

# Opposed Investigation

## Modifying Mass Battle Rules for an Investigation

Many adventures require finding clues and evidence to unearth the truth about a situation by following a trail of clues. These rules pit our hardboiled investigators against a wily adversary to solve a crime.

**When to Use These Rule Modifications:** Use the Opposed Investigation rules when you want players to solve a mystery that has a major Wild Card working to cover her tracks. These rules go into more narrative detail than Quick Encounters or Dramatic Tasks while giving the player characters a major role in the outcome. While clues are meant to be found in dramatic investigations, individual success and failure can have a significant impact on the overall outcome.

**The Basics:** Each side has a number of “Tokens” equal to their relative skill and savvy. The GM chooses the opposed skill. For example, in a criminal investigation the lead investigators rolls their Research skill each turn against their opponent’s Thievery skill. The winner reduces his rival’s tokens until the culprit is uncovered or escapes.

*Research Reference: Deadlands Noir pages 73-80*

*Running an Investigation in SWADE world builder's guide*

*Gumshoe rules set:*

*<http://site.pelgranepress.com/nas/content/live/pelgranepress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GUMSHOE-SRD-OGL-v2.pdf>*

## SETUP THE CASE

**Start at the end:** Figure out the criminal and the crime.

**Motive, Means, and Opportunity:** Determine the who, what, why, where, when, and how of the crime.

**Map the Clues:** Using the details above figure out what our heroes will be able to determine and lay out the trail of breadcrumbs. Determine the essential clues for solving the case and which clues support or reinforce the main case. These can be revealed each round as players win tokens, or remain hidden if they fail. Player tokens represent their available time, skill, contacts, and resources relative to the case. For example a group of independent investigators might have less access to specialized equipment and human resources as compared to local or federal law enforcement.

# INVESTIGATION

At the start of each round, the player characters discuss their strategy for the case. Next comes opposed rolls by the lead investigator and criminal mastermind. Add the modifiers below as appropriate to each roll.

## Investigation Modifiers

- Overmatched +1 for each token advantage above the lesser competitor
- Technical Advantage +1 to +4 for any advanced, specialized, or arcane investigative equipment or items that could aide one side or the other.
- Organizational Advantage +1 to +4 depending on the nature of the opposing force. Working against the federal government or organized crime is harder than investigating independent operators.

## Time

Investigation is often slow work. The Game Master should set-up a timeframe that works with the story. A race against the clock (think of the television program *24*) may use hours while a standard police procedural can happen over days or weeks.

## Results

The winner of the opposed roll consults the Investigation Results. Tokens won by the investigators represent progress in the case and the discovery of important clues and information. Successes by the mastermind can cause any number of complications and roadblocks that the GM can describe narratively.

## Investigation Table

- Tie - Both sides lose one token. Investigators get an essential clue only.
- Success - The winner loses one token and the opponent loses two.
- Raise - The low roll loses two tokens.

## Resolve

It takes hard work and dogged determination to track down a criminal or to avoid capture. When an investigator or mastermind loses a token they make a Spirit roll to determine their resolve in pushing their agenda forward. If a leader loses resolve things begin to unravel and they are -2 on their rolls for the next round.

## J'Accuse

Once all the essential clues have been obtained the players should have the information they need to set-up the moment of accusation. This moment most likely triggers an active role playing scene such as a chase, social, or tactical combat to “catch the bad guy”.

# CHARACTERS IN INVESTIGATIONS

Player characters play an important role in the investigation process. Before the lead investigator makes her Research roll, each player who wants to aid the investigation describes what she's doing and makes a Support roll with whatever skill she feels is most appropriate (Of course, enemy lieutenants can add to the mastermind's Thievery roll as well!). Success grants the investigator +1 to his Research roll but the hero takes Fatigue for her vigorous efforts. With a raise, she emerges without Fatigue and rolls on the Gumshoe table. She may choose to use the result rolled or give her investigator the usual +2 bonus instead

## **Gumshoe Table**

2d6

2 Recover 1 Token

3-4 Opposing hero is -2 to Spirit roll for Resolve check

5-9 Add +2 to leaders roll

10-11 Apply -2 to opposing leader's roll

12 Big Break. Opposition immediately loses one token (this doesn't subtract from his Research or Thievery roll but does cause a Resolve check even if he wins)

## **Resource Usage**

If it is important to track resources (ammo, power points, money, etc.) then roll 2d6 to determine how much of the resource was expended. The GM can adjust this roll to suit the timeframe in question and the nature of the character's actions.

Sammy: +1

Nyx: +2

Russians:

Red Court:

Gary: +1 (to the docks)