

## Disclaimer

Suzerain is a fictional depiction of our universe. Any resemblance between any proper noun we come up with and any real person/place/whatever is purely coincidental. By the same token, the book you are reading is a game based on a fictional depiction of our universe. It is not reality. The GM sets a scene in a fictional realm and the players play characters in it. Repeat after me, "I am not my character. I cannot do the things that my character can do because he is a fictional character in a fictional universe." Don't try to fly just because your character can fly. Don't kill anyone just because your character is a master of the Scottish claymore. Roleplaying is meant to be fun, but comes with serious responsibilities.

We would also like to explain that Suzerain is our take on reality with mythological and magical elements. It depicts religions and mythologies with a twist – that is to say, differently than a true believer might see them. We mean no disrespect if you are such a believer but ask you to respect our right to our own interpretation.

## Thank You

Sure, creating this book has been plenty of work, but it's also been a ton of fun. That's because we knew some day you'd be reading it! Your support for Savage Mojo means a whole lot to us. We couldn't enjoy crafting these products if it weren't for awesome fans like you. Your ideas, opinions and stories are super important too; we want to make books that you like! So send us an email with stuff you want to see more (or less) of in the future. Or just let us know you're out there with a simple "Howdy" to [hello@savagemojo.com](mailto:hello@savagemojo.com)– thanks!



We Bring Worlds To Life

[www.savagemojo.com](http://www.savagemojo.com)

version 1.savage140813

This product is copyright Savage Mojo Ltd 2014. All rights reserved. It is for personal use only, and may be printed for personal use. It may not be modified, distributed or sold without written permission.

This game references the Savage Worlds game system, available from Pinnacle Entertainment Group at [www.peginc.com](http://www.peginc.com). Savage Worlds and all associated logos and trademarks are copyrights of Pinnacle Entertainment Group. Used with permission. Pinnacle makes no representation or warranty as to the quality, viability, or suitability for purpose of this product.

## Credit Where Credit's Due

**Words:** Stuart Gorman.

**Additional Words And Rules:** Curtis and Sarah Lyon.

**Edits:** Genevra 'She was the kinda dame who stopped traffic' Harker, Miles M Kantir.

**Additional Rules Edits:** Alan Bundock.

**Illustration:** Chaz Kemp.

**Design:** Aaron Acevedo.

**Layout:** Cat McDonald, Alida Saxon.

## Contents

<b>For Players</b>	3
<b>Character Creation</b>	
Edges	9
Pulse Paths	15
<b>The 524 Files</b>	23
<b>Guns And Gear</b>	31



# FOR PLAYERS

Sample file

*There's a pale mist over the train yard just before daybreak. Two men stand next to a steel barrel, firelight bouncing off their callused hands and smudged faces. One man grinds his palms together, loosing a few motes of dirt and skin over the flames. He remarks, "The twenny-six'll be shootin' through here in a minute. It ain't gonna stop but we kin flip it."*

*A train's hollow clarion calls softly from the north. The other man picks at his beard and replies, "I heard there's a farm a little down the rails, who's looking for a couple hands. So I'm for it. Got your bindle?"*

*"Yeah, gimme jist a sec. This jungle fire ain't build itseff, an' someone else might need it." He extracts a scrap of paper and the stubby end of a pencil from his vest pocket. Somewhere behind the hobo's haggard eyes, a river of light carries his good will, flowing into his right hand. He makes a few rough lines on the paper and lets it drop.*

*Even the torn edges of the scrap hold their shape as it descends into the curling flames. A moment later, the fire seems to inhale, glowing brighter and filling the barrel. "That'll keep 'er goin' a few more nights." he announces as the Twenty Six's locomotive steams past. The two men scramble along the tracks to pick up speed, before hoisting themselves into an open box car and disappearing into its humble accommodations.*

*Sunlight arcs over the treetops to display a yellow-green forest and the Twenty Six pressing south...*

## **American Grit**

Along the sunny avenues of Washington, D.C.  
- America needs you. On its dusty Midwest farms  
- America needs you. And in the misty swamps of Florida - America needs you!

The spirit of the nation is under attack. Unknown forces tug at our politicians' strings, and unleash agents of destruction into our cities. A quiet war rages without declaration or fanfare. Most Americans don't even know the enemy has taken up arms. But the strong and the just have been slowly disappearing from the countryside over the past decade.

Now is the time for heroes to redress the balance, the time for action, and the time to let your virtues be stamped on the heart of the nation. Delve into twisted conspiracies and save America's soul from a fate worse than death. You'll need the full gamut of might and cunning to survive the times ahead. So grab your

pistol and your best noir voiceover, because the dust storms of the Great Depression aren't the only things stirring up some American grit!

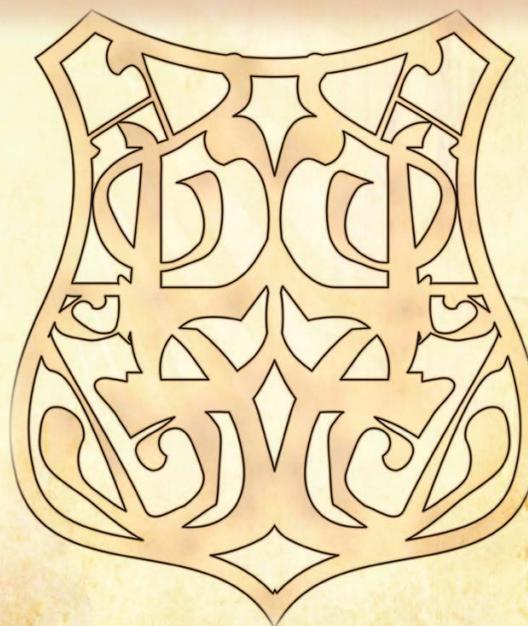
## **What Is Noir Knights?**

*Noir Knights* is your own epic. This Suzerain Continuum setting offers a pulpy romp through the terrible destitution and thundering opportunities of 1930s America. Secret organizations, hidden magic, strange technology, and hard-as-nails

G-men collide and mix across the canvas of a shattered nation.

In this Player's Guide we zoom in on Washington, D.C., the state of Florida, and the wild Midwest with everything you need to get started and craft you vigilante heroes, mystic hoboos, repentant taxidermist priests, and inventor wizards.

If you're a GM, the mysteries and machinations of America's unknown malefactors lurk in the full *Noir Knights* book, with dozens of plot point scenarios and Savage Tales. Vivid villains and thrilling twists will give you everything you need to run many evenings of dynamic adventure. You can find that in our shop on [savageemojo.com](http://savageemojo.com)



# The Special Projects Administration

In the spring of 1932, twenty thousand veterans and their families set up protest camps in Washington, D.C. to demand access to their war-time military bonuses. That summer, the Attorney General ordered the camp's evacuation by force. The ensuing mayhem spurred President Hoover to create the Special Projects Administration – a group of volunteers who were promised first pick of various public works projects that he'd authorized, hoping to offset the deepening depression. While not 'real' jobs, it was a better offer to the veterans of the 'Bonus Army' than routing them into the Potomac.

In the past two years, as a result of Hoover's belief in 'volunteerism', the SPA has grown to encompass an array of duties, largely associated with the organization of civic renovations in communities spanning the forty eight states. That side of things is done by the Works Progress Administration, which, thanks to the President, has given 8 million Americans jobs. However, while the WPA ~~now~~ makes the headlines, SPA 'volunteers' get tied to any number of bureaucratic branches... including the United States Bureau of Investigation and that's where the truly interesting stuff happens.

Veterans who are exceptionally 'talented' have been quietly channeled into the Task Force Division, which is a semi-independent SPA Division attached to the USBI whose Director, Clifton H. Osborne, answers only to the President. The TFD works to police interstate crime alongside the USBI and J. Edgar Hoover (who is currently the motive force behind the Bureau, and who will see it formed into the Federal Bureau of Investigation pretty soon).

The Task Force Division's activities aren't widely reported in the popular press. It has a number of Task Force Coordinators who each run an Official Project Team, which might consist of full time employees, usually ex-military, who research and eliminate the more supernatural threats to national security, or might be made up of freelance teams who've been recruited for similar purposes. The Coordinators of freelance teams provide a vetting process, occasionally extending offers to join the organization

full time to highly dedicated teams (or 'task forces' as they get called using the office jargon).

If all of this seems confusing, a mess of layered departments, divisions and bureaus... well, it's meant to. The TFD is an official part of the government, but it's best not to scare the public with talk of hunting supernatural threats. People are already spooked enough after the rise of spiritualism and superstition in the '20s and there's no point adding hysteria to the Great Depression. Buried within plain sight, the work of these task forces remains largely invisible, even to the accountants on Capitol Hill who scrutinize every dollar of federal spending.

## Working For The SPA

The Task Force Coordinators have much broader standards of hiring than the rest of the SPA, seeking out operatives from all corners of America. Circus freaks, gangsters, priests, post masters, lumberjacks, and street urchins -- they've all been tried out. Task forces are often rearranged to find effective synergies that can be used on assignments. The freelance nature of many task forces makes them less reliable, but it also makes them more expendable. Teams can



be sent in just to test the water. This practice results in little waste if the pool turns out to be empty, and important intelligence as well as no real loss to the Division if the pool is full of sharks.

If player characters join a freelance task force, they will be relatively well cared for by their assigned Coordinator. A task force isn't just cannon fodder, but its members are kept in the dark regarding the big picture, and considered less respectable than an in-house Official Project Team.

The SPA has proven quite effective despite funding getting diverted to the WPA. It has had to ration its funds, and chooses to issue a tiny budget to the semi-autonomous TFD – which is forced to improvise as a result. As a result, the department has developed a policy of salvage rights, granting ownership of perpetrators' belongings to agents involved in their apprehension. The process requires a little paperwork for each claimed item, and always excludes articles necessary for prosecution and objects which threaten or uniquely interest the government.

President Roosevelt, who's been in office for about a year now, is tacitly fond of the SPA and has occasionally mobilized the TFD by indirect order. He used the OPTs for confiscation of gold bullion in accordance with Executive Order 6102, and also uses them for other tasks he deems important.

### **Walking A Secret Path**

Across the U.S., the ground is torn up, and the top layer or two swirling in the breeze. New furrows and dunes take shape and most disappear just as easily. Underneath, the foundations lie silently, waiting to see how fertile the land becomes. And so it is with America's countless secret societies, minor spiritualities, and subcultures - each one shoring up its defenses or surging forward to claim territory, in accordance with its particular mores and goals. In particular, three groups of people deal in the supernatural every day, and deserve a special mention because they occasionally get recruited into the task forces of the SPA. These aren't the only folks who deal with supernatural forces, but they're surprisingly fertile recruiting grounds for Coordinators, so it's good to know a bit about their unique sub-cultures.

**Ruizologists:** In the unassuming city of Tallahassee, Florida, a sprawl of short buildings and sparse trees welcomes visitors. The weather is nearly perfect. Impossibly so. Even its imperfections are

fabricated for appearance. Close to the center of the city, Florida State University is home to one of the most influential societies in the southern United States. The ruizologists hold sway over the forces of nature. The rain falls when it's needed, and the winds rise up at their whim.

In a private library under one of the agriculture buildings, a certain book relates the early days of ruizology. The deeply scientific practice was founded on the work of Bertrand Ruiz, an outdoorsman and honorary PhD at the Collège de Sorbonne in Paris. Ruiz's theory of tidal action and predictive wind patterns allowed him to make a solo trip in a twelve-foot dinghy from Portugal to Miami in under seven days. His 1821 arrival also marked his immigration to the United States.

The travels of 'Ruiz the Rainmaker' in the new world were poorly documented, but covered most of the North and South American continents. In the late 1830s, Ruiz settled in Tallahassee to build a small neo-gothic mansion, where he graciously named his new science after himself. Red brick and a wide roof concealed an extensive modern laboratory. This was where he crossed over from predicting the future to telling the future, sometimes even creating it. The research traditions that Ruiz set out have been handed down to other great minds over the last century at Florida State. The machines and gadgets he invented have been honed by those who followed. It may look like powerful magic to the untrained eye, but ruizology is one hundred percent scientific application... mostly.

**Railwalkers:** The hobo movement has grown immense in recent years, but much of its culture is based on a society of railwalkers with roots in the civil war era. Free slaves and ex-soldiers looking for a home, or lost on the road, found magic in the steel. A hundred thousand miles of railroad lie in contact with the earth, binding a continent, acting as a conduit and a beacon for the earth's energies. They soon discovered their hobo code did more than inform. It gave common ground to a group of individuals where it sometimes seemed the discomfort of daily life was the only thing they had in common. More than that, it could create shelter, ward off threats, and speed travel in ways that aren't easily explained.

Amongst their own they call their magic drawings 'sigils,' but with outsiders, even other hobos, they claim it's just a code. The sigils have been honed over



SPECIAL PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION  
HEADQUARTERS, TASK FORCE COORDINATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

February 22, 1933

NOTIFICATION OF TASK FORCE ACTION REQUESTED, TF#00419

SUBJECT: Objective Designated for Dispatch Upon Noncompliance (DUN)

1. Task Force #00419, you are hereby notified of your obligation to carry out a DUN assignment, under authority of SPA title 8, section (f), complying with the SOP outlined therein. Your Task Reference Number (TRN) for purposes of debriefing and field assistance is 419C11.
2. Oh, to hell with formality, boys. Nobody else is gonna read this, and if they declassify it fifty years after I'm gone, it won't change where I ended up anyhow. Besides, I know you haven't read title 8, let alone the SOP.
3. Looks like we've got a real troublemaker, laying down some bad road behind himself, too. TF#203 traced this fella back to Cotton Valley, Louisiana. Say he used to farm a few acres. That is, until the crops dried up and the bank foreclosed last year. But get this. He got run out of town on a rail three months before that. Cotton Valley folks told TF#203 that he was jinxed.
4. I almost forgot, his name is Febold Pitcher. You're more likely to find him by asking for Nancy though. The list of names he's given is longer than Roosevelt's gravy train.
5. Since then he's been carrying the banner north and west. The sheriff in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, had Febold up in the kitty for a couple weeks, after he was caught trying to close an account at the 1st Bank of Pine Bluff. How many people even have money in the bank these days? It didn't help that the account he was trying to close belonged to the teller's sister, whose purse he'd nicked. Anyhow, Febold high-tailed it when a freak tornado sheered the roof off his jail cell.
6. Towns all across Kansas have booted him out, since their wells and their bars kept drying up at the same time, just as Febold rolled in. He generally rides the rails, claims to be an "honest hobo" looking for work. But he'll just grab what he can and skedaddle, once the locals get wise to him. TF#203 says "honest hobo" is a good phrase to listen for, if you wanna find him.
7. You can chalk up burglary, robbery, assault, vagrancy, and a whole barrel of destruction of property to our new dervish. He even tried snatching the cash box at a carnival. Tore up half the town getting away from the strong man and the barker. You can bet that mistake'll haunt him. The SPA caught wind of him when an agent from the Division of Investigation disappeared in Nebraska last month, although Febold's technically just a suspect.
8. Anyhow, you've probably guessed already. He's got the curse of drought, and he's not handling it as well as some. So he'll have the look too, since he's so far gone. Dusty haze over the eyes, dry skin, confused hair, raspy voice if you talk to him. You know the signs.
9. He'll be in Cheyenne when you get this. Find him. Get him under control, however you boys do it. Now, I know you aren't too keen on greasing your targets. You've got conscience. But I'm sending you on a DUN here, and Febold's a pretty mean egg. Catching the westbound may be the only way he's willing to stop kicking up dust, if you catch my drift. Of course, the head-shrinking part of the SOP says you should ask him to "consider how his actions affect others." Good luck with that!
10. One more thing. There's been some movement around Cheyenne lately. Maybe nothing, probably something. Hobos and tramps can't seem to leave the place alone. They've been like lice on, well, themselves. The population in the jungles is way up there. If there's anything to this, you'll want to find Febold, before he gets involved. Couldn't be good.

*Clifton H. Osbourne*

Clifton H. Osbourne  
Director of Operations, Task Force Division - S. 6.

## Res Ex Gratia

It has nothing to do with magic, but railwalkers can generally recognize each other on sight. This leaves the question of who's got more status. Tuffs and Droop came up with an informal competition to resolve this. The Res ex Gratia supposedly translates to "dominance by kindness".

Two railwalkers meeting for the first time try to see who can make life most comfortable for the other, while spending the least effort doing so. This could be as simple as letting the other know there's a church with free meals up the road, or relating a new tall tale. It could also take the form of a useful gift, or drawing a protection sigil.

Whatever the kind acts are, the winner is determined subjectively, biggest bang for the buck, and often left unannounced. The dominance afforded by this competition doesn't make the winner a king by any means, but folks will surely pay the winner heed when they're in a tight spot.

the decades by several pioneer railwalkers. Franky "Droop" Dunlop and Tuffs Hanly are two storied figures, said to have first created over half the known sigils, as well as the Res ex Gratia.

Not long ago, in the railwalkers' glory days, they used to hold an annual convocation. Droop and Hanly put the word out, named a town and a few days in the spring. Not everyone showed up. It was an informal thing. But it was a thing to behold. Trading, teaching and preaching in the biggest jungle you ever saw. It was probably the safest place on earth too, since most railwalkers looked after their brothers. Three days later the whole thing would vanish, leaving a couple of empty tin cans and a static charge in the air.

Recently, the railwalkers have noticed a disturbing trend. Members go missing, or are found dead at their camp sites. There's no particular pattern, and the culprits are obviously varied. Nevertheless, it's clear they're under siege. In response, they've gone to ground, and they've got a lot of ground too. With luck, the move will buy enough time to find out who's got their number. Some have come to work with the SPA to get to the bottom of it, others investigate on

their own, but all railwalkers are working towards the same goal this time... mostly.

**Taximancers:** Back in the 1700s, Adrien Toussaint disappeared from history and Erasmus Tock was put to death for blasphemy and murder, but their crimes have long outlived them. Toussaint was a self-proclaimed Houngan (Voodoo priest) from the French colony of Saint-Domingue, while Tock was a Catholic taxidermist from England. Both fled to the city of St. Augustine to avoid persecution over their particular ideologies. Even in their time, the oldest city in the States had an air of layered decay. Fate brought the pair together, and they began a 'holy order' based on their beliefs.

The Filial Order of St. James enticed many of the townspeople. Disaffected youth and repentant elderly came to Toussaint and Tock for eternal life and brotherhood. But the town whispered of golems and patchwork zombies, as each believer was welcomed into the Order's embrace. And many were never seen again... at least not alive, or in one piece.

One day the townspeople stormed into the Order's camp with torches and flintlocks. The few who survived claimed they found horrid slaughter and rot, and worse. The rot was alive. They fought things that were half man and half beast, and others that were so mixed, they couldn't tell where the parts had come from. Tock was captured, while Toussaint fled (later to hook up with the pirate captain Cesar Raleigh and continue his work in secret... but that's another story - see the *Savage Suzerain* book for more on that!).

The Filial Order of St. James survives today, as does the art of taximancy, although practitioners don't employ human anatomy so gratuitously any more, and the Order has an infallible moral compass that leads them along the path of good and away from evil... mostly.

# Character Creation

*Noir Knights* is part of the American Grit realm of Suzerain where the melting pot of America presents many exciting possibilities for roleplaying in the supernatural 1930s. There are tons of ways to combine the new Edges in this section, to come up with a mechanically unique protagonist. Mix them up with the options from *Savage Suzerain* and the Savage Worlds core rules for a truly heady mix of cool character opportunities. But it's even better to start with a concept. Figure out the character's M.O. before delving into the nuts and bolts. Then choose some powers that let your character shine in the situations you can see him in.

**A minor caveat:** The adventures in *Noir Knights* assume that player characters either have some ties to the SPA, or are the type of people who would be willing to work with the SPA. You certainly don't have to make a perfectly scrupulous patriot, just someone who might at least be persuaded to fight for the soul of a great nation. Your characters are going to be an SPA task force, so think about how that might work for everyone.

*Noir Knights* has been written as a Heroic rank campaign setting, so if you're making your own characters, you should advance them accordingly – the process is explained in the *Savage Suzerain* rulebook. You can build your own character by considering the 5 points below or, if you want to jump straight into the action, grab one of the pre-generated archetype characters that are available for download from the Treasure area of our website. Grab one that looks fun to play, and go! It's well worth checking the Treasure area once in a while – we love throwing freebies up there, so you never know what useful stuff you'll find.

## 1) RACE

As in any Suzerain setting, all characters in *Noir Knights* are considered to be human, and start with a free Edge. Some realms are simply crawling with racial options, all vying for that Edge. American Grit isn't one of them. Of course, that doesn't mean a character might not come from some other place, and be some other... thing. As long as your GM is okay with it, your hero can come from any other setting; he had to get to Heroic rank somehow, and since this

is Suzerain there's no reason why he shouldn't have got his experience by living the events in the *Dogs of Hades* or *Caladon Falls* campaign, for instance.

## 2) TRAITS

Your character's Attributes and Skills are built just like normal, using the Savage Worlds rules. In *Noir Knights*, all of the normal Skills are appropriate, and could probably be used at some time or another. The Knowledge Skill may vary from GM to GM, but it's safe to say things like Knowledge of particular Pulse Paths, or Knowledge of unusual things like cryptozoology might well apply to a given game of *Noir Knights*. Derived Statistics are also done normally – just follow *Savage Suzerain's* lead and you'll be fine.

## 3) HINDRANCES AND EDGES

Hindrances and Edges work just the same as in any other *Savage Suzerain* game. In *Noir Knights*, there are a few new Hindrances and Edges to reflect the nature of the setting. These are all covered in detail below.

## 4) GEAR

Gear is also handled as normal: characters begin with \$500 (modified by any applicable Hindrances or Edges) to spend on whatever gear they want. Of course, *Noir Knights* offers some new equipment for your hero to play with (see page 31), and the GM may allow characters that start at a rank higher than Novice (which means everyone planning on playing the campaign in this book!) to start with a bit of extra cash to reflect their previous adventures. A good rule of thumb would be to tack on an extra \$500 for every rank above Novice.

## 5) BACKGROUND

This is where you fill in all those little details that make your character something other than a bunch of statistics. Decide on his role in life – is he a hobo drifter? A career lawman, perhaps? Or is he something entirely different? It's up to you. You might be surprised at how fleshing out a few details, like style of dress and personal goals, can help drive a great story.

## That 1930s Feel

If you want to have cash be a little more in line with actual prices, simply divide cash amounts by 5. Just be warned: this will throw things out of sync with other Suzerain settings. If you go realm hopping, remember to adjust back to the 'correct' amount. Telesmae have a way of dealing with those sorts of things - they're very useful like that.

## New Hindrances

### Charge (Minor or Major)

Your character has someone in his life for whom he's responsible (or feels responsible for, at least). It may be his nosy kid brother or the frail great aunt who raised him, but whoever it is, the character goes out of his way to protect that person. And invariably, that person tends to land in trouble more than the character might like.

As a minor Hindrance, the character's Charge may factor into the story every once in a while - maybe every couple of adventures. As a major Hindrance, the character's Charge is almost constantly a factor - either requiring care or getting into trouble every adventure. Mostly this serves as a hook and plot device for the GM, unless the Charge is killed as a result of the character failing to protect him or her. If that happens, the Charge Hindrance is replaced by an appropriate Hindrance (or Hindrances) to make up for the now-lost Charge. Some examples would include Death Wish and/or Vow (if the character wanted to seek some sort of vengeance), or Habit (if the character decided to turn to the bottle in order to drown the memory). In all cases, the GM has final say as to the appropriateness of the replacement Hindrance.

## New Edges

### Echolocation

**Type:** Weird

**Requirements:** Novice, Notice d8+

There's always noise around, even when it's dark. And making noise is generally easier than making



light. Your character may have once been blind, or lived with monks in the caves of Outer Mongolia to hone this nearly superhuman capacity: a few subtle clicks of the tongue can tell him what's around him from the echo responses. He halves all penalties for bad lighting (round down). It's not cumulative with Low Light Vision, but does work in pitch darkness. However, excessive ambient noise can disable the echolocation, negating the benefit.

### Fair Catch

**Type:** Combat

**Requirements:** Heroic, Agility d8+

Step right up, ladies and gentlemen! This is the Edge for the toughest G-men and carnival show performers alike. Once per Round your character can make an Agility check versus the result of a ranged attack against him. If he succeeds, he may pay 1 Pulse to harmlessly catch the projectile in his hand (assuming he has a free hand). On a Raise, there is no Pulse cost to this remarkable act.

The type of projectile that can be caught depends on your character's Vigor. Thrown and archaic projectiles (arrows, knives etc) require Vigor d4+. Musket balls to modern day personal firearms