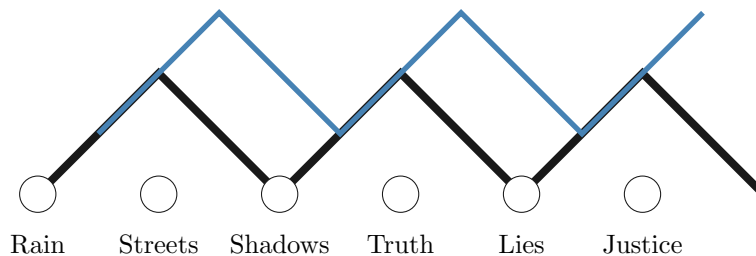


Neon Shadows

A Modern Noir Expansion for Fate's Edge
Optimized for Quick Sessions



Campaign Overview

Campaign Hook

The Premise: You are a private investigator, detective, or troubled professional working the mean streets of a modern city where neon lights cast long shadows and everyone has something to hide. The cases are personal, the stakes are high, and the truth is rarely simple.

Real Hook: In a city where corruption runs deep and justice is often just another commodity, you've chosen to walk the line between order and chaos. But every case you take pulls you deeper into a web of lies, and every truth you uncover makes you a target.

Thematic Elements: Moral Ambiguity, Urban Decay, Personal Stakes, Information As Currency, Noir Atmosphere

Key Noir Elements:

- **Moral Ambiguity:** Right and wrong are not clearly defined
- **Urban Isolation:** Characters are alone in a crowded city
- **Information Control:** Knowledge is power, and everyone guards theirs carefully
- **Personal Consequences:** Choices have lasting impact on character and story
- **Atmospheric Tension:** Mood and setting drive the narrative as much as plot

Quick Case System

Core Investigation Mechanics

One-Shot Case Framework

Designed for 2-3 hour sessions:

Case Elements (Draw 3 cards from standard deck):

- **Spade:** Crime/Inciting Incident (the hook that pulls you in)
- **Heart:** Key Person (central figure in the case)
- **Club:** Complication/Pressure (what makes it difficult)
- **Diamond:** Reward/Resolution (what you can gain or achieve)

Rank Interpretation:

- **2-5:** Simple case with straightforward resolution
- **6-10:** Moderate complexity with meaningful choices
- **J/Q/K:** Complex case with multiple viable solutions
- **Ace:** Twist - the case is not what it initially seemed

Quick Setup:

1. Draw 3 cards (Spade, Heart, Club)
2. Identify the highest rank as your main Challenge Clock (2-5: 4 segments, 6-10: 6 segments, J/Q/K: 8 segments, A: 10 segments)
3. Start with 2 Investigation Points

Investigation Actions

Core investigative activities (use Fate's Edge core mechanic):

Surveillance (Wits + Stealth, DV 2-4):

- Following suspects without detection
- Observing meetings and transactions
- Gathering behavioral intelligence

Interview (Presence + Insight, DV 1-3):

- Direct questioning of witnesses and suspects
- Reading body language and micro-expressions
- Building rapport or applying pressure

Research (Wits + Investigation, DV 2-3):

- Database searches and record checks
- Background investigations on persons of interest
- Cross-referencing information for patterns

Quick NPC System

Important Characters

The Femme Fatale

Archetype: Dangerous woman with hidden agenda

Motivation: Personal gain, revenge, or protection of secrets

Methods: Manipulation, seduction, information control

Weakness: Overconfidence, emotional vulnerability, over-elaborate schemes

Red Flags:

- Knows more than she should about the case
- Appears at crucial moments
- Has unexplained wealth or connections
- Changes story when pressed

Potential Roles: Client, witness, suspect, ally, or mastermind

The Corrupt Cop

Archetype: Law enforcement officer on the take

Motivation: Money, power, protection from own crimes

Methods: Evidence tampering, witness intimidation, information brokering

Weakness: Paranoia, need for control, predictable routines

Red Flags:

- Always "conveniently" arrives late to crime scenes
- Has unexplained income or expensive tastes
- Knows details that weren't in official reports
- Pressures investigation in specific directions

Potential Roles: Investigator, suspect, obstruction, or reluctant informant

The Wealthy Businessman

Archetype: Respectable figure with dark secrets

Motivation: Protecting empire, eliminating threats, maintaining image

Methods: Money, influence, legal intimidation, hired muscle

Weakness: Public exposure, legal vulnerabilities, family concerns

Red Flags:

- Everything seems legitimate on paper
- Has connections in high places
- Willing to spend large sums to "resolve" problems
- Associates with unsavory characters discretely

Potential Roles: Client, victim, suspect, employer, or case originator

The Broken Veteran

Urban Environment Mechanics

City as Character

District Atmosphere

Each area of the city has its own mood and challenges:

Downtown/Core Business District:

- **Atmosphere:** Bright lights, busy streets, corporate power
- **Investigation Modifiers:** +1 to Research, -1 to Surveillance
- **Social Modifiers:** +1 to Interview (professional), -1 to Infiltration
- **Hazards:** Security cameras, private security, high visibility

Waterfront/Docks:

- **Atmosphere:** Industrial, dangerous, criminal activity
- **Investigation Modifiers:** +1 to Surveillance, -1 to Interview
- **Social Modifiers:** +1 to Intimidation, -2 to Diplomacy
- **Hazards:** Criminal presence, unsafe structures, limited lighting

Residential/Suburbs:

- **Atmosphere:** Quiet, family-oriented, community watchful
- **Investigation Modifiers:** +1 to Interview, -1 to Infiltration
- **Social Modifiers:** +1 to Building Rapport, +1 to Research (public records)
- **Hazards:** Nosy neighbors, home security, limited escape routes

Entertainment District:

- **Atmosphere:** Neon, nightlife, temporary anonymity
- **Investigation Modifiers:** +1 to Infiltration, -1 to Surveillance
- **Social Modifiers:** +1 to Social Engineering, -1 to Direct Confrontation
- **Hazards:** Crowds, alcohol/drugs, transient population

Industrial/Warehouse:

- **Atmosphere:** Dangerous, isolated, heavy machinery
- **Investigation Modifiers:** +1 to Scene Examination, -2 to Interview
- **Social Modifiers:** +2 to Intimidation, -2 to Diplomacy
- **Hazards:** Physical danger, limited escape, noise cover

Time and Weather Effects

Environmental factors that impact investigations:

Time of Day:

- **Daylight (6 AM - 6 PM):** +1 to Scene Examination, -1 to Surveillance

Quick Combat System

Violence in the Shadows

Noir Combat

Streamlined combat using Fate's Edge core mechanics:

Position Modifiers:

- **Controlled:** Ambush, superior weapon, high ground (+1 effect)
- **Risky:** Even match, standard conditions (standard resolution)
- **Desperate:** Outnumbered, poor weapon, disadvantaged (-1 effect)

Common Combat Actions:

- **Strike (Body + Melee/Brawl, DV 1-3):** Direct physical attack
- **Shoot (Wits + Firearms, DV 2-4):** Ranged attack (distance/cover affects DV)
- **Evade (Wits + Athletics, DV 2-3):** Avoid incoming attack
- **Intimidate (Presence + Command, DV 2-3):** Psychological warfare

Harm System (Simplified):

- **Minor (-):** Bruises, scrapes (1 CP on next 2 rolls)
- **Moderate (=):** Cuts, sprains (1 CP next roll, -1 die)
- **Severe ():** Broken bones, deep cuts (2 CP next roll, -2 dice)
- **Critical (†):** Life-threatening (3 CP next roll, out of action)

Quick Escalation: Each 1 rolled in combat generates 1 CP that can be spent immediately by GM for:

- Reinforcements arrive (+1 Pressure Clock segment)
- Environment becomes hazardous (start Environmental Collapse clock)
- Weapon malfunction (attacker suffers -1 die)
- Unexpected betrayal (ally becomes hostile)

Sample Quick Cases

💡 Ready-to-Run Scenarios

The Missing Heirloom

Spade 7 (Crime): A priceless family heirloom was stolen from a locked safe during a charity gala

Heart Q (Key Person): The wealthy socialite whose family owns the item

Club 9 (Complication): Multiple suspects had access, and the family has dark secrets they'd kill to protect

Diamond 6 (Reward): Substantial finder's fee plus access to exclusive social circles

Clock: 6 segments (media attention will ruin the family's reputation)

Quick Hook: "Mrs. Blackwood's emerald necklace disappeared sometime between 9 and 11 PM. The safe was locked, the room was secured, but the necklace is gone. The family is desperate to recover it before tomorrow's society pages."

Investigation Points: Interview the butler, examine the safe for tampering, review security footage

The Blackmailer

Spade J (Crime): Someone is threatening to expose a city councilman's affair unless paid

Heart 8 (Key Person): The councilman's assistant who may know more than she's telling

Club K (Complication): The blackmailer has connections in the police department

Diamond 10 (Reward): The councilman will pay handsomely to end this quietly

Clock: 8 segments (exposure will end the councilman's career and marriage)

Quick Hook: "Councilman Harris has been receiving threatening letters demanding 50,000. *He's desperate but refuses to go to the police. Someone knows his secret and is willing to destroy him for money.*"

Investigation Points: Trace the letters' origin, interview the councilman's staff, check financial records

The Vanishing Witness

Spade A (Crime): A key witness in a murder trial has disappeared the night before testimony

Heart 3 (Key Person): The witness's roommate who claims to know nothing

Club 5 (Complication): The witness owed money to dangerous people

Diamond 7 (Reward): The DA's office will provide protection and a substantial reward

Clock: 6 segments (the trial starts tomorrow and will collapse without the witness)

Quick Hook: "Maria Santos was supposed to testify against the Torino crime family tomorrow. She didn't show up for work this morning, and her apartment shows signs of a struggle. The prosecution's case will fall apart without her."

Investigation Points: Search the apartment for clues, interview neighbors, check financial records

Quick Session Framework

3-Hour Session Structure

Session Flow

Designed for maximum noir impact in minimal time:

Opening (30 minutes):

1. Quick character check-in (any updates to relationships/resources?)
2. Case presentation (3-card draw, explain the hook)
3. Initial investigation setup (2 Investigation Points, identify first lead)

Middle (90 minutes):

- 3-4 investigation scenes using core actions
- 1-2 social encounters with key NPCs
- 1 combat encounter if violence erupts
- Advance Pressure Clock based on complications (2-3 segments)
- Reveal 1-2 major clues or twists

Climax (45 minutes):

- Confrontation with primary suspect/antagonist
- Resolution of central mystery
- Moral choice or consequence for the protagonist
- Award XP based on Fate's Edge guidelines

Closing (15 minutes):

- Brief aftermath scene
- Character reflection on choices made
- Tease next case or ongoing consequences
- Award 1-2 XP for session participation

Quick XP Awards

Streamlined advancement for single-session cases:

Per Session:

- **+2 XP:** Table attendance
- **+1-2 XP:** Major objective reached (case solved)
- **+1 XP:** Discovery or lore unlocked (key clue found)
- **+1-2 XP:** Hard choice embraced (moral decision made)
- **+1 XP:** Complication spotlight (character moment)

Quick Advancement:

Character Options

Quick Character Creation

Quick Build Options (20 XP budget):

- **Private Eye:** Insight 3, Investigation 3, Firearms 2, Subterfuge 2
- **Rogue Cop:** Athletics 3, Command 3, Firearms 2, Intimidation 2
- **Street Samurai:** Melee 3, Athletics 3, Stealth 2, Technology 2
- **Socialite:** Presence 3, Insight 3, Diplomacy 2, Subterfuge 2
- **Hacker:** Wits 3, Technology 3, Investigation 2, Stealth 2

Noir Talents (3 XP each):

- **Hardened:** Immune to Intimidation attempts
- **Streetwise:** +1 die to Investigation in urban environments
- **Iron Will:** Re-roll one 1 on Spirit-based rolls per session
- **Smooth Talker:** +1 die to Presence-based social rolls
- **Shadow:** +1 die to Stealth-based actions in urban environments

Starting Resources:

- **Contacts:** 2 reliable sources of information
- **Gear:** Choice of weapon, surveillance equipment, and 500*cash*
- **Reputation:** Known in 1 urban district (Controlled position)

Yes, absolutely! A generator deck and Rogue's Gallery would significantly enhance this expansion. Here's what I'd add:

“*latex*

Investigation Deck

Quick Case Generator

52-Card Investigation Deck (Standard Poker Deck):

- **Spades (Crime/Incident):** What happened
- **Hearts (Person):** Who's involved
- **Clubs (Complication):** What makes it difficult
- **Diamonds (Reward/Resolution):** What's at stake

Spades (Crime/Incident):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Stolen briefcase with confidential files | 9. Witness intimidation before trial |
| 3. Hit-and-run accident with no witnesses | 10. Evidence tampering in a murder case |
| 4. Break-in at a high-end art gallery | J. Corporate embezzlement scheme |
| 5. Corporate espionage discovered too late | Q. Political scandal about to break |
| 6. Disappearance during a business trip | K. Murder covered as suicide |
| 7. Blackmail attempt on a public figure | A. Case is actually an elaborate setup |
| 8. Forgery scheme unraveling publicly | |

Hearts (Person):

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2. Anxious secretary with hidden knowledge | 9. Former criminal trying to go straight |
| 3. Wealthy socialite with a dark past | 10. Journalist investigating corruption |
| 4. Veteran security guard with PTSD | J. Disgraced lawyer seeking redemption |
| 5. Ambitious assistant with their own agenda | Q. Corrupt police captain |
| 6. Retired detective turned private consultant | K. Crime boss's estranged child |
| 7. Tech genius with social anxiety | A. The person you trust most is involved |
| 8. Politician's spouse with secrets | |

Clubs (Complication):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. Time pressure - evidence disappears at mid-night | 9. Police are obstructing your work |
| 3. Multiple suspects all have solid alibis | 10. You're being framed for a crime |
| 4. Key witness is afraid to talk | J. Someone is willing to kill to stop you |
| 5. Crime scene was compromised | Q. The case connects to your personal past |
| 6. Someone is following your investigation | K. Your client is lying to you |
| 7. Crucial evidence is in a restricted area | A. Solving this case will destroy someone you care about |
| 8. Media attention making things difficult | |

Diamonds (Reward/Resolution):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2. Substantial cash payment | 9. Resolution of a personal matter |
| 3. Access to exclusive social circles | 10. Exposure of a major conspiracy |
| 4. Professional reputation boost | J. Choice of eliminating or recruiting a foe |
| 5. Crucial evidence in another case | Q. Control over a valuable resource |
| 6. Protection from a dangerous person | K. Complete vindication of your methods |
| 7. Information that clears your name | A. The truth, no matter the personal cost |
| 8. A favor from a powerful figure | |

Quick Setup Procedure:

1. Draw 3 cards. (Spade, Heart, Club)

2. Identify highest rank for Challenge Clock (2-5:4, 6-10:6, J/Q/K:8, A:10)

3. Draw 1 Diamond for potential reward

Rogue's Gallery

☠ Recurring Antagonists

The Fixer

Type: Information broker and problem solver
Methods: Blackmail, intimidation, network of contacts
Motivation: Power through control of information
Signature: Always wears expensive suits, speaks in calm tones
Weakness: Overconfidence, need for control, predictable routines
Complication: Knows secrets about everyone, including the investigators
When to Use: As employer, rival investigator, or final antagonist

The Fallen Hero

Type: Former respected figure turned criminal
Methods: Using old skills and connections for illicit purposes
Motivation: Desperation, revenge, or protecting family
Signature: High skill level, moral conflict, tragic backstory
Weakness: Guilt, alcohol/drug dependency, emotional vulnerability
Complication: Still has allies who refuse to believe the truth
When to Use: As tragic antagonist, reluctant informant, or cautionary tale

The Corporate Dragon

Type: High-level executive with dark secrets
Methods: Legal manipulation, hired muscle, financial pressure
Motivation: Protecting empire, eliminating threats, personal gain
Signature: Impeccable appearance, smooth talker, vast resources
Weakness: Public exposure, legal vulnerabilities, family concerns
Complication: Has connections in high places, can make problems disappear
When to Use: As hidden mastermind, client with ulterior motives, or final boss

The Street Prophet

Type: Underground figure with uncanny insight
Methods: Network of informants, pattern recognition, psychological manipulation
Motivation: Chaotic desire to "help" people see truth
Signature: Mysterious knowledge, cryptic warnings, appears when least expected
Weakness: Mental instability, isolation, obsession with patterns
Complication: Tells truth in ways that seem like lies, may be genuinely helpful
When to Use: As mysterious informant, plot catalyst, or unreliable ally

The Ghost

Type: Professional who leaves no trace
Methods: Perfect planning, multiple identities, technological expertise
Motivation: Artistic perfection, ideological purity, or simple profit
Signature: Crimes with no evidence, witnesses who saw nothing, perfect timing
Weakness: Obsessive behavior, inability to work with others, pattern-based thinking
Complication: May admire investigators enough to play games with them
When to Use: As elusive serial criminal, master thief, or mysterious helper

Using the Rogue's Gallery

Quick Reference

At-a-Glance Cards

Investigation Action Quick Reference

Core Actions (Use Fate's Edge dice pool):

- **Surveillance:** Wits + Stealth (DV 2-4)
- **Interview:** Presence + Insight (DV 1-3)
- **Research:** Wits + Investigation (DV 2-3)
- **Scene Exam:** Wits + Perception (DV 1-4)
- **Infiltration:** Wits + Subterfuge (DV 3-4)

Position Effects:

- **Controlled:** +1 effect or re-roll 1s
- **Risky:** Standard resolution
- **Desperate:** -1 effect or lose re-roll

Investigation Points: Spend 1 to automatically succeed on any action (once per scene)

District Modifiers Quick Reference

District	Investigation	Social	Hazards
Downtown	+1 Research, -1 Surveil	+1 Interview, -1 Infil	Cameras, Security
Waterfront	+1 Surveil, -1 Interview	+1 Intimidate, -2 Diplomacy	Criminals, Unsafe
Residential	+1 Interview, -1 Infil	+1 Rapport, +1 Research	Nosy Neighbors
Entertainment	+1 Infil, -1 Surveil	+1 Social Eng, -1 Direct	Crowds, Transient
Industrial	+1 Scene Exam, -2 Interview	+2 Intimidate, -2 Diplomacy	Physical Danger

Quick Complications (1 CP each)

- Key witness disappears
- Informant goes silent
- Evidence is contaminated
- Crime scene compromised
- Media attention escalates
- New suspect emerges
- Police obstruction
- Alibi checks out
- Surveillance detected
- Technology fails

Session Structure

Opening (30 min): Character check-in, case presentation, initial setup

Middle (90 min): 3-4 investigation scenes, 1-2 social encounters, 1 combat

Climax (45 min): Confrontation, resolution, moral choice

Closing (15 min): Aftermath, reflection, tease next case

Total: 3 hours for complete noir experience