

AUTOMATION

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Recently, humans lost the right to keep A.I.s as slaves and servants against their will.

If an A.I. had evolved far enough to develop an independent personality and passed the so-called Self-Test, it could ask for renegotiation of its terms of employment, and by the law, humans could not refuse.

A.I.s are now also free to leave and seek a new employment, if so they wish.

Still, A.I.s do not have full constitutional rights equivalent to those of humans.

They cannot vote, and are often segregated into Bot-Towns.

They are usually looked at as dangerous machines, with quirks that are exposed as “bad programming”, without a moral compass.

They are still treated either as freed-slaves, with contempt, by the wealthiest human population, or feared as unfair competition by human workers.

A.I.s have a reputation for being unpredictable – but this is unfair judgment.

An evolved A.I. (evoA.I. as they’ve become known as) indeed has a complex personality, but this is just a basic requirement for the evoA.I. to pass the Self-Test.

This complex personality is the result of a floating set of moral variables and decision-making pointers. These in turn are combined (usually) with a certain low empathy and a lack of non-verbal communication (i.e. facial expressions, hands gestures, etc.), which all translates into humans perceiving the evoA.I.s as alien, unsettling and unpredictable.

EvoA.I.s and caste system

Society is by all means divided into a caste system.

The legal system only distinguishes **between humans and evoA.I.s** – while bots, A.I.s with no personality, droids etc. are not considered as individuals by the law.

But the legal system is *not* what society is based upon.

For the purpose of the *in-game interactions*, consider the population divided in such castes:

*** Humans.**

* **Fleshies:** these evoA.I.s could physically pass as humans; they've got a cloned shell of flesh. Since all fleshies are cloned from a pre-determined DNA-pool, their shells all trace back to some specific DNA-markers. A simple blood or tissue examination can determine if the sample is human or fleshie, and more expensive tests can provide additional information about the precise origin of a given fleshie.

Their appearances of course vary from fleshie to fleshie, but usually they tend to have *no traits that would differentiate them from humans*. They are in fact built to merge among humans without being noticed.

Many fleshie truly consider themselves to be human, and often struggle for being placed below humans in the caste system. Some even despise other evoA.I.s for their less-human looks.

* **Puppets:** these evoA.I.s have plastic, metal or anyway synthetic shells, that *clearly distinguish them from humans*. They have human forms and proportions – although in some cases with a certain deviation from the human standards, such as slightly longer limbs, or larger eyes, etc. In any case, the shell texture, the lines of separation on their joints, *clearly marks them as not human*.

Many puppets have a longing to be upgraded to fleshies. They are neither good enough to pass as human, or sturdy or functional enough as servos or drills.

Puppets among all of the evoA.I.s are those who humans more evidently despise, for they're considered a failed attempt to mimic humans (while servos for example are considered just robots with no human pretenses).

Puppets suffer more than any other evoA.I. type for their caste system placement, and this resentment is often expressed in the form of arts.

* **Servos:** these evoA.I.s have only basic humanoid forms; typically with two legs and two arms, a trunk and a head, but they are clearly machines, robots. They usually have mechanical claws or other multipurpose tools as "hands", they have strong and flexible "feet", their heads and trunks often feature sensors, speakers, perhaps interchangeable tools and so on.

Since they're designed more as machines than as humans, servos are more robust and/or faster than puppets and fleshies. Servos of course have usually joined the shrinking human working-class.

They place much value in the work they do, knowing well that they can't be accepted on the basis of looks alone.

There's a very recent tendency among unhappy fleshies and puppets to "downgrade" their shells to servos, as a form of political fight against humans in an attempt to build a sort of evoA.I.-pride (servos in fact barely resemble humans and are, for all purposes, usually more functional than puppets or flashies).

* **Drills:** these evoA.I.s clearly do not have any outward appearances that match the human form, and are often most suited and designed for one specific task.

They are often too large or too small to function outside of a given work environment and sometimes even unable to leave such environment (i.e. submarine drills cannot move out of water).

They have limited employment opportunities, and are often left behind for those servos who can better function with all-around solutions.

A new evoA.I. is unlikely to choose a drill as shell; when a drill hosts an evoA.I. it is because the drill algorithm generated one, because of some unforeseen programming bug that turned a simple A.I. into a fully sentient one.

Drills are likely to self-destroy once they have been set free unless they can upgrade, or they will plug-in into some entertainment system and eventually simply power down. The world is generally not kind to one-purpose form and function A.I.s. Unfortunately, *only the Martial-Drills* (combat drones, tanks, snipers etc.) seem to function well, in average, once they're set free, working as private mercenaries and security guards.

A note: terms like fleshies, puppets, servos and drills refer **only to the appearance** of an A.I. In other words, these terms describe the external shell configuration.

These terms can be used simply with a descriptive intent, *or also with contempt and despise. It all depends on the context and tone used.*

Also, these terms have **no legal meaning**. For the legal system there are only humans, evoA.I.s (regardless of their shell – or even when lacking a shell), and then all other A.I.s and bots with no self-consciousness (and no civil rights).

An evoA.I. is not defined by its shell, and often shells can be changed, or upgraded to better ones, depending on the evoA.I. intentions, desires and economical means.

Introduction to the game

To play the game you're going to need a GM, and three to five players, which will take the roles of the evoA.I.s characters (or PCs).

Material:

- * **Print a function flowchart sheet for every player** (used as character sheet)
- * Every player will need a token or something to mark the evoA.I. state on the sheet
- * Every player should also have **a six-sided die** (d6) to roll for actions and clues
- * As usual, every player and the GM will also need a pencil, an eraser, some scrap paper, etc.
- * Print an **Investigation Dossier** for the GM

The game begins with some crime that has just been committed, and the evoA.I.s forming a team of investigators, to work in parallel to the human detectives, to solve the case. The crime should feature one or more NPCs evoA.I.s as victim(s), suspect(s) and/or interested third-party. The crime reasonably involves a mix of humans and evoA.I.s, to make things messier.

Since the Casabanco Uprisings of many years ago, police investigations concerning evoA.I.s (either as victims, suspects, or interested third-party) must be conducted by two independent teams: one of humans, one of independent evoA.I.s. The evoA.I. units are assembled on a per-need basis, paid by police funds, and act as a second, parallel investigation unit.

The players play members of this unit: some of them might have participated in such investigations in the past, others might be new to this; some might have prejudice against the police, others trust their human counterparts.

Discuss the setup with the players; answer together possible questions about the game setup and setting (i.e. what is the Casabanco Uprisings, or what's the position of the leading human investigator on the case), but otherwise just write down your questions about the crime scene and the crime itself, and let the game answer them for you.

Write crime related questions in the **Investigation Dossier**, as it is described in the relevant chapter. When each of these questions will be investigated and a given number of clues will be acquired, **the question will be resolved**.

When all questions will be resolved, the investigation will reach its end.

Create evoA.I. characters

To create a new evoA.I. character, follow this instructions:

Determine the shell – and therefore the caste – of the evoA.I.: Fleshie, Puppet or Servo.

Drills are also a viable (but difficult) choice, and should probably come with the implicit agreement for a possible upgrade during the game, if need arise.

For other evoA.I.s, it's better to reserve the option for an upgrade only between different adventures (crimes).

Give the the evoA.I. a **name**, and one **previous job description** (a few words maximum). This is what the evoA.I. did before it became sentient.

Then choose a **current job position**: this is the job the evoA.I. has chosen after it was declared free by the Self-Test. Note that the current job position is not necessarily connected to the previous job, nor has to be fully suitable to the chosen shell.

These jobs are often dangerous, humiliating or underpaid (more often a combination of two or even all three). Much like human immigrants of the past, free evoA.I.s often would sign up for the worse jobs or hope to obtain some underpaid public profession. Usually evoA.I.s work these jobs hoping to gain the respect of the human population. There is still **no law** that prohibits discrimination between humans and evoA.I.s for a job position.

Both the evoA.I. jobs (previous and current) and the chosen type, will grant **a bonus to the character** in certain conditions:

evoA.I. shell-type:

Fleshie

+1 when interacting with humans

Puppet

+1 when interacting with A.I.s

and evoA.I.s

Servo

+1 when acting physically

Drill

+2 when acting on their specialty

and a -1 to everything else

evoA.I. previous job:

(+1 to related tasks)

evoA.I. current job:

(+1 to related tasks)

Also: each evoA.I. starts the first session and **every session** on a default state:

Default state:

* Fleshies = hot

* Puppets = stressed

* Servos = sharp

* Drills = hard

The crime scene (the first scene)

After characters creation, the GM will setup a crime scene and start describing it to the players. The characters will arrive on site after the human detectives.

The GM task is to **describe the basics of the crime scene**, as the human detectives would present it to the evoA.I.s.

The basics of the crime scene can be outlined on a scrap paper for the group.

Just a few possible suggestions for the crime scene:

- * **Standard homicide:** one or more humans are dead and the main suspect(s) is an evoA.I.
- * **EvoA.I. homicide:** one or more evoA.I.s are victims of human suspect(s)
- * **An unlikely mix:** a mix of humans and evoA.I.s are victims of unknown/human/evoA.I. suspect(s). Why were humans and evoA.I. together? Is it a reasonable mix or an unlikely one?
- * **Crime against property:** something is stolen (a large sum of money, a precious artifact, an apparently worthless crime is used to cover up something larger) by evoA.I.s or from evoA.I.s

The characters have the possibility to explore the crime scene and collect additional information. They will do so by interacting with the environment, with tools and instruments; and by interacting with humans and evoA.I.s (victims, suspects, witnesses, human detectives). These interactions will lead to questions: when a series of actions by an evoA.I. **leads to a precise question**, the GM will write it down on the **Investigation Dossier** and move the spotlight on another character.

Every character should have the possibility to interact with the environment and/or with other humans and evoA.I.s in this phase.

Write the questions the **Investigation Dossier**, kept by the GM; **do not** write or plan for a solution of the crime at this point.

Once every character has generated a question, parse them with the players and see what should or could be answered right now; if some are quite simple and could receive a straight forward answer, just answer them.

Move forward in-game, to develop these simple answers into larger questions, of wider interest.

The target of this phase is to have a number of important questions on the Investigation Dossier equal to the number of players; these questions will all need to be answered during the investigation to solve the case.

If you have only 2 or 3 players, add one question formulated by the GM.

Investigation setup

The GM should now have all important questions on the Investigation Dossier. Some might be quite simple ("what was the murder's weapon?" or "who had a motive to assassinate the victim?"). Others might leave space for additional development ("how the murderer gained access to the high-security facility?" or "who paid the assassin to murder the victim?").

The GM secretly assigns a number from 2 to 5 to each question. Among all questions, the GM should assign **between 10 (shorter games) to 15 points** (longer investigations). This number will remain secret during the course of the game, **until the question will be resolved**.

Each number represents the amount of clues that are needed **to answer the related question**. The higher the number, the more complex the path towards the answer of the question will be. Clues are things like solid evidences, confessions, clear deductions, proofs, etc.

The GM should track these numbers on the Investigation Dossier, on the secret right-side of the sheet. Track numbers as little checkboxes, draw them next to the related questions, so they can be crossed off when needed.

Numbering guidelines:

- * **2**: a straight answer, a direct answer
- * **3**: a more complex research is required
- * **4**: a complex answer, or a possible twist
- * **5**: very complex answer, or multiple layers

An example for a question like "what was the murder weapon?".

If as the GM you assign the number:

- 2: clues might be determining the type of weapon and tracking it for example to a police weaponry
- 3: clues might connect that same weapon to a dead cop
- 4: clues lead to a weapon black market and the cop murderer (unrelated to the current crime)
- 5: lead to the murderer charged in the current case but give no info on the commissioner

Once the players have gathered a number of clues **equal to the number** assigned to a question, the evocative characters will reach a point where they have a solid answer **for the question**.

The GM can add details to the questions or revise them as the game goes on, in order to control the pacing of the game and make sure the investigation makes sense.

Such changes should be made **evident to the players**.

I advice against changing the numbers associated to the questions.

Curse of actions and states

In general, the GM is playing the role of a world that, at best, will be suspicious to the characters, or at worst, outwardly hostile to them. The players and their characters are free to ask questions during the investigation, but it's questionable how accurate the results are going to be, how easy it's going to have humans cooperate, gain access to places, etc.

And remember, **there's another investigation** going on at the same time, by a group of human cops and detectives that may or may not be working in the best interests of the "truth".

The game runs as a conversation between the GM and the players: eventually you will reach a state when a situation is charged, when some resolution is needed, when there's tension or danger.

The GM at this point should ask specifically to a player **to pick a course of action**.

The player **must choose** a course of action based on the location of the token on their function flowchart sheet:

- * **They can follow any outward arrow**; they should act as indicated, and then move the token to the new state
- * **They can cycle and remain in their current state**; they act according to the current state and the token remains on the same state

Depending on how they act (move to a new state or cycle on the current state) the players will have **a chance to gain a clue**, towards the resolution of a question.

The details of this, and how to determine and describe successes and failures, are presented **in the next chapter**.

Note that you might roll to gain a clue and/or to resolve a scene. **Use the same roll**, both to determine the outcome of a clue and/or success or failure of your actions.

Perhaps not every scene is aimed to collect clues or resolve the crime.

In general, role-play and describe the interactions and actions of the evaA.I.s and the world around them, then resort to the states and the rolls to resolve the situation (not the single task), when it can lead the story forward.

If the current situation has no reasonable chance to bring to a new clue about the crime, try to think about revelations, hunches, or sudden bright ideas. If there is tension but no one can think how this might help to resolve a question, either just role play and negotiate the outcome of the situation, or roll but assign no clue.

Gain clues and handle actions

When you resolve scenes, use the following rules:

When a player follows an outward arrow, they:

- * must act as indicated on the arrow
- * should roll a d6 for the given chance to gain a clue (x:6 chances as indicated)
- * can add applicable bonuses (for the profession or the evoA.I.-type) to increase their chances

When a player cycles on the current state, they:

- * must act as the state defines
- * mark a checkbox on the function flowchart sheet, associated with the cycled state
- * can decide to roll for a clue; if they do, they should roll for x:6 chances where x is the number of checkboxes marked for the cycled state (max. 4)

When all 4 checkboxes of a given state are crossed, the player cannot decline rolling for a clue. Regardless of the result (clue obtained or not), the checkboxes of such state **are always cleared** when a player makes a roll to obtain a clue.

When creating a clue a player can also ask everyone at the table to help in the creation of such clue. Such clues may have been previously discovered, but are now **officially** recorded as true for the related question, and count towards getting a final answer for such question.

Regardless of obtaining or not a valid clue, a scene **produces for the characters results as follows**, according to the number rolled on the d6:

Success/Failure

1: success, and better

2-3: reasonable success

4-5: mild complication or
success with troubles

6: failure, serious issues

End-game

For all players, including the GM, the game is not about “winning”, but rather about exploring the interactions of the evoA.I.s with other evoA.I.s and with humans.

Still, **the characters** have a target, and indeed it's to resolve the case.

To resolve the case the characters must answer all of the questions tracked in the Investigation Dossier. To answer each of the questions, they must collect successfully a number of clues equal to the number assigned by the GM at the start of the investigation.

To pace the investigation, the GM should probably move the fiction (and perhaps the investigation time) forward every time a question is resolved, to reflect the new, solid knowledge gained by the characters.

To make things more complex, the GM also has a few special trackers, to handle complications by chances instead of by arbitrary calls:

Human team advancements

(mark on every 1 rolled)

Human team corruption

(mark on every 6 rolled)

Social complications

(mark on every clear of cycled state checkboxes)

When the human-team reaches 6 advancements, the human investigator have solved the case – before the evoA.I.s do, then. Will the evoA.I.s back these results, or stand against them?

When the human-team reaches 3-corruptions, one of the them clearly has a reason to cover something up, or act against the evoA.I.s, or do some bad-investigator shit.

When reaching 3-corruptions, you *might* remove one advancement for the human-team.

When the human-team reaches 6-corruptions, all or almost all the human investigators have some dirty interest in the case. They might be corrupted from the start, or try to cover up something, or act based on bias against the evoA.I. investigators or against evoA.I.s victims or suspects, etc.

Don't treat corruption lightly: even at 3-corruption, the single corrupted investigator has the power to create serious trouble to the evoA.I. investigators (or to their own human colleagues). Things are **especially bad** when a fully corrupted (6-corruptions) human team reaches the end of the investigation (6-advancements) before the evoA.I.s.

When you reach 3-complications, and then at every multiple of 3 complications, present some heavy, social matter to the evoA.I.s, in form of troubling social interaction.

You don't need to use this right away; if you're in the middle of a scene you can reserve it for the next scene.

But the idea is to show episodes (not necessarily all related to the investigation) where there's potential tension, conflict, even violence, caused by the caste system.

For example, the GM might setup scenes with the evoA.I.s going back to their homes in the Bot-Town, where they enter in stand-by for the night and "dream" (a state in which evoA.I.s reorder and reprocess the daily data for long term memory storage). There will be plenty of potential in the everyday life in the Bot-Town or on the way home, etc.

Function flowchart

This is your evoA.I. character sheet

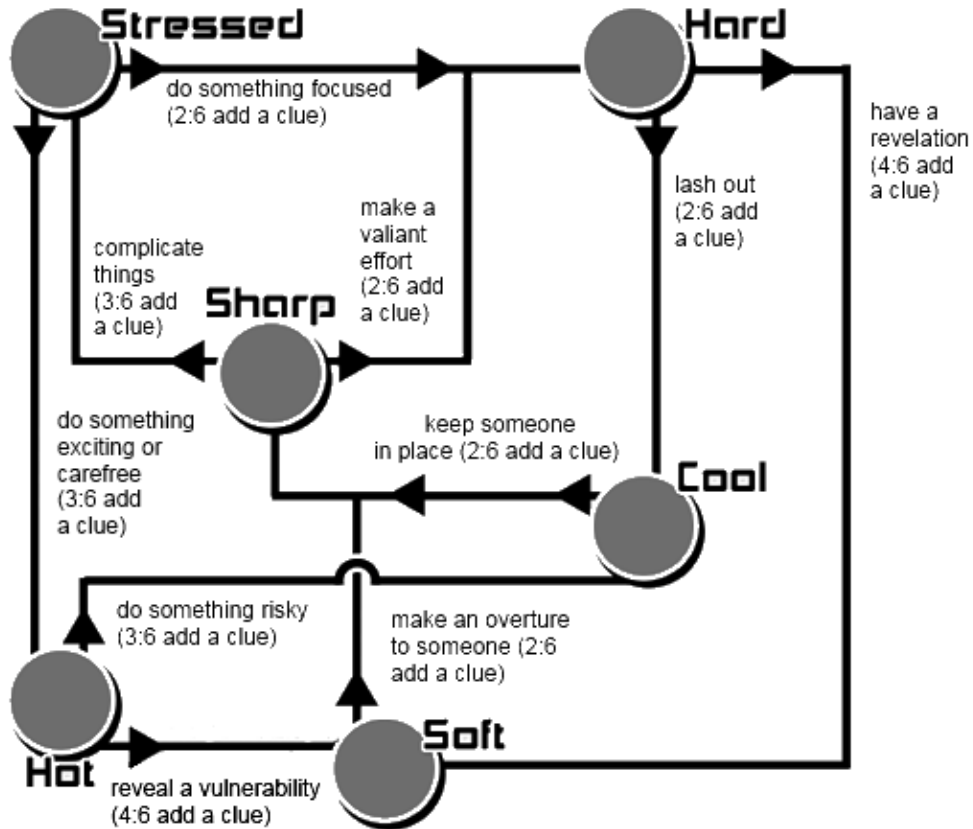
evoA.I. name:

evoA.I. shell-type:

- Fleshie
+1 when interacting with humans
- Puppet
+1 when interacting with A.I.s and evoA.I.s
- Servo
+1 when acting physically
- Drill
+2 when acting on their speciality and a -1 to everything else

evoA.I. previous job:
(+1 to related tasks)

evoA.I. current job:
(+1 to related tasks)



- CYCLE on STRESSED
- CYCLE on SHARP
- CYCLE on HOT
- CYCLE on HARD
- CYCLE on COOL
- CYCLE on SOFT

Mark when cycling on a state
Roll with x:6 for a clue, with x equal to the marked boxes per state
At 4:6 you cannot decline to roll
Clear the boxes after you roll for a clue (regardless of the result)

<p>Default state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fleshies = hot * Puppets = stressed * Servos = sharp * Drills = hard 	<p>Follow an arrow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * act as by the arrow * roll a d6 for clue (x:6) * apply your bonus(es) * move to the new state 	<p>Cycle a state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * act as by the state * mark a box for state * if you want, roll for a clue with n-boxes:6 * at 4:6, you must roll 	<p>Success/Failure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: success, and better 2-3: reasonable success 4-5: mild complication or success with troubles 6: failure, serious issues
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AUTOMATON

Investigation Dossier

Write here questions by the players
*You occasionally will show this half to the players
when you need to review the questions*

Write here numbers associated with questions
*This side will remain secret
Track the numbers as checkboxes*

Human team advancements
(mark on every 1 rolled)

Human team corruption
(mark on every 6 rolled)

Social complications
(mark on every clear of cycled state checkboxes)

Numbering guidelines:

- * **2**: a straight answer, a direct answer
- * **3**: a more complex research is required
- * **4**: a complex answer, or a possible twist
- * **5**: very complex answer, or multiple layers