



Influences v 1.2

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Influences are a potentially potent tool that players have at their disposal. They can be used as a force to build power, destroy enemies, elevate friends and drive plot. The more thought and Experience a player puts into their Influences the more that player will potentially gain as a result.

The influences available for purchase are:

Bureaucracy, Church, Finance, Health, High Society, Industry, Legal, Media, Occult, Police, Political, Street Transportation, Underworld and University. (Descriptions are at the end of this write up.)

Buying Influence/Game Mechanics

• Character Creation:

o A player may not buy above a 1 upon character creation.

The first exception to this are characters that purchase the Background Influential upon character creation. See **Backgrounds** below.

The second is characters that start with a Clan Advantage in Influences. In those cases the character may start with a 2 in the category corresponding with their Clan. See *list below*.

o Clans starting with influence:

Brujah - Start with a free trait in Political, University or Street Influence.

Tremere - Start with a free trait of Occult Influence.

Ventrue - Start with a free trait of Finance, High Society or Political Influence.

Lasombra - Start with a free trait of Church, Political or Underworld Influence.

Setites - Start with a free trait of Political, Street or Underworld Influence.

Giovanni - Start with a free trait of Health or Finance Influence and may acquire a second if they choose to give up a trait in Retainer:Wraith. (If the Player chooses to do this they may come in with 1 level 3.)

Ravnos - Start with a free trait in Street or Transportation Influence.

- A player may buy the first level of any Influence at any time.
- No player can take an Influence above a level 5 (with the exception of Ventrue who have purchased the 'Paragon' Merit. (see below))
- The total number of Influences a player can hold may not exceed their combined **Physical, Mental and Social Traits**.
- In addition every level of the Backgrounds '**Influential**' and '**Retainer**' may hold 1 level of Influence for your character, not to exceed 5 and 10 respectively
 - o Retainers must be the primary support of that Influence
 - o Retainers must be able to logically hold the Influence (Animal Retainers and the like do not count.)
- Influence levels above 1 may only be obtained through in game Actions. (see 'Grow' and 'Steal')
- All levels of influence above a 1 must be supported by at least 1 corresponding **Ability** or **Background**.
 - o i.e. a Finance x5 Influence could be supported by the Finance x4 Ability.
 - o Feel free to get creative with what is supporting your influence. As long as you can successfully argue the connection you can make it happen.

- The Influence and Ability/Background must also be represented by an in game holding/business/contact/etc. This is what your influence actually is in game. Be prepared to speak to the steps you take in order to build and maintain your Influences.

For example, Player X has a Street x5 Influence supported by her Brawl Ability. She used her Brawl to beat a local gang of homeless kids into submission. She continues to use her fighting ability to keep them under control. As a result they respect and fear her, do her bidding and help her when she asks. Conversely, Player Y also has Street x5 but is not a fighter. He maintains control of his gang of Crips with his Intimidation Ability. They are too scared to risk crossing him. And finally, Player Z also possesses Street x5. This player has successfully wowed a local gang of skinheads with their Academics: History Ability. The gang sees Player Z as a source of information and do favors in return for tales of their 'homeland' and sound historically based advice.

- You may also support your Influences with multiple Abilities/Backgrounds.
 - This is represented by 1 Primary Ability/Background and up to 4 Secondary Abilities.
 - The more Abilities/Backgrounds you have supporting them the stronger your infrastructure is.

Player X from above only needs a Brawl x4 in order to successfully hold her Street x5. She has Brawl x5 however so she is automatically supporting her Influence with more than the minimum she needs. In addition, she also possesses Dodge x5, Intimidation x3 and Leadership x2. All of those Abilities could arguably be used to maintain her control of the gang.

- Abilities may support multiple Influences. An Ability may not, however be the primary support for more than one Influence.

In addition to Street, Player X also possesses the Underworld x4 Influence. She uses her Intimidation x3 to maintain her hold on the upper echelon of a biker gang. Intimidation was also used to help maintain Street but was not the primary supporter so it is free to be used this way.

- Backgrounds may be used as a primary support to any Influence. Backgrounds may only be used as a primary support, they cannot be a secondary support. No single Background can support more than one Influence.
 - If your Influence is supported by anything other than your own Abilities it must be represented by a Background.

The Backgrounds available to support Influences are:

Allies, Contacts, Cult, Influential, Mentor, Resources and Retainers (Descriptions are at the end of this write up.)

In addition to Street and Underworld, Player X also wishes to possess the Legal Influence beyond a level 1. She has no legal expertise herself so she decides to enthrall a local up and coming hotshot lawyer who works for the D.A., eventually ghouling him. She now has a Retainer on her sheet who is a lawyer and who can pull the strings necessary to wield legal control in the city. She can now raise her Legal Influence above a 1.

- If you are having difficulty coming up with ideas for ways to support/represent your Influences please speak with your STs. They will be happy to help you come up with ideas.
- **Paragon:**
 - Paragon may only be bought by a Ventrue character and may only be bought once.

Influence Actions

- In addition to performing favors and disseminating information for a character, Influences can take a wide variety of actions that can be used to assist or hinder either your own or other player activities.
- Once an Influence has been set to do a certain action it will continue to do that action until told otherwise or the task is complete.
- If you are taking actions with your Influence(s) be prepared to explain how that is actually happening in game and what it looks like. Feel free to get creative in your explanations but it still needs to make sense. It will be easier to explain how a Street Influence is assisting the actions of an Underworld Influence than it will be to explain how that same Street is assisting a High Society Influence. Use common sense when creating story.
- You may set a **Default Action** for every Influence. Default Actions are what an Influence does whether you tell it to or not.

The Actions available to Influences are:

Grow, Assist, Spy, Obscure, Block, Attack, Steal, and Defend

• **Grow**

- o This is the action that will allow a player to take their Influence above a 1. The time it takes for an Influence to grow to the next level increases the higher it gets.
- o If you divert the Influence from Growing for any reason it will take longer for it to increase in level.

Time it takes for an Influence to Grow to the next level:

1 – Influence will become available upon purchase

2 – 2 games (4 weeks)

3 – 4 games (8 weeks)

4 – 8 games (16 weeks)

5 – 16 games (32 weeks)

Player X wants to increase her Underworld x4 to a level 5. She decides that her gang of bikers is going to start supplying drugs in order to get bigger. She gives her orders, sets her Underworld to 'Grow' and waits.

• **Assist**

- o This action allows a player to use an Influence to assist another Influence in its action. The strength of the assistance corresponds with the level of the assisting Influence. In general, every level of Influence assisting an endeavor will either increase the strength of – or – reduce the time of that endeavor.
- o Influences can join together towards a common goal in order to increase in strength. When Influences combine the assisting Influence must match or exceed the level of the Influence it is assisting in order to have an effect.

A level 1 joined with a level 1 makes a level 2. A level 2 must join up with another level 2 in order to have the strength of a 3. Two level 3's equals a level 4, two 4's together have the strength of a 5 and so on and so forth.

- o If an Influence is assisting another Influence in a time based endeavor (like Grow) it assists at a rate of 10% per level, rounded down.

Player X decides that she doesn't want to wait the time it takes to increase Her Underworld x4 Influence to a 5. Normally this would take 16 games. She decides to assist her Underworld with the full strength of her Street x5 Influence. She informs her gang of homeless kids that they are going to be selling drugs for her biker gang. In this way she is helping her Underworld to grow faster by bringing in the force of her Street. Since her Street is at a 5 it reduces the time it takes for her Underworld to reach a level 5 from 16 games to 8 games (50%).

• Spy

- o Spying on an Influence will answer the questions: Who, What, Where, When and Why? In short, the Spy action is how you find out what other players or NPC's are up to with their Influences.
- o A player that already possesses some of that information will have an easier time of finding out the rest of it.

Passive Spy Action

- o A Passive Spy Action can be used broadly to find out what is happening in an area with a particular Influence (a passive inquiry, if you will.) An Influence may only broadly Spy on other Influences of its own type.
- o A Passive Spy Action operates at half the Influence's strength (rounded down.)
Industry can Passively Spy on Industry but not Bureaucracy and vice versa. An Industry of 5 that is Passively Spying on the Industry in the city will operate at a level 2.

Targeted Spy Action

- o A Targeted Spy Action can be directed at a specific activity in order to find out more specific information.
- o A targeted Spy Action may target an Influence of a different type, as long as it makes sense and can be argued successfully. (Use common sense.)
- o Be aware that targeting an individual's Influences for surveillance may be seen as an aggressive action if the object of the Spy discovers that it is happening.
- o The amount of time it takes to discover what an Influence is up to will be determined by the strength of the Influence(s) initiating the Spy vs the strength of the Influence being spied on, how much information the initiator of the Spy already has, what information exactly is being looked for, how much protection the object of the Spy already has set up (see Obscure and Defend) and by ST discretion.
- o A successful Targeted Spy action is required in order to initiate any aggressive/counter-attack action like Attack, Block or Steal.

• Obscure

- o This action allows the player to conceal the actions of an Influence and/or misdirect anyone looking into what an Influence is up to. It is a valid defense against Spy (assuming it is strong enough.)
- o The strength of the Obscure is determined by how many points are dedicated to performing this action.
- o Influences can be broken up in order to conceal their own activities
For example, a level 5 Influence could take an action at a level 3 and still have 2 points left to perform Obscure. Should anyone want to Spy on the actions of that Influence they would have to do it with a level 3 or higher in order to be successful.
- o Influences can Obscure the actions of other Influences.
Player X is worried that her bid to gain power in the Underworld is going to attract unwanted attention from other players. She decides to Obscure her Underworld actions with her Legal (which she recently used Grow to take to a 3.) She informs her lawyer ghoul to watch for any warrants or legal proceedings having to do with her street kids or bikers. If he comes across anything having to do with either group he is to bog them down with legal precautions and eventually make the records and paperwork disappear. Anyone who is spying on her activities will have to do so with a 4 or higher in order to figure out what she is doing with her Underworld.

- **Block**

- o This action allows a player to put a hold on or stop entirely the activities of an Influence.

- **City Wide Block**

- o A City Wide Block is a general sweeping metaphorical speedbump/roadblock to an activity that is typically performed by an Influence at normal times.
- o City wide Blocks operate at half the Influence's strength (rounded down.)

Player X's Underworld has been raised to a level 5 and she no longer needs her Street to help it Grow. She has gotten used to the income and prestige garnered from the drug sales though and has decided that she does not want to make it easy for anyone else to share in those profits or risk her trade in any way. She uses her Street x5 to enact a city wide Block on all drug dealers in the city besides her own. She orders her street kids to go out and give trouble to any drug dealers they can locate. They steal, vandalize, fight and terrorize any dealers they find in their neighborhood.

Because this is a city wide Block her level 5 is halved (rounded down) to a 2. Anyone who wants to deal drugs within the city now needs an Underworld x3 or higher for the Block to not slow down or stop their activities.

- **Specific Block**

- o A Specific Block targets a known action of a specific Influence. It can only be enacted after a successful targeted Spy action. It happens at full strength.

Player Y is sick of Player X's crap. He is currently allies with a player who is upset over the difficulty his drug dealers have been having in the city. He decides to do his friend a favor and look into what is going on. He orders his gang of Crips (Street x5) to investigate (passive Spy). They report that this gang of homeless street kids are terrorizing low end drug dealers and making it difficult for them to do their business.

Player Y then enacts a targeted Spy on the street kids and orders his gang to follow them. They eventually lead him to Player X. He now knows who is behind the city wide Block. He decides to retaliate with a specific block. He orders his Crips to stop the street kids from terrorizing the drug dealers. He has a level 5 at his disposal but only sends out 3 of his levels (since the city wide Block is only at a level 2 strength and he doesn't want to draw more attention than needed.) His Crips are successful and after the 2 gangs have a few scuffles and confrontations Player X's street kids retreat and report defeat, the city wide Block from Player X is lifted.

- **Attack**

- o This action is aggressive and should only be taken with the understanding that you are attempting to remove another player's access to something on their character sheet. You should be ready for whatever type of retaliation that player brings to bear against you (Influence based or otherwise.)
- o An Attack is an attempt at destroying another player's access to Influence(s) (think scorch and burn) and thus weakening their hold over the city.
- o An Attack can only be attempted after a successful targeted Spy.
- o A successful Attack will reduce the level of the Influence being attacked by 1 level. Additional Attacks (simultaneous or consecutive) can be performed that will continue to lower that Influence level. An Influence cannot be lowered below a 1.
- o The amount of time it takes to Attack an Influence will depend on the strength of the attacker, the strength of the attacked and ST discretion.
- o If a player loses Influence levels due to an attack they do not have to repurchase those levels. All that is required to have access to them again are uninterrupted Grow or Steal actions. (They must be rebuilt IC.)

• Steal

- o Steal is similar to Attack in that it is an aggressive attempt to remove another player's access to something on their character sheet. In this case however you are attempting to transfer specific Influence(s) from their sheet to yours. Doing this takes time and energy. Be prepared to speak in detail as to how you are doing this and plan carefully. Stealing is risky and if not done carefully can open yourself up to an Attack and make you vulnerable. (The potential for leaving a easily traced trail is large.)
- o A player who enacts a successful Steal must:
 - Have the appropriate amount of XP banked to cover the new Influences.
 - They must also have the space available on their sheet (not capped.)
 - If they fail to account for either of these things the Influence will revert back to the original owner with no penalties.
- o It is acceptable to attempt to Steal a player's Influences with a different Influence type but you must have already purchased the first level of the Influence you are wishing to Steal and be ready to receive the new levels.
- o A Steal action can only be attempted after a successful targeted Spy.
- o A successful Steal action will reduce the level of the Influence being attacked by 1 level. It will also result in the attacker's level being increased by 1. Additional Steal actions can be performed that will continue to lower the Influence level of the attacked player and subsequently raise the levels of the aggressor. An Influence cannot be lowered below a 1.
- o The amount of time it takes to Steal an Influence will depend on the strength of the aggressor, the strength of the player being targeted and ST discretion.
- o If a player loses Influence levels due to a Steal action they do not have to repurchase those levels. All that is required to have access to them again are uninterrupted Grow or Steal actions. (They must be rebuilt IC.)

• Defend

- o This action is an acceptable counter to the Attack and Steal actions. It places precautions on the targeted Influence in order to keep it from being Attacked or Stolen. This is the metaphoric equivalent of battenning down the hatches.
- o Anyone who tries to Attack or Steal a Defended Influence will have to do so at at least 1 level higher than the level of Defend currently being enacted.
- o An Influence can either be broken up to defend itself or can bring its full force to defend a different Influence. Just remember that the more Influences you bring to bear in an endeavor, the more attention you have the potential of drawing from anyone who is watching.

Above all else it is important to remember that in spite of the necessary mechanics behind making Influences work in game, they are actually powerful tools that drive roleplay above all else. They shape the flavor and define the motivations behind your character. They allow you to impact your fellow characters in potentially profound ways. The more thought, Experience, creativity and diversity you put into the social structure that is your Influences the more effective as a roleplay device they will be.

Working with Other Players.

Players have the option of using their Influences in Combination with or to Support the Actions of other players. Doing this can lead to powerful team-ups but also can leave players vulnerable if they are not careful. It is important to choose your business partners wisely.

• Combine

- o Players who have levels of the same Influence have the option of combining them towards a common goal in order to get a greater single effect from their Actions.
- o Combining 2 identical Influences of the same level creates a combined total of 1 level higher.
 - 2 level 1's = 1 level 2
 - 2 level 2's = 1 level 3
 - 2 level 3's = 1 level 4
 - 2 level 4's = 1 level 5
 - 2 level 5's = 1 level 6...
- o Combining allows both players insight into how the other's Influences function. Because of this it should only be done when you trust the other player as it opens you up to easier Spy actions by that player. Conversely, players who you have combined with will find it easier to Spy on you as well. When Spying on an Influence that you have Combined with in the past your Influence effectively functions at one level higher than it truly is. This advantage lasts for 1 year.

• Support

- o Players who wish to help other players' Influence Actions can do so with Support.
- o This should be used when the Influence you are Supporting is of a lower level than your own or is of a different type.
- o Any Influence may Support another Influence as long as it makes sense. This is at ST discretion. Be prepared to explain what is actually happening in character. Feel free to get creative with your explanation but also be prepared to be told that what you are proposing is not possible.
- o Every level of Influence that you use to Support the Action of another Influence gives a 10% boost to that Action.

For example, if you are Supporting the Grow Action of another player's Influence with a Level 5 Influence, the Grow time is halved. So the 16 games required to Grow from a 4 to a 5 will go down to 8.

- o Doing this allows the Supporting Player insight into how the other's Influences function. Because of this it behooves the Player who is receiving Support to seriously consider whether or not they trust the Supporter, as it opens them up to easier Spy actions by that player. When Spying on an Influence that you have Supported in the past your Influence effectively functions at one level higher than it truly is. This advantage lasts for 1 year.

Influence Descriptions:

- **Bureaucracy** - You can manage various government agencies and bureaus. You can spin red tape, bypass rules and regulations or twist bureaucratic regulations to your advantage. Bureaucracy is useful in shutting down businesses, faking or acquiring permits and ID papers and manipulating public utilities and facilities. Government clerks at the city and county level, utility workers, road crews, surveyors and other civil servants are potential contacts or allies.
- **Church** - Church policies still exert considerable influence over the direction of politics and communities. Knowing the appropriate people allows insight into many mainstream religions (fringe alternative religions are considered Occult.) When you exercise Church Influence, you can change religious policy, affect the assignment of clergy, access a variety of lores and resources. Contacts and Allies would include ministers, priests, bishops, Church sponsored witch hunters, holy orders and various attendees and assistants.

- **Finance** - Manipulating markets, stock reports and investments are among the possibilities of this Influence. Though actual available money is a function of Resources, you can use Finance to start or smother businesses, crush or support financial institutions and alter credit records. CEO's, bankers, stockbrokers, bank tellers, financiers and loan agents are the types of people in this field.
- **Health** - This influence is useful to develop connections in the medical community. You can alter medical records, acquire rare body parts, blood and medical data. Any sort of biological research or development falls under the purview of this Influence. Coroners, doctors, lab workers, therapists, pharmacists and specialists are some examples of the folks found in this field.
- **High Society** - This Influence allows you to travel in wealthy elegant circles. Access to famous actors, celebrities and the idle rich grants certain sway over fashion trends and exclusive social events. This Influence combines well with Fame. Among these circles one finds dilettantes, artists, old money families, models, rock stars, sports figures and jetsetters.
- **Industry** - Control over the Industry Influence sways the formation of unions, the movements of work projects, locations for factories and manufacturing concerns. Union workers, foremen, engineers, construction workers, manual laborers and all manner of blue collar workers exist among these ranks.
- **Legal** - The ability to dodge tricky legal situations by holding sway over judges and lawyers. You pull the strings in the courts to make sure that the questionable practices of Cainites go unnoticed and unpunished. This Influence is also helpful when harassing an enemy's assets. Legal contacts include lawyers, judges, DAs, clerks and public defenders.
- **Media** - Directing media attention away from vampire activities is a key component of the Masquerade. Media outlets can crush or alter news stories, control the operations of news stations and reporters and sway public opinion with DJs, editors, reporters, cameramen, photographers and broadcasters.
- **Occult** - This influence offers access to the hidden world of supernatural secrets, conspiracies and unusual factions. You can dig up information to improve your knowledge, get inside the Occult community and find rare components for magical rituals. Cult leaders, alternative religious groups, charlatans, occultists, New Agers and the like can be found here.
- **Police** - This Influence can be very handy in assisting with the Masquerade, to protect one's holdings or to raid the assets of another. Police of all ranks, detectives, clerical staff, dispatchers, prison guards, special divisions and local highway patrol make up these ranks
- **Political** - Altering party platforms, controlling local elections, changing appointed offices and calling in favors all falls under the purview of Politics. Blackmail, bribery, spin doctoring or any sundry tricks are stock in trade on both sides of this fence. Contacts and allies would include pollsters, lobbyists, activists, party members and politicians of all ranks.
- **Street** - Those who reside in the dark alleys and slums have created their own laws and culture. They deal with outsiders in their own way. You use your connections to the underside of the city to find the homeless, gang members of all sorts, petty criminals, prostitutes, residents of slums and fringe elements of so called 'devious' culture.
- **Transportation** - Without this Influence a vampire's world shrinks into islands of 'civilization' with dangerous wastelands in between. Getting access to special supplies, services, shipping and travel arrangements can also take a measure of Transportation. All these things can be controlled with a bit of sway over truckers, harbors, railroads, airports, taxis, border guards, pilots and the untold hundred who work in this Industry.
- **Underworld** - Guns, money, drugs and vice can be led by anyone talented or vicious enough to take them. Underworld lets you call on favors for all manner of illegal but highly profitable dealings. Its ranks are filled by the Mafia, La Cosa Nostra, drug dealers, bookies, Yakuza, hitmen and criminal gangs.

- **University** - Institutions of learning and research are the purview of this Influence. Access to the halls of records can help you with any number of resources. from ancient languages to research assistance to many impressionable young minds. School boards, kindergarteners through graduate students, professors, teachers, deans, Greek orders and a variety of collegiate support staff are all valid contacts.

Background Descriptions:

- **Allies** - Each Allies trait possessed represents one person that you can call on for aid.
- **Contacts** - You can discern rumors and information. Lets you find out what is going on in a city in a particular area.
- **Cult** - A group of mortals reveres you as a spiritual leader and are willing to work for you and perform menial tasks. They probably do not know what you truly are but they believe you to be somehow magical and/or gifted with insight.
- **Fame** - You can exercise your connections over a longer distance. Contacts, Influence and Resources can exert themselves over a greater range without impediment. Fame may not support an influence. It is necessary however in order to do business or make Actions between neighboring cities. (i.e. Between Cleveland and Sandusky.)
- **Influential** - You are an Empire Builder. You understand Influences in a way that most do not. Leadership and manipulation come easy to you. Every level of Influential a character has allows them to purchase levels higher than x1 at character creation. (You may buy up to as many levels in any Influence as levels of the Influential Background you have.)
In addition, every level of Influential increases a Player's maximum Influence levels by 1 point.
- **Institutional Control** - You have control of a landmark or historical building. Institutional Control may not support an Influence. Buildings of great importance like skyscrapers, monuments and museums may also require that you have additional Influences, Abilities and/or Backgrounds. This is at ST discretion.
- **Mentor** - An older more experienced Vampire looks over you and comes to your aid occasionally.
- **Resources** - You have access to capital and spending money. These are always readily available.
- **Retainers** - You have secured the loyalty and fellowship of a mortal (or several mortals) who obeys your every whim. Every level of Retainer increases a Player's maximum Influence levels by 1 point. You may not use more than 10 total points in this way.