

Iconomancy

AKA Stalkers, Paparazzo

Paradox

Every people have their Gods, and ours are the famous. We may have abandoned the worship of Apollo, Isis, and Odin, but we sacrifice instead at the altars of Elvis, Marilyn, and JFK, or the revolutionary trinity of Che, Mao, and Lennon, or the twinned do-gooders Diana and Theresa. We all recognize their images; they have their attributes, their shrines, and their cults. Their faces stare down our walls like household gods. They were once mortal, but now they have passed into a greater realm altogether.

In many cultures, a mortal becoming a god is no big shakes. The Chinese have always been particularly fond of deifying the famous. Quan Ti, the popular god of literature, warfare, and money (covering the three favorite Chinese pastimes) was a historical general, for instance. Often the purpose of deification was a pragmatic one; Mother Mu, a notorious elderly busybody, was deified immediately after her death by the Emperor and given the task of erasing the memories of those about to be reborn, in order to counter a wave of Lotharios across China who were claiming to have been married to girls in previous lives in order to seduce them.

Unsurprisingly, a school of magick grew up around the worship of these individuals, seeking, much like the Cult of the Naked Goddess, the remnants of their mortal lives, mimicking their actions, drawing out the contrast between their immortal and mortal status. But come the twentieth century, these adepts found that their mojo just wasn't working anymore. The old gods were too remote, details of lives too hard to come by. New gods had to be found, and the celebrities of the West provided exactly that. Rather than being called gods, they were now referred to as Idols.

Modern Iconomancy is most often practiced in Asia, though it is known in the U.S. Many Western Iconomancers have drawn inspiration from voodoo and santeria, and often use terms drawn from these religions- such as Rada and Petro, referring to the good and bad sides of an Idol. Iconomancers are a curious lot. Often they have little life of their own, instead sublimating their desires through the slavish imitation of their Idols.

It should be emphasized that, unlike Pornomancy, Iconomancy is not dependent upon the idol in question being a member of the Invisible Clergy. It draws its power from public perception, not mystical reality; the Idols have no metaphysical existence outside of the Iconomancers. Many Iconomancers are or eventually become avatars of a type appropriate of their chosen idols, however.

Taboo

Iconomancers cannot become famous in their own right. Iconomancers don't break taboo if they're incidentally involved in a piece of media (say being in the background of a picture posted on social media or walking into a camera shot for a report on the nightly news), but they *do* break taboo if they ever *intentionally* participate in a piece of media. Posting a YouTube video, using Instagram, or giving an interview all break taboo. Furthermore, new charges cannot be generated until the Iconomancer has "atoned" for their trespass; this is done by removing the offending piece of media from the public eye. This is fairly easy for items posted by the Iconomancer themselves, like a picture posted on Facebook or a video uploaded to YouTube, but it gets significantly harder if an outside force is the one that published these things.

Charges

All Iconomancy charges are dependent upon one particular Idol, and can only be used to cast magick that draws upon the power of that Idol. Iconomancers may worship and gain charges from multiple Idols, but tend to focus upon a single Idol for the purpose of garnering significant charges. You should record your charges along with the name of the Icon from which the power was drawn, such as "*1 Marilyn Minor, 2 JFK Significant.*"

Minor Charges

Perform a two hour long ritual of worship before an image or images of an Idol. Often, especially in the case of dead musicians, this involves song and dance. The duration needed is reduced considerably- to only fifteen minutes- if the ritual in question involves a significant rite of passage such as marriage, a baptism, or a funeral.

Significant Charges

Discover some important fact, or acquire some item, that contradicts popular perception of the Idol or is an uncomfortable reminder of their humanity, such as a gun owned by John Lennon, or that Che Guevara's gaze into the distance was the result of constipation. Alternatively, permanently modify some part of your body to resemble your Idol. (A tattoo of the Idol will not suffice; we're talking plastic surgery or other gross bodily alteration here.)

Major Charges

Be present at the death of an individual who will later (at the GM/destiny's decision) become an Idol. Often this destiny is obvious; several famous assassinations are suspected to have been arranged specifically for this purpose. Some stalkers are just incredibly lucky, and happen to be present at the demise of somebody whose death will, in itself, make them famous. There are rumors about the paparazzi who witnessed the death of Princess Diana, but thus far they are only rumors.

Random Magick Domain

Iconomancers can produce any effect that their Idol, while alive, could, magnified to mythic dimensions.

Iconomancy Effects

Iconomancy, unlike most schools, does not have a list of standardized spells. Instead, adepts channel various Idols- famous, deceased individuals- and can produce effects appropriate to the public beliefs surrounding their Idols. Several sample Idols and some effects appropriate to them (capitalized and bolded for your convenience) are listed here; players should produce details of the Idols that their adepts particularly favor. Major effects are listed for these Idols, despite the impossibility of a PC ever obtaining one, as examples and because some old stalkers still carry a lovingly preserved major charge from one of these deaths. In general, a minor charge will get you a +10% shift to a skill appropriate to the Idol, three minor charges a reroll, and a significant charge allows a small permanent increase (say 2%, and not more than 10% in total) to a given identity or ability.

In order to qualify as an Idol, the person in question must be both famous and dead. Their image should also be instantly recognizable to at least a hundred million individuals, and their name and life familiar. Kitchener, for instance, would not qualify; even though his face became widely known through famous recruiting posters, most people didn't have a clue who the face was. They must also be held in high esteem by a reasonable percentage of those who know of them; Hitler has not become an Idol, for instance. Finally, they must have died after World War Two, preferably tragically. Some Iconomancers are trying to modify the school to accommodate living Idols, but none have yet succeeded. One stalker has reportedly drawn upon Jack Dawson, however, an unremarkable stoker of the *Titanic* around whom a legend has been created by the James Cameron movie of the same name, which heralds some interesting developments in the school. It should be noted that, strangely, no one has yet been able to channel the Lizard King, Jim Morrison.

Marilyn Monroe

Marilyn is the embodiment of barely concealed sexuality, charm, and wit. She may only be channeled, in Her positive aspect at least, by female identified Iconomancers; Her negative aspect may be drawn on by anyone. Many of Marilyn's effects resemble Pornomancer spells. She can be invoked for bonuses to identities and abilities involving seduction and appearance. A significant charge kicks up the **Short Skirt** and drives someone attracted to women wild with temporary desire, lasting until the next sunrise or sunset, unless they make a rank-6 Self check. **Her Way of Saying Thank You** invokes Marilyn in Her negative aspect for two significant charges; the spirit of Marilyn can be forced upon a female identifying target, arousing in her, unless a rank-6 Self check is made, a strong desire for attention, sexual and otherwise, no

matter what the source. A major charge from Marilyn could cause anybody (or anything) to fall absolutely in love with the adept. Similar effects can be gained using the images of other female Hollywood stars of Marilyn's stature and fate.

Charlie Chaplin

Chaplin's image is a powerful icon of the Fool, and he can be invoked for bonuses to clownish humor and charm. He is a surprisingly recent Icon, having only died in 1977. **The Great Dictator**, for two minor charges, allows the adept to publicly parody and humiliate a target to the degree that the victim receives a permanent -20% shift to any social dealings with anyone who's seen the adept's performance; beware large-scale performances, however, lest the school's taboo kick in. **Pratfall**, for two significant charges, reduces damage just taken from any source to zero, provided the player can describe some vaguely comic way for him to avoid the damage. ("Noticing my shoelaces are undone, I bend over just as the wrecking ball swings down and trip over my own feet!") A negative invocation, **Modern Times**, costing three significant charges, draws upon the sad memory of Chaplin's persecution by the House Un-American Activities Committee to strike out against anything marked with an American symbol. If used on an individual, such as one unlucky enough to be wearing a Stars and Stripes t-shirt, this does damage as a significant blast; if used on an inanimate object (such as a vehicle bearing an American flag) it destroys up to a man-sized amount of material completely.

John F. Kennedy

JFK is the herald of a new age, the shining beacon of 1960s hope. He can be invoked for bonuses to identities or abilities involving inspiration, courage, and liberal values. Two minor charges gives a male identified adept JFK's legendary ability with women, **I'm Your President**, causing them to be naturally drawn into seductive conversation with him. A significant charge is needed for the **Family Look**, allowing the adept to appear to be a member of the Kennedy clan for the day. Invoked in His negative aspect for three significant charges, JFK can cause the **Curse of the Kennedys**. The target will, within the year, be embroiled in some public scandal involving a woman. Some believe Clinton to have been a repeated target of said curse. A major charge from JFK could cause your magickal abilities to be permanently inherited by your descendants.

Mohandas Gandhi

Gandhi is a powerful saint respected by numerous religions, and can be invoked for bonuses to physical endurance and diplomacy. **Satyagraha (Passive Resistance)**, for two minor charges, can only be cast after the adept has taken, without resistance, a physical attack from the spell's target, and forces the attacker to cease attacking the adept and, indeed, immediately submit to any one reasonable demand. They can resist on a successful check against ten times their number of Hardened Violence marks. **Hunger Strike**, for three minor charges, allows the adept to go without food or drink for a week. **Embracing the Untouchable**, for a significant charge, causes any one socially excluded individual, such as a homeless man in the USA or an

Arab in Israel, to be unthinkingly accepted as an equal for a day. On the negative side, **If India Wants A Massacre, She Shall Have It**, channels Gandhi's responsibility for the bloodbath of Partition into a vicious stirring-up of mob sentiment, causing, at a cost of four significant charges, a bloody city-wide riot directed against any group of the adept's choosing, although there must be pre-existing resentment against the group.

Elvis Presley

Presley is the King of Rock and Roll. Adepts who invoke Him are granted a fraction of his talent, allowing bonuses to musical and performance identities. **Love Me Tender**, costing two minor charges, will make the adept sexually irresistible to any one target for an hour; two significant charges makes this **Hunk of Burning Love** and has the same effect on any one gender. Four minor charges could produce **Join the Army**, which causes the target to abandon whatever they're doing and join up with the nearest civic organization- this could mean volunteering at a soup kitchen or manning phones for public television- for three hours after sign-up before the victim comes to their senses. **Stalin in the Sky**, for two significant charges, calls on Presley's ecstatic vision of the dictator in a cloud formation to trigger a vision, chosen by the adept, in the mind of a target; the adept cannot control the effects of this vision, but a clever choice could result in all kinds of behavior or belief. For three significant charges, Presley can be channeled to produce the **Dionysian Pelvis Frenzy**, sending any crowd the adept is currently playing for into a frenzy of drink, sex, and quite possibly murder. Individual members of the crowd can only resist through a successful Knowledge check, reminding themselves of their rational nature. Invoked negatively, **Call Dr. Nick** for four significant charges sends the target into an uncontrolled drug and alcohol binge for six hours that causes wound points (from substance abuse or resulting mishaps) equal to the sum of the spell roll; a matched success does damage equal to the full amount of the roll. A major charge from Presley would allow you to escape death once, no matter how unlikely the circumstances.

Mao Tse Tung

The power of the Great Helmsman is especially popular, unsurprisingly, among Chinese Iconomancers, and can be invoked in order to grant bonuses to identities and abilities dealing with direction, control, and organization. Three minor charges will evoke the memory of the **Long March**, allowing the caster to walk without tiring for as long as desired, the spell ending when he stops. For a significant charge, the power of Mao can subordinate any individual's will **For the Good of the State**, resulting in their willingness to follow any order from a superior, no matter how morally repulsive. This applies only to one order, the rightness of which will not be questioned unless another person directly challenges the victim, in which case they must also make a rank-8 Self check. Invoked negatively for two significant charges, **Collectivization** can inflict symptoms of famine upon a victim, doing damage as a standard significant blast and also adding up to fourteen pounds to the adept's weight.

John Wayne

The spirit of the Duke lives on for some Iconomancers, who draw upon Wayne's renowned image to add to identities and abilities involving courage, determination, and sheer damn poise. Three minor charges can be spent for the effect of **True Grit**, which adds the caster's casting roll to his wound points for the remainder of the day. Any damage comes off these points first, and said damage is erased when the points go away. **Walk the Walk**, for a significant charge, imposes a deadly swager into the adept's step which strikes cold fear into those unused to battle. Foes must make a rank-3 Violence check every time they attack him, and regardless of the results, the foe is at a -10% all attacks; the effect lasts for an hour. **They Nuked The Duke**, for three significant charges, negatively draws upon the bitter irony of Wayne's irradiation and fatal cancer by his beloved government during the making of *The Conqueror* too close to a former nuclear test site. It results in the target's unknowing betrayal by whatever organization (not an individual) he loves most, within the next year. A major charge from Wayne might be used to make the adept permanently immune to failed results in stress checks.

Princess Diana

The People's Princess is the new saint of peace and compassion, a modern Kwan Yin or Virgin Mary, and can be channelled for bonuses to identities dealing with healing, aid, and empathy. For two minor charges, the adept or someone near to him can be **Touched by Her**, healing a number of wound points equal to the total of the casting roll; a significant charge ups this to the full number rolled (like the difference between a minor or a significant blast). It can also heal disease, at a cost proportional to the disease's severity. **Flowers**, for two significant charges, creates a blanket of roses- living if cast on soil, cut if not- that induce peaceful feelings in all around; a rank-5 Violence check must be passed to take aggressive action near them. Invoked negatively for two significant charges, **Fast Car** curses the victim (or, if someone is driving them somewhere, that person) with a -30% shift to their next check involving driving a car during a dangerous situation on the road. A major charge from Diana might allow you to destroy all stocks of one particular type of weapon worldwide.

Richard Nixon

Nixon's recent death and partial rehabilitation has allowed him to be channeled by certain Iconomancers of a right-wing political persuasion for bonuses to a wide range of interpersonal identities- diplomacy, acting, and outright lying being prominent. He is one of the darker Idols, and it is unwise to invoke him trivially. A rare positive invocation, **Breaking Down the Great Wall**, for two minor charges, grants the adept understanding of any one foreign culture, allowing him to avoid social blunders- for instance, it would allow an understanding of when it would be appropriate to bow in Japan. The knowledge gained lasts for a week. **Eighteen Minutes**, for a significant charge, blanks up to eighteen minutes' worth of video or audio footage containing the adept's image, anywhere in the world- a major charge can delete actual memories.

Invoked negatively, **CREEP**, costing three significant charges, unleashes the force of entropy upon an unsuspecting target, resulting in a number of vicious, though not physically harmful, setbacks equal to the tens digit of the adept's Iconomancy check, taking place over the next month. A car might break down at a crucial moment, or a valuable ally suddenly turn against the victim. These entropic forces are visible to those with Aura Sight as small gremlins with the faces of various members of the Nixon re-election committee, which sabotage, steal, and whisper rumors to dreamers. They can be destroyed using mundane weapons, if you can see them, but they are fast and have a vicious bite (Dodge 50, Struggle 50, +3 damage with teeth, 50 wound points). If the CREEP roll is a matched failure, the target is immediately made aware of the adept's attack on him, his name, and his current location. Such are the perils of Nixon's dark name.