moderate (4):      Major (6):

### NOTES

Refresh: 3





## CREDITS

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When not writing or editing, **SALLY CHRISTENSEN** crochets unspeakable evil. She lives in the wilds of north Toronto, along with two cats, a Portuguese viking, and her tiny overlord.

**BRENDAN CONWAY** is a co-owner of Magpie Games, and has worked on the *Firefly RPG* from Margaret Weis Productions, the upcoming *Bulldogs!* (Fate Core edition) from Galileo Games, and numerous Magpie Games projects including *Urban Shadows* and *The Fate Codex*. His solo projects include three Chaos World settings for *Dungeon World—The Last Days of Anglekite*, *The Cold Ruins of Lastlife*, and *The Green Law of Varkith*. He is currently at work on an upcoming game about young superheroes, *Masks: A New Generation*.

**THOMAS DEENY** is a graphic designer who specializes in book layout and game design. His layout and design work can be found in about half of things in Brendan's bio above, but the two have never actually met. Strange. Additional work of his can be found in Atlas Games' *Unknown Armies*, John Wick Presents' *7th Sea*, and Growling Door Games' *Chill*. You can review his published works at [denaghdesign.com](http://denaghdesign.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@denaghdesign](https://twitter.com/denaghdesign).

**SHELLEY HARLAN** is an editor by day, and by night...is also an editor, because you can't get too much of a good thing. She works for the indie RPG company Faster Monkey Games and still can't quite get used to the idea that people will pay her money to read gaming material. She also thinks it's a fun game to see if you can spot the typo in this bio.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**J. DERRICK KAPCHINSKY** is the Director of Operations for Magpie Games. In addition to his operational and financial duties at Magpie, he is also a developmental editor, proofer, and indexer. His indices will appear in games such as *Epyllion*, *Masks: A New Generation*, and *7th Sea: Second Edition*. He also likes cats. He, in fact, likes cats more than he likes people.

**KIRA MAGRANN** creates jewelry at Anima Metals, organizes Indie Games on Demand, and creates sexy, feminist, queer, and cyberpunk games. Some games she's recently designed are *Strict Machine*, *Mobilize*, and *Game of Thrones: Play the Cards*. Follow her on G+ or twitter [@kiranansj](https://www.tumblr.com/kiranansj). <http://kiramagrann.tumblr.com/>

**MIKE MUMAH** has worked for the better part of a decade as a roleplaying game illustrator. His work has appeared in such games as *Shadowrun*, *Rifts*, *Dead Reign*, *Part-Time Gods*, *Babylon 5*, and several others. The Michigan-based artist is currently at large from the Briarsbrook Institute for the Criminally Insane and considered extremely dangerous. If sighted, do not approach him! He may seem very affable and friendly but don't be fooled! Please call the authorities and delay him with free coffee, bourbon, and/or hot wings. He will take the time to enjoy this bait until he can be apprehended. This is for the public's best interest.

**JUAN OCHOA:** Gumshoe whistleblower reporter hero? A narcissistic antagonist out for blood? Fall-guy for a horrifying nanite invasion? Sleeper agent for extraplanar feline intelligence? The FACTS on El Mucho Colombianísimo: he is a straight-dealing, smooth-lined, grit-toothed artist, twainsplit mirror-master-magician-carouser-cavorter, and noted wizard, with knowledge bilingual, exotic, and esoteric, who theoretically does most of his thinking in Español.

**BITMAP PRAGER** is a digital artist, a trans woman, and the creator of the webcomic [catchadreamateater.com](http://catchadreamateater.com). She is 27, her favorite color is yellow with pink shadows, and she works all the time and is made of 95% coffee and 105% swirling vortex of ideas.

**SARAH RICHARDSON** is the layout artist for the *Epyllion* line, employee of Magpie Games, and co-author of *Bluebeard's Bride*. In addition to her design work, you can see her layout work in *No Salvation for Witches*, *The Shadow Out of Providence*, and *The Cold Ruins of Lastlife*. Sarah's illustrations have also have been featured in many a RPG.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**JUSTIN ROGERS** has had an uncommon introduction to RPGs—he’s played five or six different Apocalypse World hacks and a bunch of Fate, but doesn’t really have any idea what “a Pathfinder” is. He works sporadically on various projects: a Baltimore city guide for *Urban Shadows*, his analytics-oriented sports blog ([thesplog.com](http://thesplog.com)), songs for his barely-existent rock band Kodiak Arrest, and his astrophysics Ph.D. thesis, though not necessarily in that order.

**STEVE RADABAUGH**, first of his name, has been playing tabletop RPGs since Junior High with the West End Games Star Wars game in the mid 90 s. Now in addition to teaching high school, he is a Freelance Software Developer and Game Designer. He is the owner of Radicalbomb Games, and is interested in the convergence of technology with the tabletop gaming industry. Steve lives and works in Worland, WY with his wife, two kids, and two dogs.

**PHILIPPE SANER** is a statistician from Ottawa and quite possibly the world’s biggest *Dresden Files* RPG fan. He goes by Sanctaphrax online, and runs the DFRPG Resources Wiki at [dfrpg-resources.wikispaces.com](http://dfrpg-resources.wikispaces.com).

**MANUELA SORIANI** lives in the same small town in northern Italy where she was born in 1979; she studied to become an accountant, but Art asked to be part of her life. After six years in comic books for the Italian market (including Jonathan Steele for Star Comics), Manuela began creating both traditional paper books and animated apps for electronic devices. Around 2013, she added back comic book projects in her daily job, alongside children books and cover art. In early 2016, she was successfully backed for her first illustration book “Butterflies” and is currently working on the comic series *TIN* (by Ilya Dvilyanski), *BoyLord* (by Nathan Peabody), and *Girls Heist Out* (by Rob Wieland).

**MARK DIAZ TRUMAN** is an independent game developer and co-owner of Magpie Games ([magpiegames.com](http://magpiegames.com)). Mark has authored two indie RPGs—*The Play’s the Thing* and *Our Last Best Hope*—and written a number of pieces for Evil Hat Productions, including parts of THE FATE TOOLKIT and *Timeworks*. Mark is passionate about creating an inclusive and diverse gaming community and is thrilled to have the chance to put forward pieces by both fresh voices and old friends in THE FATE CODEX!

## CONTRIBUTORS

**AMANDA VALENTINE** is a freelance RPG editor and developer. Her work includes the *Dresden Files RPG*, *Marvel Heroic Roleplaying*, *Fate Accelerated Edition*, *Little Wizards*, and many others. She also edits fiction, including several of the *Spirit of the Century* novels. She blogs sporadically at [ayvalentine.com](http://ayvalentine.com) about editing, parenting, and gaming. At [reads4twens.com](http://reads4twens.com) she writes spoilerific book reviews for adults who care about what the kids in their lives are reading. You can find her on Twitter as [@ayvalentine](https://twitter.com/ayvalentine) and [@reads4twens](https://twitter.com/reads4twens).

**NICOLE WINCHESTER** is Canadian but sorry, she can't introduce you to Justin Trudeau. She finds adventure by travelling the world, exploring her hometown of Toronto, and playing and making games. Her work can be found in *THE FATE CODEX*, *Indie Mixtape Vol. 2*, and at [games.cultureaddicthistorynerd.com](http://games.cultureaddicthistorynerd.com). She is also a social media strategist for Canada's public broadcaster and owner of #partytime social media events, specializing in social for live events, sports, and entertainment. She can be found online [@noizangel](https://twitter.com/noizangel).

**TARA ZUBER** grew up on fairy tales and remains mildly obsessed with stories to this day. She looks forward to exploring the Fate system further and discovering new stories to tell and share. Tara can be found in Chicago or online on Google Plus at [+TaraZuber](https://plus.google.com/+TaraZuber).



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