The Sprawl

Version 0.2

An *Apocalypse World* Hack by Hamish Cameron.

Contact details at the end.

"The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel."
Neuromancer, William Gibson.

The future. Dark. Dirty. Dangerous. Over it all, the megacorps. "Zaibatsus", some call them. Vast multinational corporations that control the flow of money, information, goods, and people. Governments hover on their doorsteps beginning for scraps. Hydrophilic lubricious polymers and automated cleaners keep their arcologies shining amidst the grey-brown urban sprawl which surrounds them. The blood of the city keeps the money flowing.

Technology keeps changing, shifting, mutating; adapt or die. There's a sticky film of information smeared over everything, a networked datasphere in service to the megacorps. Buy this. Obey that. Buy some more.

You're loners, punks and criminals, marginalised by society through birth, choice or violence. Parasites, living symbiotic existences in the shadows cast by the arcologies, feeding from the scraps the corps dangle and scampering to the shadows to avoid their dismissive, destructive, shooings. See, the corps aren't satisfied with having it all. They want more, and the only way they can get it is by eating their own. For the megacorporations, espionage, theft, kidnapping, and murder are just tools in the briefcase of success. For you, those are rungs on the slippery ladder to success. Play your cards right and you'll be set: reputation, money, *credibility*. Whatever you want. Freedom. But one false step and they'll take away everything. You'll be replaced by the next mouthy punk with too much raw talent and bloody ambition and not enough smarts. Tread carefully.

The corps don't need *you*. They need people *like* you. And there's plenty more punks like you out there in the Sprawl.

The Sprawl is a game of mission-based action in a gritty neon-and-chrome Cyberpunk future. You are the extended assets of vast multinational corporations, operating in the criminal underground, and performing the tasks that those multinationals can't do, or can't be seen to, do. Deniable, professional, and ultimately disposable.

This game contains adult themes and adult language.

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Chapter 1: Playing in The Sprawl

So you want to play with the big boys? Hit the heavy bag? Get some cred? Read on...

The Sprawl is a roleplaying game for 3-5 players. Most of you will play badass cyberpunk protagonists, but one of you will be the Master of Ceremonies (MC for short). Playing the game is like a conversation among the people at the table and the MC is the facilitator. If there's some doubt about who's turn it is to speak, or what you're supposed to be talking about, the MC is the one who decides. Oh yeah, and the MC? They control everything else. Your contacts, your enemies, the corporations, the hit squads the corporations send to mess up your contacts, the team of pros who come to shoot up your team, and the blind cyber-assassin who loops the monofilament wire around your neck while you're waiting in line for your vat-meat burger.

There are a few things you'll need to play The Sprawl:

- Two regular six-sided dice.
- A copy of each of the playbooks.
- A copy of a the Mission sheet and the MC moves.
- A few other copies of various gear sheets for reference.

The Sprawl is Powered by the Apocalypse, which means it uses Vincent Baker's excellent *Apocalypse World* system as a foundation. If you're not familiar with *Apocalypse World*, I can't recommend it enough. If you *are* familiar with *Apocalypse World* or its various published hacks, much of this first chapter will be familiar. Nevertheless, you will notice some small differences, changes and additions.

Playbooks

Every character in *The Sprawl* is created using a playbook. A playbook is a set of actions and options based around a certain theme. In *The Sprawl*, these playbooks correspond to major cyberpunk tropes seen through the lens of mission roles. For example, Turner from William Gibson's *Count Zero* is a Soldier and Cowboy from Walter Jon William' *Hardwired* is a Driver. As your character advances, their competencies may expand beyond the confines of their initial playbook, just as Molly Millions develops from a Killer to a Fixer over the course of William Gibson's Sprawl trilogy. The playbooks can be found in **Chapter 5: Playbooks**.

Stats

Every character has six stats: Style, Edge, Cool, Mind, Meat and Synth.

Style. The character's interpersonal skills, charisma and presence. Style is used for convincing people to give you want you want.

Edge. The character's professionalism and street-smarts. Edge is also a measure to how well you can give the impression that you are a badass who is not to be fucked with.

Cool. The character's ability to remain calm and focused in stressful situations.

Mind. The character's accumulated knowledge and capability for logic and rational thinking.

Meat. The capacity of the character's natural body to give and receive punishment.

Synth. The character's ability to interface with and operate cybernetic technology.

Each of these stats has a rating between -1 and +2 that indicates how well the character acts in that sphere. Each of the **Basic Moves** and many of the **Playbook Moves** will tell you to roll two dice and add one of these stats (using the notation "roll+stat"). Moves are described below.

Synth works a little differently. Characters with cybernetic enhancements often have the option of substituting Synth for one of the other stats while performing certain actions. For example, a Character with low Edge, high Synth and cybereyes may rely on their cybernetic optics and associated firmware to pick out details in a scene rather than their natural ability to read the lay of the land. In *The Sprawl*, chrome and circuitry can replace any biological weakness.

Rolling Dice

There are two core mechanics in *The Sprawl*. Just about everything else works from these foundations. The first is the dice.

Often when you do something in *The Sprawl* you will be asked to "roll+stat" (for example, "roll+Cool"). That means you roll two regular six-sided dice, add the two numbers together, then add the value of the stat (or, rarely, some other defined number). If your total is more than 7, that's called a hit. If your total is between 7 and 9 (abbreviated as 7-9), you mostly get what you wanted; maybe you only got most of what you wanted; maybe you got what you wanted but something went wrong as well. That's called a weak hit. If your total is 10 or above (abbreviated as 10+), you get what you wanted; a strong hit.

Now, if you rolled less than six, that's a miss. Maybe you'll get what you want anyway, but it'll have strings attached. The MC will make a move.

Making Moves

The second core mechanic is the idea of "moves". A move is some action that triggers a decision or uncertainty. The Killer tries to shoot the the corp security guard in the face? That's a move. The Hacker tries to crack open a secure system? That's a move. The MC blows out the apron on the Driver's hover-limo? That's a move.

As a player, a move happens when you say you're doing something that corresponds to the fictional trigger on the move. So, lets say you're the Hunter and you're narrating how you're across the street from an apartment building scoping out the security. There's a move for that:

Check it out (Edge)

When you **closely study a person, place or situation**, roll+Edge. On a 10+, ask the MC 3 questions from the list below that your examination could answer. On a 7-9 ask 1. Take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- What does _____ want?
- How is _____ vulnerable to me?
- What is my best way in/way out/way past.
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- What is my biggest threat?

The section in bold is the fictional trigger, in this case, when you **closely study a person, place or situation**. So when your character does that thing in the fictional game world, you the player, do what the move says afterwards. In this case, roll+Edge (one of the basic stats), then look at what the move tells you happens on a hit, a weak hit and a miss. Sometimes a move won't tell you what happens on a miss. In that case, the MC gets to make a move.

If your character performs an action that corresponds to the fictional trigger, then you make the move. Likewise, if you want to perform the move, your character has to do the action that corresponds to the fictional trigger.

It's important to resolve the process in this order. Don't worry about what move your character is making, just describe what they do. The MC will translate your fictional description into the mechanics. Sometimes the MC might tell you to make a move that doesn't seem to make sense with what you described. This usually comes about because the MC has misinterpreted what your character wants to do. If so, clarify your intent. Often, it's a good idea to be specific about what your character is doing, how they're doing it and why; it helps everyone picture the scene in the same way and makes the fiction flow well.

[EXAMPLE]

Some moves are available to everyone in *The Sprawl* and are used quite commonly: these are called **Basic Moves** (see **Chapter 2: Basic Moves**). Other moves are used on in very particular circumstances: these are called **Special Moves** (see **Chapter 3: Special Moves**) or **Custom Moves**. Others are only available to certain playbooks: these are called **Playbook Moves**. Playbooks and the moves associated with them are described in **Chapter 5: Playbooks**).Regardless of the kind of move it is, all the rules above apply. You have to perform the action in the fiction to engage the mechanics of the move, and if you make the move in the fiction then you engage the mechanics of the move.

[EXAMPLE]

MC Moves

In *The Sprawl*, everyone makes moves, even the MC. The MC's moves work a little differently, though.

When a player misses a move, or when the players are waiting for something to happen, or when the fiction demands it, the MC gets to make a move. Moves can be **soft** and give the players a chance to avoid bad consequences, or **hard** and impose consequences on the players right then. It's a continuum,

but those are the end points.

[EXAMPLE]

A full list of MC moves can be found in **Chapter 10: Running The Sprawl**. Below are a few examples of MC moves. These are Corporate moves, for when a corporation is acting against the characters:

- Send a subtle message.
- Send a violent message.
- Terminate a problem.
- Throw money at a problem.

They're not as specific as the player moves; they're more like guidelines for action. The MC will make a move that follows from the events of the fiction. This might involve events in the scene at hand, or it might involve events that happen behind the scenes (in particular, advancing the legwork or mission clocks and foreshadowing or revealing complications). This will all be discussed further in **Chapter 10: Running The Sprawl**.

Agenda and Principles

How does the MC know what move they should make? They look to their Agenda and Principles for guidance. Agenda means "things that must be done" which is what these are; the golden rules of running *The Sprawl*:

- Make the world dirty, high-tech and excessive.
- Fill the character's lives with action, intrigue and complication.
- Play to find out what happens.

There are a lot of things you can change in these rules, but if you change these, you're playing an entirely different game.

Note that the MC's agenda is *not* to kill the characters. You are not competing with the players. Don't pull your punches, but you should be aiming to fill their lives with action, intrigue and complication, not death and failure. If the characters struggle through an action-packed game of corporate tricks and double-crosses, then you have succeeded as MC.

The players just have one Agenda:

- Play your characters as if they were real people.

Principles are the specific tools you use to fulfil your Agenda. They are a set of best practices for using your Moves to achieve your Agenda. There is a complete list of the MCs principles in **Chapter 10: Running The Sprawl**. But back to the characters...

Equipment

There are two types of equipment in *The Sprawl*: cyberware and everything else. Cyberware refers to

machine implants that interface within the central nervous system of the human body. Some cybernetic implants augment the body's natural abilities (like muscle grafts or targeting suites), and others act as prosthetic replacements for limbs or organs (like cyberarms or cybereyes). You can read more about Cyberware in **Chapter 6: Cyberware**. For the rest of the gear you might need to complete your missions—weapons, armour, vehicles, cyberdecks, and so on—see **Chapter 7: Assets**.

Terminology

There are a few other terms relating to moves and equipment which we should note at this point.

Some moves will grant you a bonus **Forward** ("take +1 forward"); in this case add one to the next move roll you make. Sometimes a move will say you take +1 forward to a particular move or type of roll (such as "take +1 forward to **mix it up**" or "take +1 forward when acting on the answers").

Some moves will grant you an **Ongoing** bonus ("take +1 ongoing until..."); add one to each relevant roll as long as the condition applies. This bonus may also be limited to a move or fictional situation (such as "takes +1 ongoing while you act on an assigned task" or "take +1 ongoing to **fast talk**").

Other moves will grant you **hold**, a type of currency which you can spend later for various effects. The move that grants you hold will also tell you what you can spend it on, so when you gain hold, note down how much you have and where it comes from. For example a Hacker who rolls her **Console Cowboy** move might write down "Console Cowboy, 3 hold". Then mark it off as you use it.

There are two special types of **hold**: **+intel** and **+gear**. Characters in *The Sprawl* are all professionals; they may not always act like it, but they prepare like it and they have the experience you'd expect from professionals. You as a player, on the other hand, are probably not a professional shadow operative. These two currencies, **+intel** and **+gear**, allow you as a player to retroactively narrate that professionalism and planning into the action when it becomes relevant, rather than spending hours of game time planning every contingency. Do some legwork; find out the story; get some **+intel** and **+gear**; act boldly. *The Sprawl* is about action, not planning.

For more on how missions are structured, including how to use **+intel** and **+gear**, see **Chapter 12: Missions**.

Countdown Clocks

There's one more important mechanic in *The Sprawl*, countdown clocks; they look like this:

```
1500      1800      2100      2200      2300      0000
```

As the name suggests, Countdown clocks are a timing mechanism; a countdown to "midnight". When certain things happen in the story, they will cause the countdown clock will "advance". To advance a countdown clock, just strike out the leftmost unstruck number in the list. When you read a countdown clocks, the leftmost unstruck number is the clock's value; so if 1500 and 1800 are crossed off, the clock is at 2100. As the clock advances to certain values, it might trigger certain effects in the story. There are three particular types of countdown clock that merit special attention: harm clocks, mission clocks and corporate clocks.

Harm Clocks

Every character has their own harm clock that tells you how messed up the character is. If a character's harm clock is at 1500, 1800 or 2100, they're battered, bruised and bloody, but mostly okay; their wounds can be treated by someone with a basic knowledge of first aid. If they're at 2200 or 2300 they need the attention of a trained medical professional, and if they're at 0000 they need an ambulance, right *fucking* now.

Mission Clocks

There are two types of mission clock, both of which track the progress of the team through their mission, or more precisely, the degree to which the opposition has been alerted to the team's progress. The Legwork clock tracks the amount of noise the team has generated in their investigation and preparation for the mission. The Mission clock tracks how alert the opposition is during the mission itself.

Corporate Clocks

At the start of a game of The Sprawl, all of the players, including the MC, will establish a number of corporations that will play a part in the story. The MC will start a corporate clock for each of these corporations. This clock tells the MC how much that corporation knows about the characters and how much they care about their disruptive activities. As a corporate clock advances, that corporation will begin to block the characters actions and eventually take action against them and their associates. The corporations are like sleeping lions. You don't want to poke them; they'll take your arm off. *The Sprawl* is about poking those lions.

Advancement

As the characters attempt missions against the corporations, they will discover more about the world and get better at their particular professional skills. This is handled by the advancement system. When you create a character in *The Sprawl*, you'll select two Directives that they follow. Choosing a Directive tells the MC that you want to see elements that play on, towards and against that Directive. For example, if I choose the Compassionate Directive (see **Personal Directives** in **Chapter 8: Advancement**), I'm saying that I want the game to include people in trouble so that I can choose to find out in which situations my character will choose to help them and in which situations he will not. In addition to these Personal Directives, every mission will include a Mission Directive. These give you signposts for the actions the mission requires, and reward you for taking concrete action towards the Mission. As you act in towards your personal directives and towards completing the mission, you will mark experience. Each time you mark ten experience, you'll choose a new advance for your character. After you've gained five advances, you'll be able to choose advances from an additional list. Some of these additional options have additional requirements or costs that must be met before they can be selected.

Why Play The Sprawl?

Play *The Sprawl* if you want to create a story about badass professionals living outside the law.

Play *The Sprawl* if you want to struggle against the man.

Play *The Sprawl* if you want to win sometimes, lose sometimes and be double-crossed a lot.

One more thing

Fiction.

Not all the rules in *The Sprawl* have a direct and obvious effect on the dice or move mechanics. Some moves will give characters what is sometimes called *fictional positioning*. That just means that they give a character a justification to undertake certain kinds of action. For example, there are no climbing rules in *The Sprawl*. Whether a character can climb a sheer surface is up to the fiction established by the table. If the character concept was a mountain climber or parkour specialist, perhaps they can. If they are an ex-corporate wage-slave, they probably can't... but when they strap on the climbing harness and jack-in that *Hosaka CyberSports Everest 101* skillchip, up they go.

Rules that give a character fictional positioning are just as important as rules that give a dice modifier. In fact, they're more important. The fiction is where the cool story happens, the dice just add a random element to the resolution of that story.

This applies to the GM as well. If a character is *hunted*, you have a fictional justification (actually a responsibility!) to have her pursuers appear to hunt her from time to time. If a character has *substandard* cyberware, and the player rolls a miss, you have fictional positioning to have it glitch (among the many other moves you could make). When the player chooses these options, they're saying that this is an interesting complication for my character.

Chapter 2: Basic Moves

There are nine moves in *The Sprawl* which are common to all playbooks, and will be commonly used by all playbooks.

Hit the Street (Style)

When you go to a contact for help (including finding specialists, street doctors, new cyberware, buying gear and fencing hot items), roll+Style, on a 10+, choose 3, on at 7-9 choose 2:

- They have what you want, immediately.
- You get a little something extra... (+intel or +gear)
- It doesn't attract unexpected attention, complications or consequences.
- The price is fair.
- You can pay them later.

Fast Talk (Style)

When you try to convince someone to do what you want with promises, lies or bluster, roll+Style. For NPCs: on a hit, they'll do it if you promise them something. On a 10+, they trust your promise – you can break it later. On a 7-9, they need something solid immediately. For PCs: on a 10+, both of the following apply. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- if they do it, they mark experience
- if they refuse, they must act under pressure to go against your stated wishes.

Play Hardball (Edge)

When try to get your way with threats of violence and you intend to carry through, roll+Edge. On a 10+, they have to choose: do what you want, or suffer the established consequences. On a 7–9, they can instead choose 1 as appropriate:

- back down calmly
- back down angrily
- back down fearfully
- give you want they think you want

Check it out (Edge)

When you closely study a person, place or situation, roll+Edge. On a 10+, ask the MC 3 questions

from the list below that your examination could answer. On a 7-9 ask 1. Take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- What just happened?
- What is about to happen?
- What does _____ want?
- How is _____ vulnerable to me?
- What is my best way in/way out/way past.
- Who or what is my biggest threat?

Act Under Pressure (Cool)

When you're racing against the clock, or acting while in danger or to avoid danger roll+Cool. On a 10+, you do it, no problem. On a 7-9, you stumble, hesitate, or flinch: the MC will offer you a worse outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice.

Mix it Up (Meat)

When you expose yourself to danger in an attempt to kill or neutralise an enemy, roll+Meat. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7-9, choose 2.

- You achieve your objective
- You suffer little harm
- You inflict terrible harm
- You make little noise

Manoeuvre (Mind)

When you attempt to gain a tactical advantage over an opponent, through advanced planning, careful positioning, or clever manoeuvring, roll+Mind. On a 10+ hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. You may spend 1 hold per roll for:

- Inflict +1 harm.
- Take -1 harm.
- Receive +1 forward.
- Receive +AP forward (see Weapon Tags in **Chapter 7: Assets**).

Research (Mind)

When you investigate a person, place, object, or service using some sort of library, dossier or database, ask a question from the list below and roll+Mind. On a hit, take +intel; the MC will answer your

question. On a 10+ the answer your question generously, and answer a follow-up question as well. On a miss, the MC will answer your question... then make a move.

- Where is _____?
- How secure is _____?
- What people or places are related to _____?
- Who owned or employed _____?
- What is the value of _____?
- Who else has an interest in _____?

Help or Interfere (Links)

When you help or hinder someone, roll+Links with them. On a 10+ they take +1 or -2, your choice. On a 7-9 you also expose yourself to danger, retribution, or cost.

Chapter 3: Special Moves

In addition to the basic moves, there are a number of special moves which everyone has access to, but which will be used much less often.

Harm

> "What happened to your arm?" she asked one night in the Gentleman Loser, the three of us drinking at a small table in a corner.
>
> "Hang-gliding," I said, "accident."
>
> "Hang-gliding over a wheatfield," said Bobby, "place called Kiev. Our Jack's just hanging there in the dark, under a Nightwing parafoil, with fifty kilos of radar jammer between his legs, and some Russian asshole accidentally burns his arm off with a laser."
>
> I don't remember how I changed the subject, but I did.
>
> *Burning Chrome*, William Gibson

It's a dangerous world out there, especially in your line of work. When you suffer harm, roll+harm suffered (after armour). On a 10+, choose 1:

- You're out of action: unconscious, trapped, incoherent or panicked.
- Take the full harm of the attack, before it was reduced by armour. If you already took the full harm of the attack, take +1 harm.
- Lose the use of a piece of cyberware until you can get it repaired.
- Lose a body part (arm, leg, eye).

On a 7-9, the MC will choose 1:

- You lose your footing.
- You lose your grip on whatever you're holding.
- You lose track of someone or something you're attending to.
- Someone gets the drop on you.

Apply First Aid (Mind)

When you treat someone at 2100 or less with trauma derms or other appropriate portable first aid gear, roll+nothing. On a 10+ they're good as new, or at least so full of drugs that they feel like it for the rest of the mission. On a 7-9, they're on their feet, reduce their harm by one segment for a while (i.e. until the MC makes a move to say otherwise).

When you treat someone at more than 2100 with trauma derms or other inappropriate portable first aid gear, roll-harm taken over 2100. On a 10+ it worked! Reduce their harm to 2100 and get out of there

before it wears off! On a 7-9, reduce their harm by one and get out quicker! On a 6-, there's a reason those derms aren't rated for this kind of trauma...

When you treat someone with both time and access to proper equipment, roll+nothing. On a 10+, reduce their harm by two. On a 7-9, reduce their harm by one. On a 6-, you can't do anything; get them to a proper doctor.

A trained medic (the Tech move **Expert: Medicine & Pharmaceuticals**) adds +mind to these rolls.

Acquire agricultural property (Meat)

When you hit 0000 on your harm counter, Roll+Meat, 10+ You survive until the medics arrive. 7-9 you survive at a cost. Pick one: *owned*, substandard treatment (-1 to a stat), cyberware damage (give one piece of cyberware a negative tag. On a miss, you bleed out on the street.

Declare an Obligation

Once per mission, you can name and describe someone you know who has a useful skill. Name and describe the contact, then say why the contact owes you a favour or why you owe the contact a favour. The MC will ask you some questions about the contact and your relationship. Add the contact to your list. Each contact you have is an obligation that you'll have to work at to maintain.

Obligations

At the start of each session and between every mission, roll+obligations. On a 10+, one of your obligations has a pressing problem that they need your help with. On a 7-9, take +1 forward on your next obligations roll. On a miss, everything's cool.

Get the Job (Edge)

When you negotiate about a jobs pay or conditions, or accept a job without negotiation: Roll+Edge, 10+ choose 3, 7-9 choose 1:

- The employer provides useful information (+intel).
- The employer provides useful assets (+gear).
- The job pays well.
- The meeting doesn't attract attention.
- The employer is identifiable.

Getting Paid

When you go to a meet **to get paid** by your employer: Roll+legwork segments unfilled, 10+ choose 3, 7-9 choose 1

- The employer is identifiable.

- It's not a set-up or an ambush.
- You are paid in full.
- The meeting doesn't attract attention.
- You learned something from the mission. Everyone marks experience.

Go Under the Knife (Special)

When you have new cyberware installed by a street doctor, roll+Cred spent (max +2). On a 10+, the operation was a complete success. On a 7-9, the cyberware doesn't work as well as the advertising implied, choose one: +unreliable, +substandard, +hardware decay, +damaging. On a miss, there have been... complications.

+unreliable: sometimes it just doesn't work.

+substandard: it works, but not as well as it should.

+hardware decay: it works *now*, it's just a matter of time...

+damaging: sometimes it hurts like hell and eventually it will do permanent nerve damage.

+cheap: it looks like you bought it at the dollar store: tacky, ridiculous, perhaps disturbing, but not in a badass way.

When you have new cyberware installed in accordance with a corporate contract, ignore all of that bad stuff. You're *owned*. Your cyberware works exactly the way they intend it.

Chapter 4: Making a Character:

In *The Sprawl*, everyone makes characters together. First everyone defines the corporations which will be the main recurrent opposition in your game. When that's finished, the players pick playbooks and following the instructions on them to create their characters. During this process, the MC and players will ask each other questions to help establish the world and the place of these corporations and characters within it.

Every group will bring different desires and questions to the table, but there are a few that come up regularly.

When is *The Sprawl* set? That's up to you! The Sprawl should be a believable extrapolation of current 21st century trends towards increased corporate control, increased commodification of human existence and effort, increasing division between rich and poor and increased ubiquity of technology. Discuss among the group when feels right to you.

What level of technology are we talking about? This is a tricky one. *The Sprawl* explicitly draws on the tropes of 80s and 90s Cyberpunk novels, games and movies, most of much pre-date the growth of ubiquitous wireless communications. Much of the *The Sprawl* is kept deliberately vague in the case of how the technology works so that you can decide for yourselves whether you imagine cyberpunk as gritty 1980s punks connecting cables between the headware jacks and grimy back alley phone boxes or 21st century hackers exploiting security vulnerabilities in wireless networks using implanted or handheld wireless devices. Discuss your ideas of what cyberpunk is and decide what imagery you want to see at the table.

Are the characters friends? Probably not. At the beginning of a game of The Sprawl, the characters all know each other professionally. If friendships develop, great. If they stay as professional acquaintances tied together by common employment history, that's fine too. Play to find out!

Are the playbooks unique? In Apocalypse World and many of the games based on it, each of the playbooks is unique (for example, in *Apocalypse World*, there may be many hardholds and many people who run them, but there is only one Hardholder; in *Dungeon World*, there are other workers of magic, but only one Wizard). This is explicitly not the case on *The Sprawl*. You're disposable. If you fuck up, another Hacker will step up to take your jobs, your contacts and your deck... actually no, he'll laugh at your out-dated deck and get the latest model.

Does that mean two players can use the same playbook? Most missions in *The Sprawl* require a small group with a variety of skills, so I would recommend not, at least initially. If two players want to use the same playbook, make sure everyone's cool with it. Then talk about why this team has two Hunters, two Reporters, or two Killers. It's an unusual situation that may have a considerable influence on the kind of missions the team is offered, and thus on the direction of the game as a whole.

The MC should familiarise themselves with their Agenda and Principles (**Chapter 10: Running The**

Sprawl).

Step 0: Define the Corporations

> Imagine an alien, Fox once said, who's come here to identify the planet's dominant form of intelligence. The alien has a look, then chooses. What do you think he picks? I probably shrugged.
> The zaibatsus, Fox said, the multinationals. The blood of a zaibatsu is information, not people. The structure is independent of the individual lives that comprise it. Corporation as life form.
>
> *New Rose Hotel*, William Gibson

Each player (including the MC) names and broadly describes a mega corporation (or an entity of similar scope like an organised crime syndicate or a government). There are example corporate names and types of business in **Appendix 1: Names**. The corporations that you define are the major players in your story. Don't get too attached to the corporation you define, sooner or later they'll try to kill you.

Step 1: Choose a Playbook

There are ten basic roles in *The Sprawl*, everyone chooses one and takes that playbook.

The **DRIVER** connects to her car through a cybernetic rig to enhance her skills.

The **FIXER** hooks people up with gear, jobs, friends, and trouble.

The **HACKER** glides through computer networks taking what the job requires, and more.

The **HUNTER** searches the streets for whatever or whoever needs finding.

The **INFILTRATOR** is a master of getting in to secure places and doing bad things there.

The **KILLER** uses bleeding edge technology to commit violence.

The **PUSHER** has a goal. He wants to change the world.

The **REPORTER** uncovers the truth and exposes the guilty.

The **SOLDIER** plans and executes missions in the corporate wars.

The **TECH** repairs things when they break and sometimes breaks things himself.

Step 2: Name and Describe your Character.

Choose a handle or street name for your character and describe their look. Each character has a number of options to choose from for each of eyes, face, body and wear. Give your character an affectation; there's no list of these. An affectation is something that sets you apart from all the other badasses with hard eyes and a nondescript face. Do you wear a black fedora? Are you always chewing on bullets? Do your cybereyes display an external sports ticker?

Tattoos, synth skin, hair, corporate logos, uniform, personal style, a piece of clothing, an implant.

Step 3: Assign Stats.

Assign the following numbers to the six stats: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Each playbook has one or two stats that are more important because they are used for certain basic and playbook moves that are central to that playbook. These stats are indicated on the playbooks. You'll probably want to assign a +2 or +1 to those stats, especially for your first time in *The Sprawl*.

Step 4: Choose Cyberware.

In *The Sprawl*, everyone's got chrome, but replacing human tissue with metal and plastic takes its toll. Choose one piece of Cyberware from the options on your playbook. Think about how and why you got into this business. The MC will ask you two questions:

- Why did you get part of your body cut out and replaced with electronics?

Choose one: prosthetic, for the edge, forced, loyalty, enthusisam, necessity, junkie, genetics, career, ideology, memory.

- How did you afford to have someone cut out part of your body and replace it with electronics?

Choose one:

- You scrimped and saved to buy it yourself. Choose one tag to apply to that piece of cyberware: *+unreliable, +substandard, +hardware decay, +damaging.*
- Someone else paid for it; now you owe them. You're *owned*. Choose who owns you.
- You fucked someone over to get it. You're *hunted*. Describe who you double-crossed.

The MC will make a note of who owns you, who's hunting you, the gear you have installed in your body, and any technical problems it might have. Be sure to choose an option you find interesting; your choice tells the MC which complication you find most interesting for your character.

If you take moves that grant you additional pieces of cyberware you are not restricted to the options listed in your playbook, instead choose from the full list in **Chapter 6: Cyberware**. However, you must describe who paid for it, as above.

Step 5: Choose Playbook Moves.

Each playbook will give you one or two starting moves. Some of these may require you to make some mechanical or colour choices about that move. Make those choices now.

Each playbook will give you a number of options for additional starting moves. Choose those moves now as well.

If any of your moves allow you to choose more cyberware, go back to step 4 and do all that good stuff again. The same people can own you multiple times, but pick a new enemy each time you fuck someone over. The MC will laugh as he writes down your new problems.

Step 6: Links

> "You took Chauvet from IBM for Mitsu," he said, "and they say you took Semenov out of Tomsk."
>
> "Is that a question?"
>
> "I was security for IBM Marrakech when you blew the hotel."
>
> Turner met the man's eyes. They were blue, calm, very bright. "Is that a problem for you?"
>
> "No fear," Sutcliffe said. "Just to say I've seen you work."
>
> *Count Zero*, William Gibson

In the Links phase we will establish a series of professional links between the characters.

- Each player will tell everyone about a job their character did against one of the corporations established in Step 0. The character should play a leading role in the job, either in charge of the entire operation, or providing the critical skill around which the mission was based.
- Describe your character's role in the job, and name the corporation you ran the job against. The MC will start a countdown clock for that corporation.
- The player to your left will tell you how their character was involved. They take +1 links with your character.
- Continuing to the left, each other player will tell you if and how their character was involved too. If their character was involved, they take +1 links with your character. For each character that contributes to the story, the MC will note that character's involvement and advance the corporation's countdown clock by one.

At the end of this step, each character who was involved in your job, will have +1 Links with you. Having Links with people doesn't mean that you're friends or even that you regularly work together (although either or both may be true), rather it means that you are professionally aware of that person; you know how they operate.

Step 7: Choose Gear

Each playbook has a set of gear options. Choose from the items or packages as instructed. If there are particular items of gear you want or thing your character should have, bring that up now. Discuss what kind of things you can be assumed to have.

For example, I generally assume everyone has access to at least one smartphone or equivalent portable device for communications and online research; as many sets of regular, style appropriate clothes as they might need; and enough currency to buy food and public transport as required. Remember that the characters are professionals who have the ability do their jobs properly. The Killer can maintain his weapons, the Reporter can record conversations with sources, the Infiltrator need never want for balaclavas and black turtlenecks. *The Sprawl* is about doing, not shopping.

During play, and in particular as you plan how you will complete missions, you will need to pay money for goods and services. For that, *The Sprawl* uses Cred, an abstract representation of both pure

economic purchasing power and reputation . You may be naked and on the run from a corporate holding facility when you try to buy a pistol from a pawn shop, but are you *good* for it. Cred is also what you stake on missions and spend on getting out of *The Sprawl* when you realise you're too old for this shit. Everyone starts with five cred. See **Chapter 8: Advancement** for more details.

Step 8: Consider Background and Contacts.

Think about your character's background. Does he come from the streets? Did she grow up in corporate arcology? Does he move in media circles? Did she serve in a regular military or paramilitary force of some kind? You know some people from your old life who you can still go to for help. You will name and describe them during play, but for now write a brief note about the circles these contacts will come from.

Step 9: Choose Directives

Look through the list of Personal Directives and choose two which reflect your character's motivations. Every time you make a move in service to that directive, mark experience.

That's it. Get a job!

Chapter 5: Playbooks

Basic Playbooks

There are ten basic playbooks:

The **DRIVER** plugs her car into her brain and roars off in a cloud of fumes and drones.

The **FIXER** hooks people up with gear, jobs, friends, and trouble.

The **HACKER** glides through computer networks taking what the job requires, and more.

The **HUNTER** searches the streets for whatever or whoever needs finding.

The **INFILTRATOR** is a master of getting into secure places and doing bad things there.

The **KILLER** uses bleeding edge technology to commit violence.

The **PUSHER** wants to change the world, one mind at a time.

The **REPORTER** uncovers the truth and exposes the guilty.

The **SOLDIER** plans and executes missions in the corporate wars.

The **TECH** is the master of gear: building it, fixing it, and breaking it.

Driver

> Neurotransmitters lick with their chemical tongues the metal and crystal in his head, and electrons spit from the chips, racing along the cables to the engine starters, and through a dozen sensors Cowboy feels the bladed turbines reluctantly turn as the starters moan, and then flame torches the walls of the combustion chambers and the blades spin into life with a screaming whine. Cowboy monitors the howling exhaust as it belches fire. On his mental displays... he watches fore and aft and checks the engine displays and sees another set of green lights and knows it's time to move. The howling of the engines beats at his senses... the flaming corn-alcohol throbs through his chest like blood and that the shrieking exhaust flows from his lungs like breath, that his eyes beam radar and his fingers can flick missiles forth like pebbles. Through his sensors he can taste the exhaust and see the sky and the prairie sunset, and part of his mind can feel the throbbing radio energies that are the enemy's search planes...
>
> *Hardwired*, Walter Jon Williams

Wheelman, transporter, drone jockey. Whether it's a sleek coupe, a rumbling hog, a drone-rigged panel van or a radar-baffled ex-military whirlybird, when you jack in and feel the wind rushing over your exterior panelling, you own the road and you are the car. When the job goes smooth it's the easiest gig there is – like a Sunday drive with grandma – but when things turn sour and the team needs a quick exit, well, that's where you really earn your New Yen.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: laughing, cool, hard, cold, distant, artificial

Face: blank, covered, attractive, decorated, rugged, thin

Body: toned, lithe, compact, scarred, augmented, flabby, unfit.

Wear: flashy, formal, casual, utility, scrounge, vintage, leathers, military, corporate.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Cool should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: You get Control Systems (2 tags).

Moves

You get these two:

Wheels: You start with a cyber-linked vehicle. If your vehicle has Power+2, it may start with one mounted weapon system. To build your vehicle:

> Choose a **Frame**: Bike, car, hovercraft, boat, vectored thrust, aircraft, helicopter
>
> Choose an appropriate **Design**: racing, recreational, transportation, cargo, military, luxury, civilian, commercial, courier
>
> Choose a **Profile**:

Power+2 Looks+1, 1-Armour, Weakness+1

Power+2 Looks+2, 0-Armour, Weakness+1

Power+1 Looks+2, 1-Armour, Weakness+1

Power+2 Looks+1, 2-Armour, Weakness+2

For each point of Power, choose a strength; For each point of Looks, choose a look; For each point of Weakness, choose a weakness. If your vehicle has Power+2, it may mount one weapon system; Military vehicles may mount an additional weapon system.

Strengths: Fast, quiet, rugged, aggressive, huge, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, capacious, workhorse, easily repaired.

Looks: Sleek, vintage, pristine, powerful, luxurious, flashy, muscular, quirky, pretty, garish, armoured, armed, nondescript.

Weaknesses: Slow, fragile, sloppy, lazy, cramped, picky, guzzler, unreliable, loud.

Weapons: Machine guns (3-harm close/far area messy), grenade launchers (4-harm close area messy), missile launcher (5-harm far area messy slow), autocannon (4-harm far area messy)

Second Skin: When jacked in through your Control Systems to a cyber-linked vehicle:

- if you **act under pressure**, add your car's power to your roll.
- if you **mix it up**, add your car's power to your roll.
- if you **play hardball**, add your car's looks to your roll.
- if you **help or interfere** with someone, add your car's power to your roll.
- if someone **interferes** with you, add your car's weakness to their roll.

Choose one more:

Chromed: choose another piece of cyberware.

Daredevil: when you drive straight into danger without hedging your bets, you get +1 armour. Mark experience.

Drone Jockey: you start with two drones. For each:

Choose a **motive style**: Rotor, fixed-wing, tracked, wheeled, aquatic, submarine.

Choose a frame:

- Tiny (insect-sized): +small, +fragile, +stealthy, pick one sensor.
- Small (rat- to cat-sized): choose one strength, one sensor, one weakness, and one other from any category.
- Medium (dog-sized): choose one strength, one sensors, one weakness, and two others from any category.

- Large (bear-sized): +obvious, choose two strengths, one sensor, one weakness and two others from any category

Strengths: Fast, rugged, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, easily repaired, stealthy, tight encryption, autonomous operation, robot arm, weapon mount.

Sensors: Magnification, IR, jamming, image enhancement, analysis software.

Weaknesses: Slow, fragile, unreliable, loud, loose encryption, obvious.

Machine guns (3-harm close/far area messy), grenade launchers (4-harm close area messy), and personal firearms can be installed in drones.

Weapon Mount: a weapon can be mounted on the drone. The size of the weapon is determined by the size of the frame.

- A small drone can mount a gun dealing 2- or s-harm with a range tag of close or less and without the autofire tag.
- A medium drone can mount a gun dealing up to 3-harm with a range tag of near or less.
- A large drone can mount a gun dealing up to 4-harm.

Eye in the sky: when **helping or interfering** while piloting a drone, roll+Edge instead of +Links.

Hot shit driver: When you're driving a linked vehicle in a high-pressure situation, roll+Edge. On a 10+ hold 3, one 7-9 hold 1. You may spend your hold 1-for-1 on the following:

- Avoid one external danger (a rocket, a burst of gunfire, a collision, etc).
- Escape one pursuing vehicle.
- Maintain control of the vehicle.
- Impress, dismay or frighten someone.

Iceman: When you try to **fast talk** someone, roll+Cool.

Right tool for the job: you have two additional cyber-linked vehicles (build each in the same way as your custom vehicle).

Sweet Ride: when you **hit the street** in your car, add your car's looks to your roll.

Gear

Custom cyber-linked vehicle (as described above).

and either:

Automatic shotgun (3-harm close messy autofire) and Armour jacket (1 armour)

or:

Heavy pistol (3-harm close loud), machette (3-harm hand) and synth leathers (Armour 0, discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move).

Fixer

I fly like paper, get high like planes
If you catch me at the border I got visas in my name
If you come around here, I make 'em all day
I'll get one done in a second if you wait.

Paper Planes, M.I.A.

No matter what people may want to believe, it's a personal world down here in the shadows. If someone wants something, it's not so important what it is, what matters is who you have to pay to get it. And someone's always going to get paid one way or another. You're a matchmaker; you make sure the right people get the merchandise and the right people get paid. Sometimes those people live and work in the same shadows as you and sometimes they cruise down from their luxury arcologies in armoured limousines. Mega-corporate culture is full of middlemen, and sometimes those middlemen want to deal with a middleman of their own in the shadows. Making the suits feel important is one of the many services you offer.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: trustworthy, focused, artificial, cool

Face: attractive, scarred, hidden, friendly.

Body: small, thin, toned, muscular, lithe.

Wear: corporate, formal, street, military, utility.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Style should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cybereyes (3 tags), cybercoms (2 tags), data storage and interface (1 tag).

Moves

You get these two:

Hustling: You have people who work for you in various ways. You start with 2-crew. Between missions, choose a number of jobs equal to or less than your crew, describe what each job is, and roll+Edge. On a 10+, you profit from each of your jobs. On a 7-9, one of them is a disaster and you profit from the rest. Each job you profit from gives you 1 cred. On a miss, everything's FUBAR.

Choose two jobs:

- Surveillance: You have a small network of informants who report goings on; you then sell that information. Disaster: someone acts on bad info.
- Debt collection: You have a few burly looking fuckers who collect outstanding debts. Disaster: someone's out of pocket.
- Petty theft: You have a small crew who perform minor local robberies. Disaster: they robbed the

wrong guy.

- Deliveries: People hire you to transport things. Do you have a driver who takes care of that? Disaster: the delivery never arrives.
- Brokering deals: You arrange for the right people to meet each other. Disaster: the deal that *you* arranged goes wrong.
- Technical work: You have a couple of techs who you supply with work. Disaster: something bad happens to someone else's property.
- Pimping: You manage a small stable of physical or virtual sex workers. Disaster: something goes wrong with a customer.
- Addictive Substances: You manage a small lab producing either drugs or simstim chips. Disaster: something goes wrong for a user or for the lab itself.

I know a Guy who knows a Guy: Once per mission you may introduce a new contact. Name the contact, say what they do, then roll+Style. On a 10+, you've worked with the contact before; they have talent. Write them down as a contact, and an obligation. On a 7-9, you've never met them before, they're an unknown quantity. On a miss, you know them all right. Tell the MC why they dislike you. After you've rolled, describe how you contact them; the MC will ask some questions.

Choose one more:

Backup: You have a group of "associates" who provide security. This is a small gang of 5-10 hired thugs (2 harm small employees 1 armour). Your gang is an **obligation**. Pick 2:

- Your associates are well armed: add 1 harm.
- Your associates are well armoured: add 1 armour and +*obvious*.
- Your associates are ex-military: add +*disciplined*.
- Your associates are more than just muscle to you: replace +*employees* with +*loyal*.
- Your associates have bikes or a couple of other vehicles: add +*mobile*.
- You have a large group of associates (15-30): replace small with medium.
- Your associates are self-sufficient. They are not an obligation, but they may not be available when you need them. To contact your gang you must **hit the street**.

Balls in the air: +1 crew and choose a new job.

Chromed: choose another piece of cyberware.

Deal of a lifetime: When you **hit the street** to sell something, choose one extra result, even on a miss.

Hard to Find: You never roll at more than +2 when you make the obligations move.

Reputation: when you meet someone of consequence who might have heard of you, roll+Edge. On a hit, say what they know about you. On a 10+, take +1 forward with them. On a miss, the MC will

decide what they've heard about you, if anything. Either you or the MC can say whether someone is "of consequence", but once you've made the reputation move on someone, they're "of consequence" and will be a recurring part of the story.

Smooth: when you **help or interfere** with someone, roll+Style instead of +Links.

Street kingpin: +1 crew and choose a new job.

Word on the Street: when you research by listening to or recalling street level gossip, choose one extra result, even on a miss.

Gear

Either:

Armoured Clothing (armour 0, discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move), holdout pistol (2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud), encrypted communications gear.

or

Armoured coat (armour 1), Semi-auto pistol (2-harm close loud quick) and flashy ride.

Hacker

> Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts… A graphic representation of data abstracted from banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding...
>
> *Neuromancer*, William Gibson

Console Cowboy, Netrunner, Decker; they're just words. Who gives a shit about words? Numbers are what matters now. Zeros and ones, baby, and when it comes to paydata, the more zeros the better. You're the shadow in the networks of cyberspace, going where you please and taking what you want. No mega-corporate system is safe from your icebreakers. Black Ice? Well, that just makes it *fun*.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: impatient, twitching, smug, young, mocking, cool.

Face: scarred, sneering, smooth, decorated, hidden.

Body: small, thin, awkward, flabby, young.

Wear: worn, corporate, punk, street, scrounged.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Synth and Mind should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: You get Data Storage and Interface (2 tags).

Moves

You get these moves:

Jack in: When you're jacked into the matrix you have access to the matrix moves: **control systems**, **break systems**, and **jack out**.

Console Cowboy: When you begin a matrix run against a secure location, roll+Mind. On a 10+, hold 3, on a 7-9, hold 1. While on the run, spend your hold 1-for-1 for the following effects:

- Prevent a construct from triggering an alert.
- Avoid an ICE routine executed against you, your deck, or your programs.
- Activate a routine controlled by a system you have hold on (see **Control Systems**).
- Cancel a command given by a human operator to a system you have hold on (see **Control Systems**),

Choose one more:

Black ICE Vet: You may **jack out** in response to Black ICE.

Chromed: Choose another piece of cyberware.

ICE Breaker: You know how to disable ICE quickly and quietly. Once per Matrix run you may cancel a routine executed against you, your deck, or your programs.

Neural Scars: you have 1-armour against Black ICE.

Programming on the Fly: You can adapt your programs to the specific weaknesses of matrix constructs as you encounter them. When you succeed at **control systems**, hold +1.

Rep: When you appear in the Matrix with a recognisable avatar, roll+Synth instead of +Style for **fast talk** and instead of +Edge for **play hardball**. When your reputation gets you into trouble, mark experience.

Search Optimisation: when you **research** a topic in the Matrix, ask one additional question, even on a miss.

Tech Support: when you **help** a team member while jacked into the matrix, roll+Mind instead of +Links.

Gear

A Cyberdeck with 5 points of ratings and a number of programs equal to its Processor rating+1.

and either:

Flechette pistol (3-harm close quick flechette) and Armoured clothing (Armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move) and Microtronics workstation.

or:

Armoured coat (armour 1), Machine pistol (2-harm close autofire loud) and flashy bike.

Hunter

One: you lock the target
Two: you bait the line
Three: you slowly spread the net
And four: you catch the man

Headhunter, Front 242, *Front by Front*

There are millions of people in this sprawl, and millions of secrets. An immense cloak of glass, ferrocrete, plasteel and flesh; it's the perfect place to hide. Your contacts, skills, and experience, give you plenty of handholds to grip that cloak and ease it back. What happens then, well, that depends how much they're paying, doesn't it.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: searching, restless, artificial, penetrating, resigned, jaded, obscured.

Face: scarred, impassive, friendly, nondescript, weathered.

Body: muscular, lithe, augmented, wiry, compact, overweight.

Wear: worn, faded, corporate, casual, street, scrounged.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Edge should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cyberears (2 tags), cybereyes (3 tags), cybercoms (2 tags), data storage & interface (1 tag), skillwires (2 slots).

Moves

You get these two moves:

Network of Favours: Once per mission you may declare and describe a new contact without incurring an obligation. Add the new contact to your list as normal.

Eye for detail: At the start of a mission, roll+Edge. 10+ hold 3, 7-9 hold 1. During the mission, spend hold 1 for 1 to ask one additional question from whatever move you're currently making, even if you missed. On a miss, your opponent has predicted your every move. The MC will hold this over your head until the worst possible moment.

And one more:

Big Game Hunter: When you **mix it up** with a target you have investigated, roll+Edge instead of +Meat.

Chromed: choose another piece of cyberware.

Deadbeat: When you roll for obligations, your maximum bonus is +3.

Investigation: When you **research** to find a specific person or piece of information, roll+Edge instead of +Mind.

On the Tail: When you tail a target, roll+Edge. On a 10+, you tail them until they go somewhere you can't or won't and they don't notice you. On a 7-9 either they notice you or you lose them, your choice.

Play the Angles: When you **Fast Talk** someone, roll+Edge instead of +Style.

Stake Out: When you **stake out** a location, roll+Cool. On a 10+, hold 3; on a 7-9, hold 1.

- You don't attract attention.
- You detect a pattern of behaviour.
- You find a person of interest.
- You gain an opportunity.

Gear

Heavy revolver (3-harm close loud), holdout pistol (2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud), armoured clothing (armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move) and nondescript sedan.

or:

Flechette pistol (3-harm close quick flechette), armoured coat (armour 1), light amplification glasses and recording equipment.

Infiltrator

[Blurb]

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: dark, focused, black, artificial, cunning, restless.

Face: hidden, decorated, nondescript, sneering, calm, weathered.

Body: lithe, augmented, wiry, muscular, slim.

Style: utility, military, corporate, street, scrounged.

Affectation:

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Cool and Meat should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cybereyes (3 tags), cyberears (2 tags), data storage and interface (1 tag), synthetic nerves, skillwires (2 slots).

Moves

You get this move:

Cat Burglar: When you attempt to infiltrate a secure area alone, roll+Meat. On a 10+ you get in unobserved and without raising the alarm. On a 7-9, you get in but something (or someone) you broke to do so was detected. The MC will advance the mission clock. Each person infiltrating must make this roll separately.

Choose two more:

Assassin: When you attack from hiding, choose one option from the Manoeuvre list for free.

Bypass: When you attempt to bypass secured electronics, roll+Cool. On a 10+, you successfully bypass the system without leaving a trace. On a 7-9, you bypass the system, but it's a mess and will be obvious to anyone who sees it.

Chromed: Choose another piece of cyberware.

Jack in: When you're jacked into the matrix you have access to the matrix moves: **control systems**, **break systems**, and **jack out**.

Note: You need data storage and interface cyberware and a cyberdeck to make the most of this move.

Mother Duck: When you use **Cat Burglar**, you can get other people in with you. Take -1 forward on your Meat roll for each additional person beyond the first. You do not gain any bonuses forward from gear unless everyone in the group is equipped in the same way.

Sniper: When you take aim and shoot at an enemy from a "safe" distance, roll+Cool. On a 10+ you

have a clear shot – inflict your weapon's harm. On a 7-9, you inflict your weapon's harm, but your fire attracts attention to your location.

Gear

Sniper rifle (3-harm far/ex loud), Machine pistol (2-harm close autofire loud), Stealth suit (+1 ongoing to avoid being detected while alone and hidden), hand taser (s-harm hand reload), and recording equipment

or

Silenced SMG (2-harm close autofire), silenced semi-auto pistol (2-harm close quick), monofilament whip (4-harm hand messy area dangerous) and a Cyberdeck with 4 points of ratings and a number of programs equal to its Processor rating.

Killer

The purist, non-conformist, jaded subhuman terrorist
From flesh to steel & blood to blade, I fight to exist
A rival of justice, extreme rush of hatred
Survival in a twisted world where nothing is sacred

Edgecrusher, Fear Factory

Eyes by Sony, arm by Nissan, muscles by Krupp, synthetic nerves by some bleeding-edge black clinic in Chiba. You're more machine than man and more deadly than either. Some jobs require a soft touch, some a strong hand, others a dozen mags of caseless flechette rounds and twelve inches of retractable plastisteel inserted at high velocity into various reluctant organs. Those are the jobs you like. After all, you paid a lot for those mods, it'd be a shame not to use 'em.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: hard, dead, mirrored, artificial, cunning, crazy.

Face: scarred, impassive, friendly, nondescript, weathered, decorated.

Body: muscular, lithe, augmented, wiry, compact.

Wear: military, corporate, punk, street, scrounged.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Meat or Synth should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cyberarm, dermal plating, implant weaponry, muscle grafts, synthetic nerves, targeting suite.

Moves

You get these two:

Chromed: choose another piece of cyberware.

Custom weapon: Choose a base and two options. You may customise an implanted weapon; use the stats of the weapon as the base and add two options.

Base (choose 1):

- handgun (2 damage close loud quick)
- shotgun (3 damage close messy)
- rifle (3 damage near/far/ex loud)
- blade or head (2 damage hand)
- chain or wire (1 damage hand area)

Options (choose 2):

- ornate (+valuable)
- antique (+valuable +reload)
- 3-round burst (close/far)
- automatic (+autofire)
- silenced (-loud)
- hi-powered or weighted (+1 damage)
- big or dangerous (+1 damage)

Choose one more:

Hard: When you make the harm move, subtract your meat from your roll.

Ice Cold: When you **play hardball**, roll+Synth.

Loaded for Bear: choose another custom weapon.

More machine than meat: choose another piece of cyberware.

Corporate Secrets: You used to be a Company Man. When you **research** a corporation, choose one additional question to ask.

Military Background: You still have contacts in the military. When you **hit the street** for military gear, choose one extra option.

Mil Specs: When you **mix it up**, roll+Synth instead of +Meat.

Serious Badass: when you enter a charged situation, roll+Style. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7–9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to make eye contact with an NPC present, who freezes or flinches and can't take action until you break it off. On a miss, your enemies identify you immediately as their foremost threat.

Trained Eye: When you evaluate a target, roll+Cool. On a hit, ask the target "How are you vulnerable to me?" On a 10+ gain +1 forward when acting on the answer.

Gear

Custom Weapon (as described above).

and either

Silenced machine pistol (2-harm close autofire), Armoured jacket (armour 1) and powerful motorcycle.

or

Automatic shotgun (3-harm close messy autofire) and Body armour (armour 2).

Pusher

You will not be able to stay home, brother.
You will not be able to plug in, turn on and cop out.
You will not be able to lose yourself on skag and skip,
Skip out for beer during commercials,
Because the revolution will not be televised.

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised, Gil Scott-Heron.

Ideology is everywhere. If you don't see it and try to control it, you're just a puppet of those who do. You believe in something bigger than the daily grind of life in the sprawl. You have a cause, a vision, or a mission... Perhaps it's a higher ideal: political change, social justice, revolution! Maybe it's simply to be the top dog in the junkyard. Whatever it is, when you start talking, people listen.

Pushers are gang members, revolutionaries, activists, synth stars, rockers, politicians, or corporate climbers.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: shining, vulnerable, driven, passionate, intense, trustworthy, artificial.

Face: attractive, friendly, striking, alluring, serene, sculpted.

Body: toned, muscular, relaxed, lithe, slim, augmented.

Wear: corporate, high fashion, avant-garde, street, flashy, punk.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Style and Edge should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cybereyes (3 tags), cybercoms (2 tags), control systems (1 tag), implant weaponry.

Moves

You get these two:

Driven: When you begin a mission that furthers your vision, roll+Edge. On a 10+ hold 3; on a 7-9 hold 1. You may spend your hold before rolling a move to take +1 or -2 forward to the move.

Vision Thing: when you have time and space for a one-on-one conversation with someone in which you passionately advocate for your vision, roll+Style. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold over NPCs to have them:

- give you something you want.
- do something you ask them to.
- fight to protect you or your cause.

- disobey an order given by someone with authority or leverage over them.

When you use this move on a PC, spend your hold to help or interfere as if you had rolled a 10+ (i.e. give them +1 or -2). If you miss against a PC, they hold 2 over you which they can use in the same way.

Choose one more:

Believers: You are part of a gang, tribe, band, corporation or similar group. You can go to them for aid, for resources or to hide out until the heat dies down. As a group, they're pretty trustworthy, but they will make demands on you in return (your gang is an obligation). By default this group has a core of about 20 people as well as various associates and groupies

What kind of gang is it? Choose one:

Street, Corporate, Media, Military, Political

How big is your gang? Choose a size and choose two tags.

- Small: 10 or fewer (loyal, mobile, well-armed)
- Medium: 20-40 (mobile, well-armed)
- Large: 50-100 (well-connected, resources, self-sufficient)
- Huge: 200+ (well-connected, resources, spread out, self-sufficient)

Define your gang's territory. Do they control a few blocks of the streets? Do they operate out of a compound or an arcology?

Choose one:

poor, wanted, hard to find, unreliable, violent, hated

Who leads your gang? If your gang is small, you may be the leader. Otherwise, choose 1:

immoral, demanding, grasping, a real fucker, useless, absent

What are your gang's main gigs? Choose 2:

commerce, crime, parties, muscle, deliveries, infiltration, scavenging, activism, politics

Chromed: Choose another piece of cyberware.

Famous: your face is well known beyond the narrow scope of your people. Unless you disguise yourself, you will be recognised by many people you meet. If someone recognises you, you take +1 forward against them, but they they'll tell people that they met you. Both you and the MC can declare that someone recognises you.

People Person: When you **hit the street** among your own people, choose one extra option, even on a miss.

Opportunistic: when you help or interfere with someone, roll+Edge.

Silver Tongue: When you **fast talk** someone, choose one extra result, even on a miss.

Gear

You get Synth leathers or Armoured clothing (armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move)

Choose one of: Sleek bike, sim-sense recording equipment, instruments, encrypted communications relay.

and one of: holdout pistol (2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud), flechette pistol (3-harm close quick flechette), semi-auto pistol (2-harm close loud quick).

Reporter

There's dirty business going down all over this city. I'm not talking about sex scandals and drunken escapades. That's what they *want* you to focus on. Leave the tabloid stuff for the hacks. It's the real secrets you want: rights are being trampled; families are being separated; lives are being destroyed. You hear about the building collapse on seventh the other day? Seventy-two people died. Word is, that wasn't an accident. Right now peoples lives—peoples' *fucking lives*—are being traded for market share, profit margin and fucking competitive advantage. Sure, you hang out with a bunch of criminals and break all sorts of laws to get the story, and some people might get hurt, but the people need to know what's happening behind those wood-panelled boardroom doors. The ends justify the means, right?

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: penetrating, intense, empathetic, calm, determined.

Face: attractive, friendly, serious, grim, composed.

Body: toned, slim, augmented, tense, animated.

Wear: corporate, street, punk, flashy.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Edge should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cybereyes (3 tags), cyberears (2 tags), cybercoms (2 tags), data storage and interface (2 tags).

Moves

You get these moves:

Live and On the Air: When you go live from the scene and broadcast a stream to avoid harm and expose your target, you get the shot you want and are "escorted" to a position of safety. Choose one:

- Your story irritates your target. (The MC will advance a relevant threat clock).
- Someone on your team gets hurt off camera.
- Your story angers your employer.
- Your rushed narrative is misinterpreted by the public with unintended consequences.

Nose for a story: At the start of a mission, roll+Edge. 10+ hold 3, 7-9 hold 1. During the mission, spend hold 1 for 1 for the following effects:

- Ask one additional question from the **research** list.
- Take +1 Forward when **Monstering**.
- Find a piece of evidence that links this mission to a current story. Start a Story Clock and a

linked Noise Clock or roll to **gather evidence**.

Gather Evidence: When you gather evidence to break a story, roll+Mind. On a 10+ you get the evidence you need, advance the relevant Story Clock. On a 7-9, you get the evidence, but tip your hand to someone implicated in your story. Tell the MC which clock to advance: a relevant corporate clock, the linked noise clock or the relevant mission clock (Legwork or Mission, depending on which phase of the current mission you're in). On a miss, the MC will advance the Noise Clock *and* make a move.

If the Story Clock reaches 0000 before the Noise Clock, the Reporter has broken the story before the implicated parties could cover up the evidence, or stop her investigation. The exact implications of this for the game will vary based on the story, but it should have a major impact on the implicated parties and will effect at least one Corporate Clock.

If the Noise Clock reaches 0000 before the Story Clock, the implicated parties have tied up all the loose ends and the story is dead. Now that damage control is complete, they can deal with the Reporter permanently. Advance any relevant Corporate or Threat Clocks.

Choose one more:

24/7 Live Feeds: When you scan the feeds to **research** a topic, ask one extra question, even on a miss.

Chromed: Choose another piece of cyberware.

Filthy Assistants: When you give mission advice based on your **research**, your team takes +1 forward to follow that advice and you mark experience.

Monstering: When you corner someone and hound them with questions to get to the bottom of a story, roll+Edge. On a 10+ they tell you the truth, regardless of the consequences. On a 7-9, they give you enough to get you off their back, then when they're safe, they choose one:

- they respond with fear.
- they respond with anger.
- they respond with clinical calm.

Press Pass: When you reveal your public persona to **fast talk** your way in, choose one extra option even if you miss.

Reliable Sources: When you call your regular sources to **research** a topic, roll+Style instead of +Mind.

War Correspondent: When **acting under pressure** or **manoeuvring** while in physical danger, roll+Edge instead of +Cool and +Mind respectively.

Gear

Armoured clothing (armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move), encrypted communications equipment, recording equipment, glasses (2 tags)

Choose one of: holdout pistol (2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud), flechette pistol (3-harm close quick flechette), taser (s-harm hand reload).

Soldier

> "Turner had been a soldier in his own right for most of his adult life, although he'd never worn a uniform. A mercenary, his employers vast corporations warring covertly for the control of entire economies. He was a specialist in the extraction of top executives and research people. The multinationals he worked for would never admit that men like Turner existed..."
>
> *Count Zero*, William Gibson

In this business, planning and preparation is what separates the professionals from the corpses. There are plenty of successful teams in your line of work, but those that live long enough to spend their money are led by people like you. The one who minutely studies the corporate dossier on the target until he knows his every move before he makes it. The one who watches surveillance footage for two days straight to find the weakness in the security pattern. The one who pores over the archaic paper maps of the utility tunnels under the facility. It's a thankless job, but it pays well. You get to live.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: Hard, searching, artificial, cunning, penetrating.

Face: Rugged, scarred, weathered, tired, thin, decorated, calm.

Body: Muscular, toned, unfit, graceful, wiry, tanned.

Style: Casual, utility, vintage, military, corporate, worn.

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Edge should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Choose one: Cybereyes (3 tags), cybercoms (2 tags), skillwires (2 slots), targeting suite.

Moves

You get these two:

Here's the plan: When you plan a Mission, everyone to whom you assign a task takes +1 ongoing while they act on that task according to the plan. Anyone who rolls a miss or goes off the plan loses their bonus for that mission. If *you* get paid, mark experience.

I love it when a plan comes together: At the start of a mission, roll+Edge. 10+ hold 3, 7-9 hold 1. During the mission, spend hold 1 for 1 for the following effects:

- You have that piece of gear that you need, *right now.*
- You appear in a scene where you are needed, *right now.*

On a miss, hold 1 anyway, but your opponent has predicted your every move. The MC will hold this over your head until the worst possible moment.

Choose one more:

Aura of Professionalism: When you **get the job** and try to **get paid**, choose one extra option, even on a miss.

Chromed: Choose another piece of cyberware.

Corporate Knowledge: You used to be a Company Man. When you **research** a corporation, choose one additional question to ask even if you miss. One of these questions may be "How is _____ acting against us".

Exit Strategy: When shit hits the fan and you decide to bail out, roll+Mind. On a hit, you escape the situation. On a 10+ choose one thing to leave behind. On a 7-9, choose two things.

- Your team.
- A mission objective.
- Identifiable evidence.
- Your staked cred.

Hands-on Management: When you **mix it up** while directing a mission from the front, roll+Mind instead of +Meat.

Recruiter: When you attempt to recruit a specialist or a team of specialists, roll+Edge. On a 10+ choose 2, on a 7-9 choose 1:

- Reliable professional(s)
- A small team (up to 5)
- As competent as required

Steady Presence: When you give someone a pep talk while in a stressful situation, you **help** them as if you had rolled 10+.

Tactical Operations: When you **manoeuvre** while leading a mission from the front, choose an extra option, even if you miss.

Gear

Either:

Heavy pistol (3-harm close loud), Armoured clothing (armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move), Flashbangs (s-harm hand area reload), and encrypted communications relay.

or:

Assault rifle (3-harm near/far loud autofire), Armoured vest (armour 1) and Fragmentation Grenades (4-harm hand area reload messy), communications relay.

Tech

Hackers get all the glory, but you're the one who actually gets things done. Deck took a couple of pellets from that security team? Call the Tech. Need a bus wired to blow? Call the Tech. Need to lay twenty-two klicks of hardline from the grid to your desert hide? Call the effin' Tech. At least the jobs pay better than crawling around ductwork in a Sprawl tenement.

Look. Choose one from each line:

Eyes: focused, excited, artificial, squinty, impatient, calm, appraising

Face: plain, friendly, nondescript, weathered, expressive

Body: muscular, wiry, compact, thin, flabby

Style: utility, military, corporate, street, scrounged

Stats. Assign each stat one of these numbers: +2, +1, +1, +0, +0, -1. Your Cool and Mind should be +2 or +1.

Cyberware: Cybercoms (2 tags), Cybereyes (3 tags) Cyberarm with implant tools, Control Systems (2 tags), Data Storage and Interface (1 tag).

Moves

Expert: Choose one area of expertise:

- Vehicles & Drones (You have two drones)
- Cybernetics & Biomodification (You may begin with one extra piece of cyberware)
- Computers & Electronics (You have a cyberdeck with 5 points of ratings and a number of programs equal to its Processor rating+1.)
- Armaments (You begin with a **custom weapon**, see the **Killer** playbook move.)
- Medicine & Pharmaceuticals (When you **apply first aid**, roll+Mind.)
- Chemistry and Explosives (Ignore the *dangerous* tag for explosives.)

You start with workshops appropriate to your areas of expertise (e.g. surgery, electronics workshop, garage).

At the start of each mission, roll+Mind. On a 10+ hold three +gear relevant to your chosen area(s) of expertise. On a 7-9 hold one +gear relevant to your chosen area(s) of expertise.

Customiser: You can identify and examine new or complicated technology related to your area of expertise, and modify technology which with you are familiar. When you try to modify a piece of tech, tell the MC what you want to do and discuss what tags or game effect that modification will have. The MC will tell you the requirements in terms of:

- time
- tools
- parts
- help from contacts
- more research

Choose one more:

Analytic: When you **check it out**, roll+Mind instead of +Edge.

Blend In: When you try to look inconspicuous, roll+Cool. On a 10+ no one thinks twice about your presence until you do something to attract attention. On a 7-9, you'll be fine as long as you leave right now, as soon as you do anything else, your presence will be suspicious.

Bypass: When you attempt to bypass secured electronics, roll+Cool. On a 10+, you successfully bypass the system without leaving a trace. On a 7-9, you bypass the system, but it's a mess and will be obvious to anyone who sees it.

Chromed: Choose another piece of cyberware.

Diverse Interests: Choose one more area of expertise.

It all fits together! At the start of a mission, roll+Mind. On a 10+ hold 3, one a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 at any time to ask the following questions:

- What does _____ really want out of this?
- How do _____ and _____ relate to each other?
- What does _____ have to do with all this?

Jack of All Trades: Choose one more area of expertise.

Obsessive: When you shut yourself away with a problem or piece of cutting edge tech, make a research move. You may spend 1 hold to ask *any* question about the problem.

On it: When you help a teammate, roll+Cool instead of +Links. If your areas of expertise were central to the help you gave, mark experience.

Gear

Toolkit and gear appropriate to your areas of expertise, goggles (2 tags), van (1 strength, 1 weakness)

Either:

Armoured clothing (armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move), holdout pistol (2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud), encrypted jamming communications relay.

Or:

Armoured jacket (armour 1), Assault rifle (3-harm near/far loud autofire), Fragmentation Grenades (4-harm hand area reload messy), Gas Grenades (s-harm hand area reload gas).

Chapter 6: Cyberware

"The Japanese had already forgotten more neurosurgery than the Chinese had ever known. The black clinics of Chiba were the cutting edge, whole bodies of technique supplanted monthly, and still they couldn't repair the damage he'd suffered in that Memphis hotel."

Neuromancer, William Gibson.

Getting new cyberware is a two step process. First you have to find it, then you have to have it installed.

When you try to find new cyberware, use **hit the street**. It's expensive stuff; even a "fair" price will be high, especially if you want 'ware without nasty side effects. On a miss you might owe someone, you might get shafted, or you might get a little something extra... Use the **Go Under the Knife** move.

Go Under the Knife (Special)

When you have new cyberware installed by a street doctor, roll+Cred spent (max +2). On a 10+, the operation was a complete success. On a 7-9, the cyberware doesn't work as well as the advertising implied, choose one: +unreliable, +substandard, +hardware decay, +damaging. On a miss, there have been... complications.

When you have new cyberware installed in accordance with a corporate contract, ignore all of that bad stuff. You're *owned*. Your cyberware works exactly the way they intend it.

Cyberware List

Cybereyes: When you have cybereyes installed, choose two of following tags: +thermographic, +light amplification, +magnification, +flare compensation, +recording, +encrypted, +unaccessible.

When your enhanced sight helps, you may roll+Synth for **Check it Out**.

Cyberears: When you have cyberears installed, choose two of following tags:+dampening, +wide frequency, +recording, +encrypted, +unaccessible.

When your enhanced hearing helps, you may roll+Synth for **Check it Out**.

Cybercoms: When you have cybercoms installed, choose two of following tags: +encrypted, +jamming, +recording, +relay, +unaccessible.

When monitoring communications, you may roll+Synth for **Check it out**.
When giving orders in a tactical environment, you may roll+Synth for **Maneuver**.

Control Systems: Allows direct neural control of an appropriately configured external device such as a vehicle, weapon, recording device, or hacked electronic system. Choose two of following tags: +encrypted, +relay, +multi-tasking, +relay, +unaccessible.

You may take the Driver move **Second Skin** as an advance.

Cyberarm: When you **mix it up** in close combat using your cyberarm, roll +Synth instead of +Meat. Choose one of the following options. Additional choices can be added to the cyberarm later in the same way as adding a new piece of cyberware.

Augmented Strength: +1 harm when using a melee weapon that relies on physical strength.

Implant Tools: When you have time and space to interface with a device you are attempting to fix or tamper with, take +1 forward.

Implant Weaponry: Either: retractable blades (2-harm hand, messy, implant), or a holdout firearm (2 harm close, loud, implant).

Cyberlegs: You can run faster and jump further than un-enhanced people. When your enhanced athleticism could help you (especially with **act under pressure** or **manoeuvre**), you may roll+Synth instead of the move's usual stat.

Data Storage & Interface: When you use **Research** to search internally or externally stored data, you may roll+Synth instead of +Mind. Choose two of following tags:+unaccessible, +encrypted, +high capacity, +high speed.

You may take a Hacker move **Jack in** as an advance.

Dermal Plating: When you make the harm move, subtract your Synth from your roll.

Implant Weaponry: Either:

- retractable blades (2-harm hand implant)
- a holdout firearm (2-harm close loud implant)

- a monofilament whip (4-harm hand messy area dangerous implant)
- internal assassination implant (4 harm intimate slow implant)

Muscle Grafts: When you **Mix it Up** with a melee weapon that relies on physical strength, you may roll+Synth instead of +Meat and may also inflict +1 harm.

Synthetic Nerves: You react so quickly that you can almost dodge bullets. You may roll+Synth instead of +Cool to **Act under Pressure,** instead of +Meat to **Mix it Up**, and instead of +Mind to **Maneuver**. When you Maneuver in combat, add the option "Someone without synthetic nerves dies. You choose."

Skillwires: You may slot chips to grant certain skills. While slotted, chips give +1 ongoing to moves appropriate to the programmed skill. Standard skillwires comes with two slots and you may have one chip active in each slot. For each additional slot you add, take -1 to **Acquire Cyberware**.

If you start with Skillwires, you also start with one chip per slot. You can acquire skillchips in play just like any other gear.

Example skillchips: martial arts, breaking and entering, rock climbing, skydiving, scuba diving, planning and logistics, firefight combat, extreme driving, parkour, first aid, military history and tactics.

Targeting Suite: When you fire a linked weapon, you may inflict additional harm equal to your Synth. You may also roll +Synth instead of +Meat to **Mix it Up**. You may precisely define the area of effect for weapons with the +area tag.

Cyberware Tags

+cheap: it looks like you bought it at the dollar store: tacky, ridiculous, perhaps disturbing, but not in a badass way.

+damaging: sometimes it hurts like hell and eventually it will do permanent nerve damage.

+dampening: Protects against sonic Stun effects.

+encrypted: it's resistant to hacking

+flare compensation: Protects against visual Stun effects.

+high capacity: Greatly increases the storage capacity of the device. This is useful for storing, uploading and transporting large quantities of complex data. You will be able to loot more paydirt from corporate archives and locally store more recorded data.

+hardware decay: it works *now*, it's just a matter of time...

+high speed: allows you to stream and access data much faster.

+implant: implant weapons can have the discreet tag and cannot be taken away without causing harm.

+jamming: allows you to jam communications without the +encrypted tag.

+light amplification: Allows you to see well even with very weak light sources.

+magnification: Allows you to see to much greater ranges. This does not effect weapon accuracy.

+multi-tasking: You can control multiple devices simultaneously.

+satellite relay: the cyberware can be controlled remotely by someone else.

+substandard: it works, but not as well as it should.

+thermographic: Allows you to see heat patterns in the infrared spectrum.

+unaccessible: it has a courier mode in which you can't access the data being recorded, stored or transmitted.

+unreliable: sometimes it just doesn't work.

+wide frequency: Enhances your ability to hear things.

Chapter 7: Assets

> Cowboy can't use the radio in his panzer because the police will be listening for him. He can't use a squirt transmission from a directional microwave antenna because there's no receiver set up within line of sight. And he can't use a wireless telephone because they're completely unsafe— someone within range of the phone is bound to be listening, ready to dissect the signal for hints as to the owner's identity and business. If you're lucky, they'll only steal your wireless account— and if you're unlucky, they'll get your identity and the keys to your portfolio and bank account. The only way to beat them is to use the latest military-grade encryption, and only the Orbitals have that. And on top of that, the phone signal is going to be bounced off some satellite or other, a satellite owned by one or another of the Orbitals, and they're are almost guaranteed to be listening. Using a cellular telephone is like standing naked in an open field with a megaphone, screaming Please kill me and take all my stuff. What Cowboy needs is a ground line. Not that ground lines can't be monitored, but someone actually has to attach a tap to the line, or monitor traffic from a phone supplier control room, and that means a human being has to be involved somehow, not an automated system listening to wireless traffic.
>
> *Hardwired*, Walter Jon Williams

Most gear a character has will have no mechanical effect, but it will always have a fictional effect. If you have a smartphone, you can bring up maps, access global data networks and call your contacts. You don't need to keep track of everything your character owns. If it seems reasonable to everyone at the table that your character would have something (like a smartphone), then you can assume you have it.

You should keep track of the items of gear that are important to your character, especially those which will have a fictional or mechanical effect on the outcome of missions. Some of these are listed below.

Buying Gear

Each playbook has a number of gear options to choose from. Additional gear can be brought into play by **hitting the street** to acquire it from contacts, or by asking your employer to supply it for the purposes of the job (**get the job**). You should give all your gear brand names. It's not just a heavy pistol, it's a Tianxia Fire Dragon 15. Use the names of the corporations you created during character creation.

If a move that usually comes with gear is gained in play (such as the Killer move **Custom Weapon**) the gear must be acquired in a fictionally appropriate manner, usually through a contact.

Weapons and Armour

Weapons are a staple of the genre, both for their effect and their aesthetic. Think about the look of your weapon when you give it a brand name.

All weapons have a harm rating and a range tag; most have additional tags which are described below under **Weapon Tags**.

Firearms

- Holdout pistol (2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud)
- Flechette pistol (3-harm close quick flechette)
- Revolver (2-harm close reload loud quick)
- Semi-auto pistol (2-harm close loud quick)
- Heavy revolver (3-harm close reload loud)
- Heavy pistol (3-harm close loud)
- Shotgun (3-harm close messy reload)
- Automatic shotgun (3-harm close messy autofire)
- Assault rifle (3-harm near/far loud autofire)
- Machine pistol (2-harm close autofire loud)
- SMG (2-harm close/near autofire loud)
- LMG (3-harm near/far autofire messy)
- Hunting rifle (2-harm far/ex loud)
- Sniper rifle (3-harm far/ex loud)
- Grenade launcher (4-harm close/far area messy)
- Grenade tube (4-harm close area reload messy)
- Assault cannon (4-harm close/far area messy breach)
- Missile launcher (4-harm far area messy breach)

Grenades

- Fragmentation Grenades (4-harm hand area reload messy)
- Flashbangs (s-harm hand area loud reload)
- Gas Grenades (s-harm hand area reload gas)

Hand weapons

- Knife (2-harm hand)

- Club (2-harm hand)
- Sword (3-harm hand messy)
- Taser (s-harm hand reload)
- Monofilament whip (4-harm hand messy area dangerous)
- Shuriken or Throwing Knives (2-harm close infinite)

Armour

- Armoured clothing, Synth Leathers (armour 0, +discreet, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move).
- Armoured vest, jacket, coat (armour 1)
- Body Armour (armour 2)
- Military hardsuit (armour 3, +clumsy)

Ammunition

The Sprawl doesn't require you to count bullets, but sometimes a mission might require different kinds of ammo. Most of these simply add a tag to the weapon they're loaded into.

- AP rounds: A weapon loaded with AP rounds adds the +AP tag.
- Airburst rounds: A weapon loaded with airburst rounds adds the +area and +messy tags.
- Explosive rounds: A weapon loaded with explosive rounds adds +1 harm and cannot be silenced.
- Flechette rounds: A weapon loaded with flechette rounds adds +1 harm, but the target's armour value is doubled.
- Gel rounds: A weapon loaded with gel rounds inflicts s-harm instead of its listed harm value. Targets harmed by gel rounds add the original harm value (minus armour) to their roll when making the harm move.

Weapon Tags

Range Tags: Intimate/Hand/Close/Near/Far/Ex

These indicate the optimum range for the weapon. In good conditions you may be able to use the weapon at longer (or shorter) ranges, but take a -1 to do so.

- Intimate is close enough to kiss.
- Hand is close enough to touch.
- Close is within a few steps.
- Near is within a couple of dozen metres.

- Far is within a block.
- Ex (Extreme) is several hundred metres away.

Other Tags:

AP (Armour-piercing): The target of AP rounds subtracts 2 from their armour value.

Area: The weapons harms everyone in the area of effect.

Autofire: The user can opt to temporarily give the weapon +area and +reload.

Dangerous: On a miss, the user suffers harm.

Discreet: The weapon is easy to hide and will often be overlooked.

Flechettes: The target's armour value is doubled.

Infinite: These are easy to hide (+discreet) and there are always more around when needed.

Loud: The sound is unmistakable, everyone nearby hears it, and, if the circumstances allow, they'll be able to identify where it came from as well.

Messy: Fire effect is inconsistent throughout the area of effect, but it makes a mess of people and things that it hits. If a messy weapon is loud, it cannot be silenced.

Reload: After firing, the user must spend a brief time reloading.

Quick: If speed matters, quick weapons go first.

Stun: Weapons with Stun do not do harm, but the target still makes a harm roll (which can cause harm).

Gear

Silencer/Sound Suppressor: A weapon equipped with a silencer or sound suppressor removes the loud tag. A Messy weapon cannot be silenced.

Vision enhancing devices (glasses, goggles, scopes)

Available tags: +thermographic, +light amplification, +magnification (+far or +1 damage at far), +recording, +flare compensation, +display

Communications equipment (optional tags: +encrypted, +jamming, +relay, +recording)

Recording equipment (optional tag: sim-sense)

Trauma Derms (allows you to apply first aid)

EMT kit (allows a Medic to add their Mind to First Aid rolls)

Surgery (allows treatment of serious injuries and implantation of cyberware).

Stealth Suit (+1 ongoing while hidden and alone)

Toolkit (3 uses. +1 forward each time)

Microtronics workstation (you may perform field repairs on electronics and cyberware).

Climbing/Rappelling rig.

Instruments

Explosives

Spray explosives

Survival kit

Vehicles

Most vehicles don't need rules, just pick a frame and a design, strength, look or weakness. If a vehicle is wired for cybernetic control systems (cyber-linked), and a character with the Driver move **Second Skin** jacks in with Control Systems and, you may need to assign a profile.

Choose a **Frame**:

Bike, car, hovercraft, boat, vectored thrust, aircraft, helicopter

Choose an appropriate **Design**:

racing, recreational, transportation, cargo, military, luxury, civilian, commercial, courier

Choose a **Profile**:

Power+2 Looks+1, 1-Armour, Weakness+1
Power+2 Looks+2, 0-Armour, Weakness+1
Power+1 Looks+2, 1-Armour, Weakness+1
Power+2 Looks+1, 2-Armour, Weakness+2

For each point of Power, choose a strength; For each point of Looks, choose a look; For each point of Weakness, choose a weakness. If your vehicle has Power+2, it may mount one weapon system; Military vehicles may mount an additional weapon system.

Strengths: Fast, quiet, rugged, aggressive, huge, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, capacious, workhorse, easily repaired.

Looks: Sleek, vintage, pristine, powerful, luxurious, flashy, muscular, quirky, pretty, garish, armoured, armed, nondescript.

Weaknesses: Slow, fragile, sloppy, lazy, cramped, picky, guzzler, unreliable, loud.

Weapons: Machine guns (3-harm close/far area messy), grenade launchers (4-harm close area messy), missile launcher (5-harm far area messy slow), autocannon (4-harm far area messy)

[SAMPLE VEHICLES]

Flashy ride

nondescript sedan

motorcycle (killer)

sport bike

Drones

The same general advice for vehicles applies to drones. Most drones only need a frame, a motive style and a role in the story. Only make a profile if you need to.

Choose a frame:

- Tiny (insect-sized): +small, +fragile, +stealthy, pick one sensor.
- Small (rat- to cat-sized): choose one strength, one sensor, one weakness, and one other from any category.
- Medium (dog-sized): choose one strength, one sensors, one weakness, and two others from any category.
- Large (bear-sized): +obvious, choose two strengths, one sensor, one weakness and two others from any category

Choose a motive style:
Rotor, fixed-wing, tracked, wheeled, aquatic, submarine.

Strengths: Fast, rugged, off-road, responsive, uncomplaining, easily repaired, stealthy, tight encryption, autonomous operation, robot arm, weapon mount.

Sensors: Magnification, IR, jamming, image enhancement, analysis software.

Weaknesses: Slow, fragile, unreliable, loud, loose encryption, obvious.

Machine guns (3-harm close/far area messy), grenade launchers (4-harm close area messy), and personal firearms can be installed in drones.

Weapon Mount: a weapon can be mounted on the drone. The size of the weapon is determined by the size of the frame.

- A small drone can mount a gun dealing 2- or s-harm with a range tag of close or less and without the autofire tag.
- A medium drone can mount a gun dealing up to 3-harm with a range tag of near or less.
- A large drone can mount a gun dealing up to 4-harm.

[SAMPLE DRONES]

Cyberdecks

Cyberdecks have three ratings: Hardening, Firewalls, Processor. For an explanation of these stats, see **Chapter 9: The Matrix**.

Divide four points among these.

Choose a number of programs equal to your deck's processing. You start with that many programs.

- Lockdown (When you successfully **break systems**, prevent the system from triggering an alert)
- Defend (+2 Firewall)
- Sift (When you successfully **research** in a secure database, choose one extra option)
- Manipulate (When you successfully **control systems**, hold +1)
- Alert (When you successfully **check it out** in the matrix, choose one extra option)
- Tactician (When you successfully **manoeuvre** in matrix combat, choose one extra option)
- Eject (+1 forward to **jack out**)

Gang

Sometimes the asset you need is a collection of people with a certain set of skills. If you don't have access to such a group (say from the Pusher's **Believers** move), perhaps you can pay one to help you out.

If a gang is not already present in your story, specify the kind of group you're looking for and how you intend to make contact and the MC will fill in the details as appropriate. The questions and lists below are intended as inspiration for both potential employers of a gang and for the MC to create one; create new tags and add new descriptions as required.

By default a gang comprises a core of about 20 people as well as various associates and groupies.

What kind of gang is it? Choose one: Street, Corporate, Media, Military, Political

How big is the gang? Choose a size and choose two tags.

- Small: 10 or fewer (loyal, mobile, well-armed)
- Medium: 20-40 (mobile, well-armed)
- Large: 50-100 (well-connected, resources, self-sufficient)
- Huge: 200+ (well-connected, resources, spread out, self-sufficient)

Does the gang have territory? Do they control a few blocks of the streets? Do they operate out of a compound or an arcology? Perhaps they control a network of activities (transportation, hacking, or drug sales to corporate parties, for example) rather than an area of the city.

What is the character of the gang? Tags include: poor, wanted, hard to find, unreliable, violent, hated.

Who leads the gang? What are they like? Tags include: immoral, demanding, grasping, a real fucker,

useless, absent.

What is the gang's main gigs? Tags include: commerce, crime, parties, muscle, deliveries, infiltration, scavenging, activism, politics.

Chapter 8: Advancement

As the characters attempt missions against the corporations, they will discover more about the world and get better at their particular professional skills. This is handled by the advancement system.

Directives

When you create a character in *The Sprawl*, you'll select two Personal Directives that they follow. Choosing a Directive tells the MC that you want to see elements that play on, towards and against that Directive. For example, if I choose the Compassionate Directive, I'm saying that I want the game to include people in trouble so that I can choose to find out when my character will help them and in when he won't. In addition to these Personal Directives, every mission will include a Mission Directive. These give you signposts for the actions the mission requires, and reward you for taking concrete action towards the Mission. As you act towards completing the mission, you will mark experience. Each time you mark ten experience, you'll choose a new advance for your character. After you've gained five advances, you'll be able to choose advances from an additional list. Some of these additional options have additional requirements or costs that must be met before they can be selected.

It's important to remember that in *The Sprawl*, planning doesn't advance your character or the story. Be bold! Take action!

Personal Directives

If life was just the mission, it would be pretty easy. But in *The Sprawl*, there's always life beyond the mission. Personal Directives are the motivations, problems, connections, duties, and loyalties that throw you curve balls, pull your focus off the task at hand, and generally complicate your shadowy, illegal career. Personal Directives split a character's focus between the mission and their personal life. Sometimes they align, and sometimes they conflict.

Here are some examples:

The Behavioural Directive: You have some kind of personal behavioural restriction or code: a religious, moral, professional or the like. When following that code impedes the mission, mark experience.

The Compassionate Directive: You have a soft spot for the weak and powerless. When you go out of your way to help someone who cannot help themselves, mark experience.

The Deceptive Directive: Sometimes your entire life is a lie. When you pass yourself off as someone or something you're not in a high pressure situation, mark experience.

The Filial Directive: You have a mentor who gives you advice. When you follow that advice, mark experience.

The Financial Directive: You love wealth. When you come out of a deal richer than you expected,

mark experience.

The Hierarchic Directive: You want power. That's all. When you improve your standing in a society or organisation by improving your own position or impairing someone else's, mark experience.

The Ideological Directive: You have a strong belief that guides you. When you act, or persuade others to act, according to your belief, mark experience.

The Illustrious Directive: You're in it for the bright lights. When you publicise your activities unnecessarily, mark experience.

The Interlinked Directive: You are part of an organisation that makes occasional demands of you. When the organisation's demands are the major influence on a significant decision, mark experience.

The Intimate Directive: You have a close friend who is more important than anyone else. When you put that friend or friendship ahead of the mission, mark experience.

The Masochistic Directive: You thrive on personal pain and suffering. When you suffer harm, mark experience.

The Network Directive: You are part of an organization that calls on your expertise from time to time. When your membership in this group hinders the mission, mark experience.

The Protective Directive: You have a ward who depends on you for security and protection. When you put that responsibility ahead of the mission, mark experience.

The Prudent Directive: You always seek non-violent solutions. When you resolve a charged situation without violence, mark experience.

The Rejected Directive: You were part of an organization, but they kicked you out. When your former status hinders the mission, mark experience.

The Revealing Directive: Something is being covered up and you intend to find out what. When you discover something about the conspiracy, mark experience.

The Vengeful Directive: You hate a particular organisation or person. When you harm the subject of your hatred or their interests, mark experience.

The Violent Directive: You enjoy overpowering others in combat. When you choose to use violence to overcome a problem, mark experience.

Mission Directives

The main other way to gain experience in *The Sprawl* is by undertaking missions. When you accept a mission, the MC will show you the directives for that mission. The first directive is always "When you accept the mission, mark experience." Here's an example:

> When you accept the mission, mark experience.
>
> When you decide when and where to take Kurosawa, mark experience.
>
> When you complete the extraction, mark experience.
>
> When the mission ends, mark two experience.

When the team collectively fulfils one of the mission directives for the first time, everyone on the team marks experience according to the directive. The last directive always takes the form “When the mission ends...” This usually occurs after the team **attempts to get paid** and any resulting complication are resolved. However, it occurs whether the mission is successful or not, so if the mission clock hits 0000 and the team disperses in failure, never to contact their employer again, the mission is still over and the directive is fulfilled. Succeeding the mission gives you cred and experience. Failing still gives you experience.

Advancing

Every time you mark ten experience, choose an advancement from the list of basic advances:

__ choose another move from your playbook.

__ choose another move from your playbook.

__ choose another move from your playbook.

__ choose a move from another playbook.

__ choose a move from another playbook.

__ +1 Style (Max +2).

__ +1 Edge (Max +2).

__ +1 Cool (Max +2).

__ +1 Mind (Max +2).

__ +1 Meat (Max +2).

__ +1 Synth (Max +3).

After you have chosen five advances from the basic list, you may select from this additional list:

__ +1 to any stat (Max +3).

__ buy off an obligation, *enemy* or *owned*.

__ change your character to a new playbook.

__ rewind a corporate countdown clock to 1800. [COST: 10 Cred]

__ retire your character to safety and create a new character. [REQUIRES: 20 Cred]

__ make a second character.

Links

At the end of a mission, each player makes this move:

Chooses someone who, as a result of the mission, has a better idea about how your character operates. Explain why. That character increases their Links with you by 1.

When Links reaches +3, mark experience, reset your Links with that character to 0, and frame a short downtime scene between the two characters focused on that new knowledge.

Cred

An important currency in *The Sprawl* is Cred. Cred is both your reputation on the street and your ability to trade on that reputation for goods, services and favours.

Everyone starts with five Cred.

Cred is staked on missions. After someone has **got the job** (see **Chapter 3: Special Moves** and **Chapter 12: Missions**), everyone stakes one or two points of Cred on the success of the mission. If you succeed, you get back twice the amount that you staked. If a result of **getting the job** was that "The job pays well", you get back three-times what you staked. If the job is particularly high profile or the employer wants it done quickly, the multiplier may increase.

If the players want to gamble, they can each stake three Cred. For every player that does so, the legwork or mission clocks advance by one: advance the mission clock first, then the legwork clock, and continue to alternate.

If you get hosed and the mission fails, you lose your stake. If you ever run out of cred, you're begging for scraps at the mercy of the the kindness of any employers desperate enough to take a chance on you. You'll probably die in a gutter.

Fair Prices

In most cases, characters will need to **hit the street** to find the gear the want. If "the price is fair", use the prices below. If they don't choose that option, double the cost or add a condition ("Sure Loulou, I'll give you a good price on the TWC-9... if you go lean on Max and bring back the money he owes me.")

Spending 1 Cred will get you:

useful information from a contact.

basic restricted gear from a fixer (sidearms, hunting weapons, ammo).

replacement parts for a cyberdeck.

unreliable gang members for muscle.

a chauffeur

Spending 2 Cred will get you:

a getaway driver for a mission

a hacker for a matrix run (but at this price he'll be poking around for pay-data on the side)

professional muscle (a dangerous individual or a competent gang)

a street doctor for gunshot wounds

more complex restricted gear from a fixer (grenades, assault weapons, legal drones, basic hacking programs)

Spending 4 Cred will get you:

a hacker with a sense of professional integrity

discreet medical services for life-threatening wounds

expensive or illegal gear from a fixer (vehicles, security drones, heavy weapons, cutting edge Russian attack software, basic cheap cyberware)

Spending 8 cred will get you:

expensive and illegal gear from a fixer (cyberdecks, military vehicles, most cyberware)

Chapter 9: The Matrix

> The matrix is an abstract representation of relationships between data systems... Legitimate operators never see the walls of ice they work behind, the walls of shadow that screen their operations from others, from industrial-espionage artists and hustlers... Monochrome nonspace where the only stars are dense concentrations of information, and high above it all burn corporate galaxies and the cold spiral arms of military systems.
>
> *Burning Chrome*, William Gibson

Matrix Constructs

A matrix construct is anything that can be manipulated in the matrix: virtual environments, control systems, intrusion countermeasures and other autonomous programs. A matrix system is a virtual space containing databases and operational systems. Matrix systems often correspond to physical facilities, and may be mostly or entirely offline and accessible only for brief periods or by physically infiltrating the facility. Matrix constructs can be manipulated by legitimate operators at a legitimate console, or by illegitimate operators with the **control systems** move. Matrix constructs can also simply be disabled by brute force attacks with the **break systems** move.

Matrix Systems

Matrix systems contain a large number of smaller systems which control various physical aspects of a building or compound as well as all the components of the virtual environment. A few common types of systems are described below. These systems all have routines which can be manually operated by legitimate system operators or by hackers who have gained control over the system.

Users must be accessing a particular system to activate the routines in that system. Hackers must use the **control systems** move to activate those routines. Users can generally move freely between matrix systems within a virtual environment, although they may have to make moves to avoid raising alarms in secure servers or to bypass ICE in servers that are on alert.

Login Gates govern entry into a Matrix system.

Routines:

- Admit or deny a login.
- Trigger an alert.
- Activate ICE.

Security Nodes monitor physical security systems.

Routines

- Activate or deactivate a camera network.

- Activate or deactivate a physical alarm.
- Activate or cancel a physical facility lockdown.
- Trigger an alert.
- Activate ICE.

Building Services Nodes control the various mundane operations of the physical building or compound.

Routines:

- Lock or unlock a door or set of doors.
- Activate or deactivate a building system (such as air conditioning, lights, power; note that security or life support systems will over have independent backup power controlled from a separate Matrix system).
- Trigger an alert.
- Activate ICE.

Databases contain data. These will often be the target of intrusion attempts aiming at discovering or extracting specific data, as well as general paydata fishing attempts. Many hackers consider this a great way to make a bit of extra Cred on the side... but you have to be good at sifting out the hot, tagged or worthless data.

Routines:

- Search (When you **search for paydata** in a Database, roll+Mind. On a hit you find something you can sell. On a 10+, when you **hit the street** to sell it, choose one extra option, even on a miss.)
- Trigger an alert.
- Activate ICE.

Root controls the entire system. This is often the first place a system operator will go to defend the system against an intruder.

Routines:

- Isolate or reintegrate a subordinate system.
- Sever all logins (external only, internal only, or both).
- Shut down the virtual environment. This will often have major consequences for the operation of physical systems.
- Trigger an alert.
- Activate or deactivate ICE in any subordinate system.

Matrix Login Instances are the representation of a hacker's physical connection to the Matrix. Matrix security assets (including counter-hackers and ICE) will often attempt to trace a hacker's connection and control it.

Routines:

- Cancel the connection, dumping the hacker from the Matrix.
- Maintain the connection after logout.
- Identify the physical location of the hacker.
- Damage a connected Processor.
- Corrupt a connected program.

ICE

ICE (Intrusion Countermeasure Electronics) are autonomous programs designed to prevent infiltration of and damage to a matrix system. ICE constructs have routines, just like other Matrix systems, but they cannot be controlled and must be disabled.

Blue ICE locates intruders, raises the alarm, traces their location allowing the system owner to alert physical response teams (either internal corporate teams or the appropriate local police authorities), then attempts to sever the intruder's connection.

Routines:

- Trigger an alarm
- Trace an intruder's location
- Identify intruder
- Sever an intruder's connection
- Call for counter-hacker backup.

Red ICE locates intruders, raises the alarm, traces their location, then engages them to damage their cyberdeck with feedback algorithms.

Routines:

- Trigger an alarm
- Trace an intruder's location
- Identify an intruder
- Sever an intruder's connection
- Corrupt an intruder’s program.
- Damage a cyberdeck’s Processor.

Black ICE locates intruders, raises the alarm, traces their location, then engages them to harm the intruder herself with lethal feedback algorithms. They often use psycho-electronic techniques to prevent the intruder severing the connection themselves, trapping the intruder in the matrix until the Black ICE kills them or physical response teams can reach her location.

Routines:

- Trigger an alarm.
- Trace an intruder's location.
- Identify an intruder.
- Damage to a cyberdeck's Processor.
- Inflict physical harm to a **jacked in** intruder.
- Prevent an intruder from jacking out and trap their mind.

Hacking

There are three special moves which can only be used in the Matrix. To use these moves to their full capacity, you must have **Data Storage & Interface** cyberware and the Hacker and Infiltrator move **Jack In**:

> **Jack in:** When you're jacked into the matrix you have access to the matrix moves: **control systems**, **break systems**, and **jack out**.

Jacking in with **Data Storage & Interface** cyberware allows you to access the Matrix at the speed of your thought, rather than the speed of your physical reflexes. This is the only way a hacker can hope to compete with the pure electronic reaction time of ICE.

If you have the **Jack in** move but elect not to jack in through **Data Storage & Interface** cyberware, you cannot be physically harmed by ICE, but you roll all three moves at -1 instead of using the relevant stat.

Control Systems

When you attempt to manipulate a computer system into doing what you want, roll+Synth. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9, hold 1. You may spend your hold, 1-for-1 to do the following:

- Activate a routine controlled by the system.
- Prevent the system from triggering an alert.
- Cancel a command to the system given by another human operator.

On a miss, you trigger an alert, which may have additional consequences.

Break Systems

When you use an attack program to destroy, disable, or shut down a computer system by brute force, roll+Mind. On a hit you destroy or temporarily disable the system, your choice. On a 7-9, the system successfully executed an routine before you could disable it.

Jack Out

When you are about to take harm from ICE, you can try to jack out. Roll+Cool. On a 10+ you jack out before any serious harm occurs. On a 7-9, you jack out, but choose one:

- You lose some data.
- You take some of the established consequences.
- You've been traced.

On a miss, you take the harm... and you're still jacked in. You cannot use this move against Black ICE.

Basic Moves in the Matrix

Most Basic Moves work the same whether the user is jacked in or not, while some have additional uses.

If you don't have **Data Storage and Interface** cyberware, you never add your stat to your rolls in the Matrix, instead roll at -1.

Research is used for investigating systems, locating hidden systems, and finding backdoors to systems.

Check it Out is used to scout systems for ICE.

Cyberdecks

> "He'd used decks in school, toys that shuttled you through the infinite reaches of that space that wasn't space, mankind's unthinkably complex consensual hallucination, the matrix, cyberspace, where the great corporate hotcores burned like neon novas, data so dense you suffered sensory overload if you tried to apprehend more than the merest outline."
>
> *Count Zero*, William Gibson

Using a cyberdeck gives you further options and defenses while hacking. Cyberdecks have Hardening, Firewall, and Processor ratings, and can run programs. Several programs are listed in **Chapter 7: Assets.**

Hardening protects the circuitry of the cyberdeck from harm. Spend a point of Hardening to prevent an ICE attack from damaging your deck.

Firewall protects the deck's software from harm. Spend a point of Firewall to prevent an ICE attack from damaging your programs and processor.

Processor determines how many programs the deck can run. Each point of Processor allows a deck to run one program.

Maintaining Cyberdecks: a Tech with **Hardware and Electronics** expertise can spend a few hours and one Cred worth of parts to restore a deck to the ratings it had at the start of the last run, minus one. The last point will cost an additional Cred and a few more hours.

Chapter 16: Running The Sprawl

"Aspects if my wealth have become autonomous, by degrees; at times they even war with one another. Rebellion in the fiscal extremities."
Josef Virek, *Count Zero*, William Gibson

Agenda

There are three very important rules to keep in mind when you MC *The Spawl*. These are your agenda. You should keep these in the back of your mind when you MC, and every move you make should be filtered through this lens.

- Make *The Sprawl* dirty, high-tech and excessive.
- Fill the character's lives with action, intrigue and complication.
- Play to find out what happens.

Remember that "agenda" means "things that must be done". These are the golden rules of running *The Sprawl.* There are a lot of things you can change in these rules, but if you change these, you're playing an entirely different game.

Make the world dirty, high-tech and excessive.

The Sprawl is a contemporary city turned up to 11. The dangerous parts of town are more dangerous; the affluent parts are dripping with excess and guarded with lethal force; the government is more self-serving and corrupt, and more in the pocket of their corporate masters; those corps are more uncaring and arrogant; the technology is shinier and more powerful but used for dirtier and more perverse ends. Everything is dripping with money, dirt, exploitation, power and violence.

Fill the character's lives with action, intrigue and complication.

In The Sprawl, missions are filled with opportunities for action and betrayal. Make sites inaccessible and heavily guarded not to kill the characters but to challenge them to perform daring infiltrations, engage in furious fight scenes, execute exciting heists, escape double-dealing employers and pull off skin of the teeth extractions. Be a fan of the characters; give them opportunities to be badass professionals.

Play to find out what happens.

Don't plan outcomes or storylines; plan starting positions and vectors of action. Set up a situation in which several NPCs and groups with conflicting goals come into contact, insert the characters, then have those NPCs and groups take action in pursuit of the goals and react to the characters' interference.

The rules in **Chapter 12: Missions** give more detail on how to set this up and place it in motion.

Always Say

In addition to the your agenda, there are some things you should always say:

- What the principles (below) demand.
- What the mission prep demands.
- What honesty demands.
- What the rules demand.

Information keeps the story moving, so when the players make a move, be generous with information. Give them everything the rules for the move demand, everything the principles demand, and everything your prep for the mission demands. Be honest and forthcoming. The Sprawl is not about characters puzzling over complex mysteries, it's about what the characters do with the information once they have it. In apocalypse-powered games, a miss is a complication that makes the characters' lives interesting, not a failure that stops a line of inquiry. Give the players information even when they miss. In fact, that's a perfect opportunity to give them some bad news.

When you say what the Principles demand, remember to pass it through the filter of your Agenda. Look at these often while you MC *The Sprawl*. Say things that keep the fiction at the forefront of everyone's imagination and drive the characters towards action, intrigue and complication.

Principles

Principles are the specific tools you use to fulfil your Agenda. They are a set of best practices for using your Moves to achieve your Agenda.

- Chrome everything, then make it dirty.
- Address the characters, not the players.
- Begin and end with the fiction.
- Make your move, but misdirect.
- Make your move, but never speak its name
- Ask questions and incorporate the answers.
- Name everyone
- Make everything Corporate.
- Make everything personal; complicate everything.
- Treat your NPCs like disposable assets.

- Think offscreen

Chrome everything, then make it dirty.

Neon kanji script reflected in mirrored cybereyes. In the corporate future of The Sprawl, image is everything. Even the cyberpunks who reject that. Chrome everything, bathe it in neon, then smear it with the refuse of society.

Address the characters, not the players

Addressing the characters rather than the players keeps the focus on the fiction.

Begin and end with the fiction

Start with the fiction. Resolve the mechanics. Return to the fiction, incorporating the newly resolved outcome. Most problems you might run into with moves and their triggers can usually be resolved by making sure you've established the fictional situation precisely. Don't roll the dice unless you know what you're rolling for. If anyone is in doubt what's going on with a particular roll, ask for more detail.

Make your move, but misdirect

When you make your moves, describe them in terms of their effect in the fiction, not in game terms. Always return to the fiction to describe the move before dropping out to describe an mechanical effects. So if your move is Inflict Harm, describe what happens to cause the harm, then tell the player the mechanical effect, then return to the fiction, usually with "What do you do?"

Ask questions and incorporate the answers

One of the most fun aspects of MCing an Apocalypse-powered game is asking questions of the players. Draw them into the shared world by having them describe it. Incorporate their answers into the fiction as it happens. Bring up those elements they created in later play.

Name everyone

Give names to all everyone the characters interact with in *The Sprawl*. Make them feel real and human. Give them motivations and personality.

Make everything Corporate.

In *The Sprawl*, marketing is ubquititous. Slap corporate logos and names on everything like you point bullets and knives at the PCs.

Make everything personal; complicate everything

That corporate scheme isn't going to destroy a random section of slum, it's going to destroy the home of someone a PC knows and cares about. The PCs are useful assets to the Corps; that means that the people the PCs know, trust and rely on are leverage. This especially applies to Contacts. Threaten them

subtly, threaten them explicitly, level their apartment building to get the PCs attention.

Treat your NPCs like disposable assets

Don't protect your NPCs. Your NPCs exist to add drama and complication to the story you and the other players are telling. If there's one thing that my love of Hong Kong Cinema has taught me, it's the dramatic and emotional value of a well timed bullet to the head of a beloved NPC. Get as much story potential from your NPCs as you can, but don't stand in the way of the fictional consequences of their own or the characters' actions. In *The Sprawl*, the characters are useful and disposable assets. If the corporations are willing to dispose of such useful assets how much more easily will they dispose of less useful people to act as leverage against those assets. As MC, you should do the same.

Think offscreen

The characters can only see a small part of *The Sprawl*, make sure the rest of it keeps moving too. In particular, think about the Corporate Clocks; if the characters have pissed off the wrong people, those people aren't going to politely let them conduct their illegal business. Look at the Retaliation section in **Chapter 12: Missions**. If a corporate clock is above 2100, that corp is actively looking for the characters; maybe you should complicate the mission by throwing in a third party? Remember your principles!

Be a Fan of the Characters

This is a very important principle to keep in mind. Don't run *The Sprawl* because you want to tell your story in the medium of gaming or because you want to kill off your friends. Run *The Sprawl* because you want to collaborate with the other players to tell a story with the awesome characters you've all created. Remember that MC your questions to the players play a pivotal role in shaping the characters that the group created, so there's a little bit of your input in each of them!

Moves

Whenever a character misses a roll, or the players look at you to say something, you get to make a move. Make a move that follows consistently from the fictional circumstances of the game, remembering to think about both what the characters just did or what just happened to them, as well as the offscreen actions of any other parties. Remember the status of your various Clocks, especially the Legwork and Mission clocks. The basic list of MC moves is as follows:

- Foreshadow future complications.
- Reveal a current complication.
- Put someone in a spot.
- Inflict harm.
- Use up their resources.

- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost.
- Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask.
- Use a corporation, mission, or site move.

Follow every move with “what do you do?”

Foreshadow future complications.

Reveal a current complication.

Put someone in a spot.

Delay someone.

Capture someone.

Inflict harm.

Use up their resources.

Tech malfunction

Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost.

Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask.

Use a corporation, mission, or site move.

Raising the Stakes

Apocalypse-powered games will often talk about “soft” and “hard” moves. This terminology refers to the immediacy of the effect on the characters. A soft move sets up future danger and consequences, while a hard move applies that danger directly and immediately. But, this is a continuum, not a binary. In general, you should introduce a situation with soft moves, and then apply gradually harder moves as the situation builds towards a climax. This applies at every scale of *The Sprawl*: individual scenes, linked groups of scenes, missions, and story arcs governed by countdown clocks. The following list of moves increases in strength from soft to hard, in this case in a set of scenes:

Attempting to bypass security raises an alarm (The MCs move is **foreshadow future complications**. This is a very soft move because it doesn’t require any sort of response from the character.)

The characters hear the running feet of security guards on the stairs (Again, **foreshadow future complications** (or **deploy permanent assets**), but this time a little harder as the guards will reach them soon.)

A squad of security guards burst into the office (The MC **reveals a current complication**. Now the danger is right here and the characters must respond to it.)

A corporate bodyguard points a gun at someone and tells them to surrender (MC move: **put someone in a spot**. This is a bit harder as there is the threat of immediate consequences.)

A razorgirl swings her implant blades at someones head. (The MC move is **put someone in a spot** again, but a quite hard move which forces the character to react immediately or else take harm.

A sniper opens fire, hitting a character. (One of the hardest moves, **inflict harm** applied to a character.)

Corporate Moves

> We ran. Out a service door, into Tokyo traffic, and down into Shinjuku. That was when I understood for the first time the real extent of Hosaka's reach.
> Every door was closed. People we'd done business with for two years saw us coming, and I'd see steel shutters slam behind their eyes. We'd get out before they had a chance to reach for the phone. The surface tension of the underworld had been tripled, and everywhere we'd meet that same taut membrane and be thrown back. No chance to sink, to get out of sight.
> Hosaka let us run for most of that first day. Then they sent someone to break Fox's back a second time.
>
> *New Rose Hotel*, William Gibson

These moves apply to any large organisation in whose affairs the characters have become involved: corporations, government and law enforcement agencies, underworld organisations, political lobby groups, personal empires of considerable power.

- Send a subtle message.
- Send a violent message.
- Terminate a problem.

- Throw money at a problem.
- Hire disposable assets.
- Deploy permanent assets.
- Buy out smaller operators.
- Make life difficult for someone.
- Implant a cortex bomb.
- Deploy technology (Cortex bombs, tracers, uploaders)

Mission Moves

Make these moves when the characters are on the mission. They should complicate the job and force them into action.

- Raise the alarm.
- Seal the complex.
- Call for backup.
- Reveal unexpected security measures.
- Reveal a personal complication.
- Reveal another player.

Site Moves

Particular locations may have specific moves. These should be specific to the current mission or the location in which the scene is set. For example, your Sprawl probably has a slum area mostly inhabited by gangs and squatters. It might have moves like this:

- Show criminal activity in the background.
- Entangle someone in violence.
- Highlight desperation or kill someone's dream.
- Reveal corporate callousness
- Spotlight the breakdown or absence of first-world society.

Putting it all together

If you have a clear idea of the fictional situation and the motivations of any NPCs and you work from that fiction to establish exactly what is going on, the right move will usually be obvious. Maybe you'll have several good options! Then take those results back to the fiction and continue the conversation.

Countdown Clocks

As the name suggests, Countdown clocks are a timing mechanism; a countdown to “midnight”, to zero, 0000, to flatlining. Countdown clocks look like this:

```
1500      1800      2100      2200      2300      0000
```

When certain things happen in the story, they will cause the countdown clock will “advance”. To advance a countdown clock, strike out the leftmost unstruck number in the list. When you read a countdown clocks, the leftmost unstruck number is the clock’s value; so if 1500 and 1800 are crossed off, the clock is at 2100.

Countdown clocks are descriptive. As they advance they show you the state of whatever that clock represents. Countdown clocks are also proscriptive. As the clock advances to certain values, it will trigger certain effects in the story.

There are three particular types of countdown clock that merit special attention: harm clocks, mission clocks and corporate clocks.

Harm Clocks

Every character has their own harm clock that tells you how messed up the character is. If a character’s harm clock is at 1500, 1800 or 2100, they’re battered, bruised and bloody, but mostly okay; their wounds can be treated by someone with a basic knowledge of first aid. If they’re at 2200 or 2300 they need the attention of a trained medical professional, and if they’re at 0000 they need an ambulance, right *fucking* now.

Mission Clocks

There are two types of mission clock, both of which track the degree to which the opposition has been alerted to the team’s progress. The Legwork clock tracks the amount of noise the team has generated in their investigation and preparation for the mission. The Mission clock tracks how alert the opposition is during the mission itself. The workings of Legwork and Mission Clocks are described in **Chapter 12: Missions**.

Corporate Clocks

At the start of a game of *The Sprawl*, all of the players, including the MC, establish a number of corporations that will play a part in the story. The MC starts a corporate clock for each of these corporations. This clock tells the MC how much that corporation knows about the characters and how much they care about their disruptive activities. As a corporate clock advances, that corporation will begin to block the characters actions and eventually take action against them and their associates.

At certain points in the game it might become necessary to establish a Countdown Clock for some lesser entity like a gang or a particularly dangerous individual. Those clocks work in the same way; Corporate Clocks are just a special case of Threat Clocks, which can be used for any circumstance that represents a growing threat to the characters.

Countdown Clocks as Story Arcs

You can think of Countdown Clocks as story arcs which operate on different scales. At the top level are Corporate Countdown Clocks which overarch the entire game and take major effort on the part of the characters to change.

Below that are intermediate story arcs, like the Reporter's **Nose for a Story** move which lasts over several sessions of play. When **Nose for a Story** resolves, it can have major effects on one or two of the Corporate Countdown Clocks.

The lowest level of story arc is the Mission, which is governed by two Countdown Clock, the Legwork and Mission Clocks. A mission should generally only last for a session. Choices made in the course of the Mission change the Mission Clocks which, upon completion of the Mission, alter the Corporate Clocks.

Each Mission provides new opportunities for the MC to introduce new elements to the game world through the Mission parameters itself, and gives the players the chance to introduce new elements to the game world through the various contact and obligation moves. These contacts expand the world of *The Sprawl* while helping the characters succeed in their missions. While the characters grow and change through undertaking Missions, so does *The Sprawl*.

Chapter 11: The First Session

The first session, or the first part of a one-off game, should involve a lot of questions. Who are these people, where are they, and what sort of things are they doing? The Links phase of character generation will answer a lot of these questions for you, and will probably suffice for a one-off game, but there are a few kinds of questions the MC should keep in mind during the character generation process:

Ask questions about their cyberware.

Ask questions about who owns them.

Ask questions about their enemies.

Ask questions about their background.

Ask questions about their jobs.

Ask about the setting.

> Which urban sprawl does the game take place in?
>
> What are the important areas of the city?
>
> Where do they work and hang out?
>
> Who are the important people in the places they work and hang out?

Ask questions about the corporations.

The First Mission

Give them a mission against one of the corporations for which they established a Corporate Clock. Pick one whose clock is relatively low (1500 or 1800). There should be a sense of danger, but it probably shouldn't result in a Corp trying to squash them like bugs in the second session.

Make it a relatively simple premise, such as a basic extraction. The idea is to introduce the characters and the moves.

If any of the PCs are *owned,* have the job come through the corporation that owns them.

You might try framing the first scene as a planning scene, then flashing back to the meeting at which they were employed to have a character with high Edge roll the **Get the Job** move.

Explain the way the legwork countdown clock effects the **Getting Paid** move.

If any of the PCs are *hunted*, throw an enemy into the works.

For Subsequent Missions:

The PCs should have a selection of obligations, enemies, and corporate threats. Spice up missions by introducing these elements as obstacles, primary objectives, or tangents.

As the players introduce contacts, ask questions about them and establish PC-NPC triangles between the players, their contacts, the corporations you established for the game, and any other threats that have come up in play or in questions.

Design missions that play to the group's strengths, but throw them curve balls occasionally. e.g. if the group is expert at covert infiltration, but doesn't have a Hacker, have them escort a Hacker into a secure area then get her out.

During missions, push on the players' contacts. Threaten them, put them in spots, make the characters make choices.

Chapter 12: Missions

> I remember Fox leaning against the padded bar in the dark lounge of some Singapore hotel, Bencoolen Street, his hands describing different spheres of influence, internal rivalries, the arc of a particular career, a point of weakness he had discovered in the armour of some think tank. Fox was point man in the skull wars, a middleman for corporate crossovers. He was a soldier in the secret skirmishes of the zaibatsus, the multinational corporations that controlled entire economies.
>
> I see Fox grinning, talking fast, dismissing my ventures into intercorporate espionage with a shake of his head. The Edge, he said, have to find that Edge. He made you hear the capital *E*. The Edge was Fox's grail, that essential fraction of sheer human talent, nontransferable, locked in the skulls of the world's hottest research scientists.
>
> You can't put Edge down on paper, Fox said, can't punch Edge into a diskette.
>
> The money was in corporate defectors.
>
> *New Rose Hotel*, William Gibson

How do you plan a mission when your agenda is “Play to find out what happens”?

Hook those playbooks in!

Think about your group. Which playbooks are they using? Those playbooks represent the team’s skillset. Corporate Fixers are looking for teams with experts relevant to the specific jobs; think about the kind of jobs a corp would hire the team for. A team without a Hacker is not going to get a lot of hacking jobs.

Perhaps more importantly, playbooks are flags for the players. When the players chose their playbooks, they told you what kind of missions they want to play. Someone chose a Driver? Include jobs with a lot of mobility and make driving relevant. Got a Hunter? Someone wants to do a lot of investigation.

This makes describing the playbooks to your players an important part of your job as MC. Playbooks can’t be flags unless the players have a correct idea of what the playbooks do.

What about the world?

When planning the next mission, consider:

- What is the state of the Corporate Clocks? Corps with clocks over 1800 are looking for information on the PCs. Corps with clocks over 2100 are gunning for them!
- Are there any loose ends from the last mission?
- What about NPCs? Did the characters promise anything to a contact that the didn’t deliver?

Make everyone appear suspicious. Sow the seeds for double-crosses with foreshadowing and the like,

but don't worry too much about them yet. The mission structure below is designed to produce that sort of post-mission fuckery.

Make the mission exciting and challenging. Remember your Agenda, "Fill the character's lives with action, intrigue and complication". *You're* not trying to kill them, but the corps might be!

Structure of a Mission

A mission has up to six parts, as follows:

1. Get the Job
2. Legwork & Planning
3. The Mission
4. Getting Paid
5. Retaliation
6. Lie low or fight back?

The MC should prepare an employer and the outline of the job that he will offer the team. Give the employer an anonymous name, anonymous dress, but perhaps a distinguishing feature.

The MC should consider who the target and the employer are and prepare countdown clocks for both if necessary. These may both be corporations for which there are already Corporate Clocks.

The MC should consider what kind of job it is. For example:

- a threat, show of force, or sending a message
- transport or interception
- kidnapping or physical theft
- data theft or retrieval
- wetwork or property destruction.

Pick a target, probably a location or a person. Where is that target, or where might that target be?

The MC should consider what additional mission-specific questions they might wish to make available on Research and Check it Out rolls.

The employer should give the team enough information that they can quickly make a plan and execute it immediately, or tell them that some legwork is required. Of course, if they don't do any legwork, they're likely to get caught with their pants down. That makes for a fun game!

Mission Packages

This section describes some of the types of mission that teams will be paid to complete in *The Sprawl*. Each mission package consists of goals, methods, & considerations. These packages have two purposes. First, they are frameworks around which MCs can conceptualise and design missions. A full mission may consist of several mission packages strung together - the team could perform an Infiltration on a corporate holding, then Capture some assets, and then need a method for Extraction.

Second, they allow the players to quickly focus on what is needed instead of puzzling through and figuring out an approach to the jobs presented. When a player decides to achieve an objective, and isn't sure how to go about it, show them the missions and let them decide which is the closest. The players must execute the methods. The success of these actions will indicate if they are effective or if they get into trouble. Success can be determined in two ways, by a series of moves in the normal way, or quickly, by a single Conduct an Operation move, that lets the players go directly to the heart of the action.

Conduct an Operation

When you lead a planned and coordinated operation, roll+Edge. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- the team arrives at the critical objective with time and equipment to spare.
- the team arrives at the critical objective with a tactical advantage; superior position, cover/concealment, target awareness.
- the team seizes the initiative, forcing the opposition into reaction and mistakes.

The conduct an operation move can be used for side missions, or any part of the main mission that the players or MC doesn't want to spend a lot of time on. For example:

> While investigating a target in the Legwork Phase, the team discovers that a third party has a secure facility which contains information or equipment required for the mission.
>
> The team decides that the best way to approach the desert facility holding the mission target is to steal a military helicopter.
>
> After a botched **Hit the Street** roll in the Legwork Phase, a contact demands help protecting his turf from a rival gang.
>
> A mission starts to go badly wrong and the team has to fight their way out of a corporate arcology.

Destruction

Goal: To engage and destroy target assets.

Methods:

- Assemble teams: 1) point/scouts, 2) Demolitions, 3) support elements.
- Determine approach routes.
- Take positions.
- Destroy target assets.

Considerations:

- Position and status of security teams.
- Location factors.
- Resiliance of target assets.

Hunt

Goal: To locate a target.

Methods:

- Assemble teams: 1) point/scouts, 2) support/backup, 3) coordinating/communications.
- Determine approach and search pattern.
- Enact search to find target.

Considerations:

- Position and status of security teams.
- Location factors.
- Ability of target to remain hidden.

Capture

Goal: To seize control of assets.

Methods:

- Assemble teams: 1) point/scouts, 2) primary elements 3) support/backup.
- Determine approach routes.
- Seize assets.

Considerations:

- Position and status of security teams.

- Virtual surveillance.
- Location factors

Wetwork

Goal: To eliminate specified target(s)

Methods:

- Assemble teams: 1) point/scouts, 2) assassin, 3) support/backup.
- Determine approach routes.
- Take positions.
- Eliminate target(s).

Considerations:

- Position and status of security teams.
- Location factors
- Target and bodyguard vigilance and resiliance.

Extraction

Goal: To exit a hostile situation.

Methods:

- Determine extraction point(s).
- Establish alternate extraction point(s).
- Maneuver to extraction points.

Considerations:

- Position and status of response teams.
- Virtual surveillance.
- Location factors.

Guard

Goal: To protect target assets.

Methods:

- Assemble teams: 1) point/scouts, 2) primary element, 3) support/backup.
- Establish matrix overwatch.

- Determine approach routes and fields of fire.

Considerations:

- Enemy strength and approach vectors.
- Location factors

Infiltration

Goal: To manuever without being detected

Methods:

- Determine entry points.
- Avoid detection and maneuver to objective point.

Considerations:

- Position and status of security teams.
- Virtual surveillance.
- Vigilance of enemy.
- Location factors.

Smuggle/Courier

Goal: To deliver assets between multiple locations

Methods:

- Assemble teams: 1) point/scouts, 2) transportation element, 3) support/backup.
- Determine transport method and route.
- Establish alternate rendezvous.
- Establish matrix overwatch.
- Determine potential obstacles, ambush locations and choke points.

Considerations:

- Transportation
- Credentials
- Pursuit/hunt opposition.

Mission Directives

The MC should also decide what the main steps in the mission are and assign experience values to them. These are the Mission Directives (see **Chapter 8: Advancement**). The first directive is always "When you accept the mission, mark experience." and the last directive always takes the form "When the mission ends...", but the directives in between will vary according to the type of job it is. When the team collectively fulfils one of the mission directives for the first time, everyone on the team marks experience according to the directive.

As soon as the players **get the job**, the MC will show the players the the mission directives, so they should give a general shape of how the mission is conducted, but use only the information given to them by the employer. Here's anexample:

The mission is the hostile extraction (i.e. kidnapping) of a corporate manager. After the characters **get the job**, the MC reveals the Mission Directives:

> When you accept the mission, mark experience.
>
> When you decide when and where to take Kurosawa, mark experience.
>
> When you complete the extraction, mark experience.
>
> When the mission ends, mark two experience.

The characters just **got the job**, so they all mark experience. This is a simple mission. In this case the second step is essentially "when you finish investigating and planning" (i.e. the Legwork Phase) and the third is "when you finish the Mission phase".

That was a First Session kind of mission; most missions should be more complicated. Here's another example:

The mission is a simple wetwork operation (i.e. assassination/murder): kill a corporate VP. However, the twist is that while the VP's house is easy to find, the VP, suspecting his enemies are plotting to kill him, has hired a body double to impersonate him.

> When you accept the mission, mark experience.
>
> When you find the VP, mark experience.
>
> When the VP is dead, mark experience.
>
> When the mission ends, mark two experience.

The Mission Directives don't give away the twist, but although they might find out where "the VP" is in the Legwork phase, they probably won't find the VP himself until the mission. In this case, both the second and third steps probably take place during the mission phase. However, if the characters discover the VP's subterfuge during the legwork phase, all bets are off.

More complications are possible, for example, in the mission above, when the players discover the fake VP plot, the MC might remove the first set of Mission Directives and reveal a different set, like:

> When you discover the VP's body double, mark experience.

When you find the real location of the VP, mark experience.

When the VP is dead, mark experience.

When the mission ends, mark two experience.

Mission Directives should generally provide five experience, but more complicated missions may provide more.

The final directive, “When the mission ends...” usually occurs after the team **attempts to get paid** and any resulting complication are resolved. However, remember that it *always* occurs whether the mission is successful or not, so if the mission clock hits 0000 and the team disperses in failure, never to contact their employer again, the mission is still over and the directive is fulfilled. Their reputations and finances suffer when they fail, but they still learn valuable lessons.

Get the Job

Begin the game with the team meeting their anonymous employer. Give him or her a generic anonymous name (Mr Smith, Mr Lee, Mr Johnston) a generic anonymous suit, and perhaps a single mannerism or distinguishing features.

Whoever does most of the talking in the meet will be **Getting the Job**. Others will be aiding (or interfering... Remember, if you do it, you do it).

Jobs come to the characters through a couple of avenues. Through a Fixer or other employment professional, or through a contact known to the character. For a one shot, the best method is to frame the characters right into the meet. If you offer the job through a personal contact, be sure to make it clear that the job requires the entire team.

Get the Job

When you negotiate about a jobs pay or conditions, or accept a job without negotiation: Roll+Edge, 10+ choose 3, 7-9 choose 1:

- The employer provides useful information (+intel).
- The employer provides useful assets (+gear).
- The job pays well.
- The meeting doesn’t attract attention.
- The employer is identifiable.

Legwork

In the legwork phase, the team prepares to run the mission. They **hit the street**, **research** and use playbook contacting moves to gather information, make a plan and collect appropriate equipment.

Some moves will give the characters +intel and +gear. These two types of hold allow the players to retroactively narrate their character's professionalism and forethough into the action when it becomes relevant, rather than spending hours of game time planning every contingency.

The MC will make a countdown clock for the Legwork phase; something like this:

1500	The team is making some noise, but nothing serious... yet.
1800	The target hears vague rumours.
2100	The target hears definite, but unconfirmed rumours. Advance the Mission clock.
2200	The target has reliable information about the time of the mission. Advance the Mission clock.
2300	The target has reliable information about the team. Advance the Mission clock.
0000	The team is precisely identified. Advance the mission clock and the target Corporation's threat clock.

The legwork countdown clock determines whether investigating the particulars of the mission tips off the corporation. It advances as the players miss legwork rolls or as the fiction dictates. The MC should signal the advance of the clock by **foreshadowing future complications** or **revealing current complications**, subtly at first, but with increasing directness.

It's a good idea to keep the clock where the players can see it and to visibly adjust it when you advance it. Ratchet up the tension!

Characters in *The Sprawl* are specialists with access to many moves that grant bonuses to rolls (including the basic moves **Check it Out**, **Manoeuvre**, **Research**, and **Help**), so misses are be less common than in Apocalypse World. Teamwork is also important in *The Sprawl*, so encourage the characters to think creatively about how they can help each other. Most of the playbooks have a move that helps with this.

The Legwork phase begins when the characters get the job, and ends when they begin doing the job they're been hired for. This might be subjective, especially for investigation jobs where the job itself is Legwork. In that case, the MC should consider in advance when she will stop using the Legwork Clock and start using the Mission Clock.

The Mission

Once the PCs are finished investigating and planning, they will begin the mission proper.

The MC has an opposition clock which is filled as the plan goes astray. When a character misses and the MC has a chance to make a mission move that represents the increasing awareness and alertness of the target (moves like **raise the alarm**, **seal the complex**, or **call for backup**), she will advance the clock. If the mission clock reaches 0000, the mission has failed and the players have to bug out. The opposition clock will look something like this:

1500	The target is more alert than usual.
1800	The target is on full alert.
2100	The target fully deploys internal assets appropriate to the threat.
2200	The target calls on external assets and locks down everything over which it still has control.
2300	The target deploys external assets.
0000	The target deploys overwhelming, excessive force. Advance the target Corporation's threat clock.

The closer to 0000 on the opposition clock, the harder the moves the MC should make. When the clock is at 2300 make every move hard, especially if it doesn't involve them escaping. The team can attempt to continue the mission, but the costs should seriously outweigh the benefits at that point. Remember that you are still a fan of their characters, but make 'em pay if they stubbornly stick it out.

When the clock hits 0000, immediately describe the new heightened badness, then have each player give an epilogue describing how they escape the situation, or are killed or captured in the attempt.

During the mission, the players spend +intel or +gear to narrate fictional advantages and opportunities into the story. They may spend +gear to immediately have a useful piece of equipment. If the gear would be relatively trivial to acquire, have them quickly narrate how and why they have it; they take +1 forward to use that gear. If it seems more complicated that that to anyone at the table, have a short flashback scene in which the character obtains the gear. That may involve moves (most likely **Hit the Street**) and perhaps cred expenditure. If the flashback scene ends without a character rolling a miss, they take +1 forward.

When a player spends +intel, they may narrate how a clue they picked up in the legwork phase presents them with an opportunity which they can now exploit. The character takes +1 forward to exploit that opportunity.

The most important aspect of +intel and +gear is that it allows the players to change the fictional situation to give themselves an advantage.

When the objective has been completed, the characters will want to be paid...

Getting Paid

When the mission objective has been achieved and the team has extracted itself from immediate danger, it's time to get paid.

Getting Paid

When you attempt to **get paid** by your employer: Roll+legwork segments unfilled, 10+ choose 3, 7-9 choose 1

- The employer is identifiable.
- It's not a set-up or an ambush.
- You are paid in full.
- The meeting doesn't attract attention.
- You learned something from the mission. Everyone marks experience.

In a one-off game, this is a fine place to end, but in ongoing games the characters' actions have ramifications in *The Sprawl*.

Retaliation

> They sent a slamhound on Turner's trail in New Delhi, slotted it to his pheromones and the color of his hair. It caught up with him on a street called Chandni Chauk and came scrambling for his rented BMW through a forest of bare brown legs and pedicab tires. Its core was a kilogram of recrystallized hexogene and flaked TNT.
> He didn't see it coming. The last he saw of India was the pink stucco facade of a place called the Khush-Oil Hotel.
>
> *Count Zero*, William Gibson

After the team has been paid (or screwed over), the MC will look at the final state of the Legwork and Mission Clocks.

1. If the legwork clock is filled, the target corporation(s) found out a lot about the team. Advance the relevant corporate clock(s) by one segment (as mentioned on the legwork clock above).
2. If the mission clock is filled and every member of the team escaped alive or un-captured, the target corporation(s) are infuriated. Advance the relevant corporate clock(s) by two segments (as mentioned on the mission clock above).
3. When a corporate clock gets to 1800, the corporation has definitely taken notice of them.
4. When a corporate clock gets to 2100, the corporation takes definite action against them.

If the Mission Clock hit 0000 and the mission failed, the players get to decide if their characters escaped alive, were captured, or died.

- If everyone escaped alive, the corporation increases their efforts to dispose of the characters; represented by advancing the Corporate Clock.
- If any character was killed by one of the corporations, that corporation is momentarily sated; that clock doesn't advance, If multiple corporations were involved, their clocks will still advance.
- If any player was captured by one of the corporations, don't advance that clock. If multiple corporations were involved, their clocks will still advance. Instead of advancing the clock, make a corporate move to give that corporation leverage over the character and, they hope, the team. What kind of leverage you say? Take a look at the corporate moves now. They're in Chapter 10: Running The Sprawl.

  You know what I'm talking about.

  Cortex bombs. I'm talking about cortex bombs.
  But sure, there are other options too.

If any interesting hostilities erupted between characters and other parties (individual NPCs, gangs, and the like) during the course of the mission, make a countdown clock for them. These threats are less pressing and dangerous than the Corporations you established at the start of the game, but they may become significant (and deadly) pains in the characters asses. Note that in *The Sprawl*, NPCs are not necessarily threats (unlike in *Apocalypse World*), but anyone could become a threat.

Lie low or fight back?

When the Corporate Clocks are advancing and the heat is getting too high, the characters have a couple of options. They can **lie low** with contacts to reduce the heat. That's a move.

> **Lie Low:** When everyone goes to ground until the heat dies down, each character pays half their cred, or five, whichever cost more. Lower all Corporate Clocks by one.

Laying low is only an option if you have resources. That cost represents both time and money. *The Sprawl* moves fast. Yesterday's hotshot is tomorrow's granddaddy. You have to have enough money to get out of town.

If you don't have the cash, or you value your rep more than your life, you can attempt to fight back against a corporation. The best options are to find out what they know about you and erase or destroy that information, or to attack their balance book and make it too expensive to pursue you. Either way, those are missions.

Appendix 1: Names

Corporations

When you're setting up *The Sprawl*, you'll have to come up with several corporations. Here's a list of types of businesses. Remember that the major corporations on the list you create in Step 0 are into all of these, but they're especially known for one or two.

Types of Business

Biotechnology (cybertechnology, pharmaceuticals)

Consumer Goods (commodities)

Electronics (IT, robotics, hardware)

Financial (banks, insurance, holding companies)

Governments (national, provincial, departments, bureaus, ministries)

Heavy Industry (Automotive, Zero-G manufacturing)

Illegal (drug cartels, organised crime)

Media (news, entertainment, erotica)

Matrix and Telecomunications (IT, data storage and security, software, remote operations)

Military (technology, operations, security)

Primary Resources (mining, fuels, agriculture, chemicals)

Transportation (orbital operations, waste disposal)

And here's a list of corporations compiled mostly from the names that my playtesters came up with (including a few nods to the classics here and there). Contemporary corporations are another rich source of inspiration for corporate names in *The Sprawl*. Current media and telecomunications companies appeared like clockwork in my first playtests.

Biotechnology

Acumen

Henderson and Henderson

Iristech

Tashinetics

HelixTec

Lifetech

Kikuyu Optics

Mass-Neotek

Tempel Pharmaceuticals

Pointsman Pharmaceuticals

Consumer Goods

NuKraft

KidiCorp

Vaser

Electronics

Hosaka

Weyland-Hughes

Grand Technologies

Financial

Zurich Orbital

Solar Investments

Empire

Aktivor

Shinjo

Governments

Senate Inc.

Heavy Industry

Zhuangzi

Omni Dynamics

Illegal

Camorra

Okhrana

Media

Global News Network

Pirate Bay

Sploot

Sydney-Holmes Media

Existence Entertainment

Matrix and Telecomunications

United Future

Virtual Interface

Aeon Nova

Wipe

Military

Shanghai Security

MDI

Unified Security

Blackwater-Verizon

Gold Coast Maximum Law Corporation

Primary Resources

Ecuadine Petrochem

Valdez Combine

Nutrigrow

Transportation

New Horizons

RadCom

Namatoki-Boeing

Unified Xeno

Tianxia

Korolev

Appendix Z: Thanks...

to the media

If you're not familiar with Cyberpunk as a genre, begin by reading William Gibson's Sprawl trilogy, *Neuromancer* (1984), *Count Zero* (1986), and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). For a distilled hit of mission-focused cyberpunk, read the short stories in *Burning Chrome*, especially 'Johnny Mnemonic', 'Fragments of a Hologram Rose', 'New Rose Hotel', and 'Burning Chrome' itself. For the tone and aesthetics of *The Sprawl*, watch Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner* (1982), preferably the 1992 *Director's Cut* or the 2007 *Final Cut*.

Read //

Daniel Suarez, *Daemon* (2006) and *Freedom*™ (2010).

Walter Jon Williams, *Hardwired* (1986).

Watch //

Dredd (2012)

Elysium (2013)

Johnny Mnemonic (1995)

Max Headroom (1987).

New Rose Hotel (1998) ??

Any of the *Ghost in the Shell* anime franchise.

Strange Days (1995)

Total Recall (1990)

Listen //

Music is a particularly personal form of media, but here are a few albums I like to listen to get in the mood for fighting the man in a cybernetic future.

Fear Factory *Obsolete* (1998) and *Demanufacture* (1995).

Rage Against the Machine *Battle of Los Angeles* (2000).

Pendulum, *Immersion* (2010).

Shihad *Ignite* (2011)

to the designers

Most importantly Vincent Baker, for *Apocalypse World*, a game which I can't recommend enough. Available at http://apocalypse-world.com/.

Clinton R. Nixon for *The Shadow of Yesterday*, especially for keys, from which directives are drawn. Available at http://crngames.com/the_shadow_of_yesterday/index.

Jeremy Keller for *Technoir*, especially for the use of tags. Available at http://technoirrpg.com/.

Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel for *Dungeon World*.

Paul Riddle and John Harper for *The Regiment*.

Bob Charrette, Paul Hume, Tom Dowd and all everyone who brought the *Shadowrun* universe to life.

Mike Pondsmith and everyone involved with the *Cyberpunk* RPG.

to the playtesters

The Capital Crews: James Glover, Matthew Harward, Rose Nichols, Richard ____, William Howard, Steve Hickey, Nick Adams, Dan Steadman, Tim Townshend, Michael Sands, Paul Wilson, Karen Wilson.

SoCal Cyberpunks: Morgan Ellis, Brian Allred, David Gallo, Rob Sanderson, Alejandro Duarte, Jeremy Tidwell, Gina Ricker, Mook Wilson, Nicco Wargon, Jim Waters, Sarah McMullan, Jesse Burneko, Erik Lytle, Robert the Skagg, Ryan McMullan, Adam Goldberg.

The Entourage: Carson Forter, John Verive, Julie Verive, Beau Lindsay.

Quake City Underground: Jo East, Alistair Steele, Stuart Stoddart, Rachel Hanover-O'Connor, Mutu Thompson, Ian Raymond, Mark Berry, Carla Bayard, Cristy Burge, Phil Burge.

Big Bad Badasses: Matt Wilson, Shaun Hayworth, Basil Benitz, Luke Miller, Geoff McCool.

Emerald City Shadow Runners: Sean Nittner, Karen Twelves, Jonathan Reiter

Detailed comments from Mark DiPasquale, David Gallo, Colin Jessup, Steve Hix, Alasdair Sinclair

Everyone who read and commented on the alpha version on *The Sprawl* sub-forum at Barf Forth Apocalyptica (http://apocalypse-world.com/forums/index.php?board=38.0) or on my design blog (http://www.ardens.org/category/games/sprawl/).

Contact //

If you play this version, let me know a little bit about yourself and your group and how your play experience went and I'll add you to this list.

You can reach me at:

hamish@ardens.org

http://www.ardens.org

on Barf Forth Apocalyptica (http://apocalypse-world.com/forums/index.php?board=4.0)

Feedback //

When you send me feedback it would be useful to know a bit about you as context for what you're telling me, so I have some questions for you!

Background:

How familiar was the group with cyberpunk?

What are your cyberpunk touchstones (books, movies, games)?

You've played *Apocalypse World*, right?

What other *Apocalypse World* hacks have you played?

Regarding the text or gameplay:

What did you like about *The Sprawl*?

What would you change about *The Sprawl*?

What was confusing about *The Sprawl*?

How did the game feel?

Were there any inconsistencies or typos that effected your experience of the game?

Thanks for reading and playing *The Sprawl*!