

CBR+PNK

Plain Text Core Rules in English

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Content Warning This game touches sensitive topics like racial stigma, class segregation, large-scale disaster, violence and substance abuse. Because of that, it is intended for mature players, with mutual trust and safety tools in place (e.g. the X-card, Lines & Veils and Open Door).

CBR+PNK created by EMANOEL MELO (cabinetofcuriosities.games) and published by MYTHWORKS (myth.works).

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Long-Shot (Campaign Mode) rules adapted from Sean Nitter's Broken Spire campaign setting for Blades in the Dark.

CBR+PNK IS A FORGED IN THE DARK GAME FOR ONE-SHOT SESSIONS OF CINEMATIC CYBERPUNK ACTION.

PLAYER Characters (PCs) are **RUNNERS**—mercs, criminals, rebels, living on the edge and running in the shadows of a gritty, ultraviolent world. In each game they are brought to life as a team, ready to make huge compromises to score their angle by going on one **LAST RUN**.

Their fixer is known simply as **OPERATOR**, an anonymous flat voice over the comlink who sees them as nothing more than disposable assets.

The **SPRAWL** can be any overcrowded megacity consumed by high tech, class struggle, intrusive advertising, corporatocracy, automated services of poor quality, climate crash, the futile search for humanity amongst all this, and so on.

The **GRID** is made up of servers across the globe through which data flows frantically. On the surface level are public records, media streams, everyday apps. Sensitive information is protected by ICP (Intrusion Countermeasure Protocols). Megacorps and obscenely wealthy individuals run their own private servers, accessed only from terminals inside well-secured facilities.

The **GAME MODERATOR (GM)** refers to the game rules to establish a dynamic world around the PCs. They help organize the conversation so it's pointed toward interesting elements of play.

GAME MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Game Moderator Protocols

- Play to find out what happens.
- Telegraph trouble before it hits. Establish a threat implying tone and hinting at its intent.
- Follow through with established threats. Do not pull punches, the PCs have plenty of tools at their disposal to deal with adversity.
- Ask questions to set the stage, to encourage players to express their characters, bolster the fictional circumstances, satisfy curiosity, or to bring in the players when you're stuck.
- Provide context. Convey a vibrant world of high tech and low life around the Players' characters.
- Present interesting situations, then build upon their choices.
- Cut to the action.

Game Setup

In order to play you will need the GM Guide and a Runner File for each player.

A game of CBR+PNK revolves around our characters' **LAST RUN**—a high-stakes operation with a clear **OBJECTIVE**, best suited for veteran **RUNNERS**.

As a GM, you can prepare Run outlines in advance or generate them on the spot using the prompts found in the **FRAMEWORK** brochure. Players can also come up with their own Run outlines, possibly setting up for their PCs' **ANGLES** and eventual **HUNTED** statuses.

After selecting the Run, ask the Players to file their Runners (build their PCs).

On your end, write a couple of **LOCATIONS**, potential **ASSETS** and make a list with 3-6 obstacles that may be encountered.

Do not overprepare: this is a type of game where you **PLAY TO FIND OUT** what happens.

When everyone is ready, recap the Run's **OBJECTIVE** and let the players select their **ENGAGEMENT PLAN** (their main course of action) and answer the follow-up question.

- **ASSAULT**: Point of attack?
- **DECEPTION**: Method of deception?
- **STEALTH**: Point of infiltration?
- **SOCIAL**: Connection to be leveraged?
- **TRANSPORT**: Route and means?

They don't have to detail every step of the plan—the nitty-gritty of it happens off-screen. Ask them to select their **LOAD** and cut straight to the action.

1 / COMING IN HOT

Describe the **LOCATION** and circumstances the PCs start in based on their **ENGAGEMENT PLAN**. They've already successfully dealt with minor inconveniences and now engage with the first significant obstacle: a shoot out, chase, checkpoint, etc. Go around the table asking each Player to introduce their Runner while dealing with the trouble in their own way—possibly triggering some **ACTION ROLLS**.

2 / ERROR 417: EXPECTATION FAILED

Build up on their actions and, as they get closer to the objective, you should have enough to put them in a spot. Reveal a twist, possibly challenging the PCs' priorities or interests—maybe the data they were stealing is the first known awakened AI; The rogue synthetics show empathy towards their creators; This gig's client is revealed to be the Runners' common enemy; Some shady organization is also interested in the target.

The FINAL OBSTACLE can be a resourceful individual, a resilient machine, a difficult choice.

When the Run's OBJECTIVE is concluded (successfully or not), wrap it up and fast forward to the epilogues.

3 / LOGOFF

The runners have received their reward (or bad news, if they've failed) and now we see how they leverage it to score their Angle.

The outcome of their epilogue is determined by an ANGLE ROLL.

ANGLE ROLL

On their turn, a player declares what APPROACH they will employ to pull off their Angle and gathers the corresponding dice. They also get:

- -1D if the chosen Approach is GLITCHED (don't add Glitch dice for this roll).
- -1D for each marked DEBT.
- -1D if they overlooked or failed to comply with one or more critical requirements: time constraints, quality, integrity etc. Or -2D if they abandoned the mission.
- +1D for each marked CRED : captured a bounty, extracted and sold corporate secrets, found a stash of untraceable credsticks, did a solid for Mx. Smith.

△ If ending up with zero or less dice: roll 2 dice and keep the lowest.

Player rolls and describes what happens to their character (5 min per player should be enough).

If they don't like the outcome, they can step up the result at a huge cost: something/someone they love, their ideals, themselves.

- **6,6:** You succeeded remarkably. After all other players are done, choose who you offer a hand to—improve their result by one step. Describe together how this works in the fiction.
- **6:** You got out of it mostly intact, but why it doesn't feel like a win?
- **4/5:** You did it, but you know it won't last. How do you prepare?
- **1-3:** You've failed. How do your actions only manage to set you back even further?

Action Roll

When a Player Character faces a risky or troublesome situation, the outcome is determined by the ACTION ROLL:

1. The player describes what they want to accomplish and what Approach, Skill, and any other factor (gear, augment, environmental aspect) they will employ to do so. There is no "wrong" Approach to a situation, but some may be less effective or result in more severe consequences, prompting the Player to rethink their course of action to improve their positioning.
2. The GM assesses the risk and tells them what are the probable Consequences. If any or both sides have Edges on distinct aspects of the situation, they will then inform what Threat and Effect Levels can be expected—otherwise use the standard Level 2.
3. The Player can then raise both Threat and Effect simultaneously to improve their Effect at the cost of a worse Consequence or vice-versa.
4. Player gathers their dice:
 - A number equal to Approach+Skill ratings.
 - Add bonus dice from Push and/or Assist.
 - △ If ending up with zero or less dice, they must roll two dice and keep the lowest.
5. The Player rolls their dice and reads the single highest result, judging the outcome by the table below.

Player and GM work together narrating the action, but the latter has the final say over the outcome and is the one declaring eventual Consequences.

- **6,6: Critical.** They succeed and gain an extra benefit (Increase Effect, uncover a secret, improved position, pinpoint a bounty).
- **6: Success.** It goes as well as intended.
- **4/5: Partial Success.** They succeed, but it comes with a Consequence.
- **1-3: Failure.** Things go bad as they fail and also suffer a Consequence.

GLITCH DICE

Each GLITCHED factor used on an Action Roll replaces a normal die with a __GLITCH die__—use a die that's easily discernible from the rest.

After judging the outcome as usual, read the lowest GLITCH separately. On a 1-3, it triggers a further Level 2 Consequence that can't be Resisted; on a 4/5, the additional Consequence can be Resisted normally.

Threat, Effect and Edge

Threat Level (T) informs the danger posed by the situation and what/how much the PC can lose on a partial success or failure. Effect Level (E) gauges how much is accomplished on a success. They are both set to LEVEL 2 by standard and go up to Level 4.

In a conflict, each side may have an EDGE from how they are using gear, tactics, environment, or opposition weaknesses to their advantage—only the most significant factors should be considered. Edges can Increase or Reduce either levels in the respective side's favor:

- If the **OPPOSITION** has an Edge allowing them to respond more effectively, Increase Threat. If their Edge improves their defenses or diminishes the PC's efforts would Reduce Effect.
- If the **RUNNER** has an Edge that can avoid or mitigate retaliation from the Threat, Reduce Threat. An Edge that increases their effectiveness might give Increased Effect.
 - Using an Expertise, they can trade a die for an Edge.
 - They can choose to Push themselves for Increased Effect.

Consequences

Inflicted by enemy actions, bad circumstances, or the outcome of a roll. informs the Harm level, the ticks on a Track, the severity of the Complication, etc

- **Reduced Effect:** their action falls short and causes Reduced Effect.
- **Harm:** lasting condition or injury. Requires time or treatment to recover.
- **Complication:** compromise assets (e.g. cyber becomes GLITCHED), deplete resources (e.g. ammo), start and/or advance a troublesome Progress Track.
- **Threat Escalation:** they lose control of the situation, take away an Edge or safeguard to Increase Threat.
- **Lost Opportunity:** circumstances shift, they must find a new approach.

Combine these as the fiction dictates. E.g. a Runner facing a Threat 3 enemy rolls a Failure. As a Consequence, the GM could deal a level 3 Harm or a level 1 Harm and have the enemy disarm them.

Runners can **Resist** each Consequence separately.

Each Harm Level implies a penalty to pertinent Action Rolls (may be disregarded later by Taking a Breather). When a PC takes Harm of a Level already filled, it moves on to a greater Level. If they take Harm but there is no slot left to fill, it's Time to Die.

Therefore, Level 4 harm is FATAL if not Resisted and should be inflicted only when the stakes are clear.

Progress Tracks

Assign Progress Tracks of 4, 6, or 8 segments when a situation is complex and you need to track ongoing effort or progress over time—otherwise, resolve the result of an action with a single roll. Even more complex obstacles might feature layered Tracks to represent the multiple steps needed to overcome it.

When PCs make progress towards an objective, tick a number of segments in the Progress Track equal to their Effect Level. When progress is made by an opposition, tick a number of segments equal to the Threat Level.

Employ Progress Tracks to:

- **Mark progress on a task:** the endurance of an enemy; a system's integrity. The task is completed when the Progress Track fills up.
- **Set up a countdown:** reinforcements' arrival; a time bomb. Trouble ensues when the Track fills up.
- **Represent a race:** a hacker infiltrating a network while security closes in. Set two opposed Tracks, they don't even have to be the same size.

Adversary Skill

Adversaries' capabilities manifest through Progress Tracks, the severity of the Consequences they deal (as a result of fictional standings), and ultimately, their Skill level.

When **Regular** adversaries are involved, the PCs' Action Rolls determine the outcome for both sides simultaneously. A single roll tells us how their actions interact and which Consequences result.

When **Skilled** adversaries act, they are about to accomplish something. How the Runners respond—and their rolls—determine how effective the adversary was.

By taking the initiative, when **Elite** adversaries act they can inflict a Consequence that must be Resisted before the Runners also have a chance to act.
