

Noir: a Storytelling System

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Introduction

As avid fans of Ridley Scott's film "Blade Runner", Philip K. Dick's novel "Do androids dream of electric sheep?" and Westwood Studios' game "Blade Runner" we have decided to create a role-playing game system that would let us host games based in the world of these three.

We recommend this system for more experienced Game Masters - when writing this manual we have assumed that our readers will have already played tabletop RPGs and know the basics. The mechanics of this system are quite simple, inspired partially by the ABC scale known from the film. The difficulty lies in using the limited rule set to cater for all possible situations. On the other hand the system is very easy for the players as they need to know very few of the rules to play.

The manual consists of three parts. The **Player** part contains the basic mechanics and character creation rules and is intended for both GM and players alike as mandatory. The **World** part is complementary but highly recommended for both players and GM as it contains much useful information. The **Game Master** section is obviously off limits to players.

In the game you will most probably play the roles of Blade Runners, police-men or "private contractors" but the game is not only about retiring replicants but also making the players ask themselves more philosophical questions than "shoot or run?" and creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and danger. It's about exploring the future vision of a world blighted by war and industrial pollution, where real animals are a rare luxury.

Even though the system has been created with the setting mentioned above in mind it would be perfectly suited to be adapted for use with other modern themes as it is very lightweight. As long as telling a story is your focus this minimalist system might prove a good fit.

Not to bore you with the introduction any longer, here is the game.

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Part I

Player

Chapter 1

Character Description

1.1 The scale

First thing that ought to be explained is the grading of your mental and physical capabilities. Each attribute or ability can be said to be on one of three levels:

A a replicant or an exceptional man

B an average man

C a child or a particularly unremarkable man

This scale is universal and is used throughout the system. It might be helpful if you think of *B* as the number zero (meaning the average) and appropriately *A* as positive one (above the norm) and *C* as negative one (below norm):

A +1

B 0

C -1

Each character, both player and non-player, is described by attributes, abilities, traits, and flaws. The scale is inspired by the film and is merely an aesthetic choice - feel free to drop it and go with numbers (or just “+” and “-”), especially if you’re using a different setting.

1.2 Player statistics

Attributes

physical strength, dexterity, endurance, agility all summed up in this characteristic,

mental intelligence, willpower, perception, knowledge bundled together into one.

This simplistic approach puts the emphasis on the narration and atmosphere rather than on game mechanics. The rules are simple so that they hinder the flow of the action as little as possible whilst still differentiating between characters to help define them.

Abilities

athletics an ability responsible for all the strenuous tasks, where muscle power is primarily responsible for the success, such as lifting heavy objects, fighting, running,

endurance the power to resist and survive physical injuries and bear pain and suffering, e.g. caused by wounds, torture or diseases,

suppleness ability to perform tasks which require dexterity and speed, such as stealthy walking, dodging, jumping,

acumen the quickness of mind, shrewdness and the ability to learn fast and efficiently,

empathy the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in their situation also various oratory abilities including the ability to lie and see through lies,

perception the power of one's senses and the ability to use them effectively.

Abilities are a subsection of attributes, not replacing them but supplementing instead. The first three are physical and the other three mental.

Both attributes and abilities are represented on the already mentioned ABC scale unlike traits and flaws presented below. Those either apply to your character or not and serve as a further refinement of your character's description. This is where you should get creative. Here is a short and definitely not exhaustive list of traits for your characters.

Major traits

acrobatics ability to perform cunning feats of agility (suppleness raised by one for such attempts),

city-speak "gutter-talk, a mishmash of Japanese, Spanish, German, what have you,"

doctor of medicine the ability to treat major injuries (acumen considered A for such actions, may require items to be effective),

forgery ability to produce fake documents,

master locksmith no door is closed to you, even those that are,

elite marksman proficiency in handling and firing a gun (firearms trait required), it raises your perception by one when firing a gun,

martial arts you have trained a in combat style of your choice, it let's you use technique instead of brute force when fighting using your suppleness instead of athletics to attack (and grants +1 bonus),

genetics extensive knowledge in the field of genetics,

electronics engineer grasp of modern technology (acumen increased by one when dealing with any high-tech equipment),

charm you leave a positive long-lasting impression wherever you visit.

Minor traits

piloting the ability to fly a spinner,

lock-picking you can pick most common locks,

explosives knowledge of explosive materials, the ability to create, arm and detonate them in numerous ways (acumen raised by one for such purposes),

autopsy medical knowledge of dissecting a human body post-mortem (requires a medicine degree),

firearms ability to arm, fire and maintain a gun (acumen considered A for the purpose of using a firearm),

quick-draw you can draw a gun and shoot an unaimed shot in one move without any penalties (you can also change magazines in one move),

marksman +1 for long distance shots with a rifle, you can fire off two shots with a semi-automatic pistol in one turn (double-tap)

first-aid the ability to treat injuries and illness, short-term (acumen increased by one for such actions),

origami the ability of folding pieces of paper into beautiful and intricate works of art,

musical instrument "I didn't know if I could play. I remember lessons. I don't know if it's me or Tyrell's niece,"

narcotics expert knowledge of various illegal pharmaceuticals,

voight-kampff (VK) the ability to use the VK machine,

local boy reliable knowledge of city's most obscure places.

Of course the list is incomplete and the GM and players are encouraged to add more items as they see fit, taking into account players' suggestions and proposals. Major traits are things you'd spend years of dedicated training to learn or are a rare ability. Minor traits are either specialisations, or things you can pick up in a few months, or minor background characteristics.

You may, and should, push the description even further by adding character flaws to balance the traits. It's up to the GM and the campaign he's creating to decide the balance requirement - by default the number of flaws should equal the number of traits with one free major trait. A major flow or trait is equal to two minor ones. The total number shouldn't exceed 3 major traits or equivalent.

Major flaws

alcoholism ranging from a barely functioning alcoholic to a human wreck,

paranoia everyone is out to get you, even your friends,

in debt you owe so many people so much money you will be paying interest forever, unless (or maybe even if) you win a lottery or stop breathing,

addiction to hard narcotics or something equally destructive,

compulsion psychological compulsion affecting your actions like kleptomania, hoarding or other inconvenient,

crippled lost appendage or a dulled or absent sense like sight or hearing,

old age resulting in either social penalties or physical limitations,

phobia of anything ranging from animals (and animoids) through inanimate objects to certain groups of people,

obese moving at half speed and getting tired twice as fast,

allergy of the life-threatening variety or requiring constant medication.

Minor flaws

light substance abuse ranging from functioning alcoholic to dopey pot-head,

hidden replicant fetish you claim to hate skin-jobs and are yourself in denial but you are sexually attracted to them,

allergy irritating but mostly benign,

extremely short stature though this can also be an advantage,

born ugly but with a kind heart, only kidding, you hate the world for how it is quick to judge on the superficialities,

lost appendage but with a functioning replacement,

short temper you do not suffer fools gladly even if discretion would be the better part of valour at that point.

The list is not definitive and you are free to devise your own. Consider them a finishing touch to make the character a bit more interesting and unique.

Both traits and flaws have no scale and you either have them or not. As far as game mechanics are considered they are always successful - if you don't have a leg you can't sprint, whatever you roll on the die. Some enable you to do things no one else can and others offer a bonus to a particular action. Performing actions still requires an ability roll. If someone is bleeding and you have a first-aid trait, you still have to roll for it but you get an appropriate bonus and if it's a complicated procedure, like an on-the-spot tracheotomy then you wouldn't even know when or how to do it without training.

Chapter 2

Character creation

When creating a character first thing to do is to create his mental image in your head. Decide who he is, what he does, what he looks like, what his strengths and weaknesses are. What are his beliefs? Maybe he has an odd mannerism or dresses really badly. Try to visualise his face and find him a name. Then try to describe the character you have just imagined with the process presented below as closely as the mechanics of the game allow.

2.1 Attributes and abilities

There are two schools of character creation. The old-school approach is to roll your character. You can roll a three-sided die for each attribute or roll two dice and pick which roll determines which attribute. Then for abilities related to an *A*-graded attribute roll five dice and pick three highest scores, for a *B*-graded attribute roll four dice and three for *C*-graded.

The other way is more akin to points-buy systems. You start of with an average character that has all his attributes and abilities at *B*. You can raise an ability by lowering another. The attribute is a sum of all your abilities within the group governed by that attribute. An attribute cannot go below *C* or above *A* (unless in special circumstances).

The first one averages a little higher but the second one provides certainty of a fair character.

Next choose or create appropriate traits and flaws for your character. Try to balance the traits with flaws and provide background reasons for them. It's up to the GM to approve traits and flaws and their numbers.

2.2 Filling in the gaps

All this however doesn't really describe your character, it only imposes certain limitations in order to preserve game balance. Consider it a frame for your character to be painted into. The real value of the character lies in the acting not in the attributes.

The system tries to describe characters with an immensely thick brush. If it can't handle the nuances of the character just write it down on your character sheet as part of the description. Maybe your character is incredibly handsome or intimidating - there is no character ability to describe this but you can add a trait or just put this in his description.

Finally you can complete the character by adding background information, description of his appearance and supplying him with equipment appropriate for his role. Since there are no rules about your starting funds it's up to the GM to approve your initial expenses and savings. This should be congruous with your profession. Whilst it's fair to start off rich if you're an art collector if your character is a cop he is more likely to be in debt and have a mortgage to pay.

As to how much a person can carry on him you shouldn't really be worrying about things like that. If you must then an average person (athletics at level *B*) can carry half his body weight. A strong person can carry his body weight and a weakling only a third of his body weight. This is the maximum load that still allows you to move but is extremely strenuous. So, unless you're a Sherpa, if you want to do anything more demanding, like fighting or running, you will have to drop your bags.

Chapter 3

Game mechanics

The rules are designed not to disrupt the flow of the game as little as possible but rely on them only when necessary. If you are heavily into rolling dice we recommend AD&D (I miss 2.5e) - you get plenty of exercise there and you get to use all your types of dice (all hail the Dodecahedron).

In Noir for all rolls you will need only one die type, though of course you may want to have a handful of them for comfort of play. The die you need is a three sided die with "A", "B" and "C" printed respectively on its sides. A working replacement for one is a standard six sided die, with numbers replaced with letters, each duplicated on the opposite side. You can easily buy six sided dice with two blank sides, two pluses and two minuses (the FUDGE system uses dice like these). You can also buy blank six sided dice and paint them.

Rolls are performed by adding multiple dice results of dice that range between equal positive and negative values so theoretically should produce results with a normal distribution. However, only two dice are used hence the results aren't as reliably zero weighted (1/3 of the time).

3.1 The ability roll

Whenever the character attempts to perform a task which is difficult enough not to be considered an obvious success the ability roll is performed.

Firstly the GM assesses the task's difficulty. That ranges from *CCCC*, though *B* to *AAAA*:

CCCC a trivial task, easily performed even by a distracted idiot with a broken arm,

CCC a simple task which under normal circumstances is all but a certain success for most people,

CC a very easy task that even unskilled people will accomplish on their first attempt most of the time,

C an easy task which most people can do 90 per cent of the time,

B an average task an average person will be able to perform most of the time under normal circumstances,

The scale continues symmetrically at the other end:

A a hard task that an average person could perform given a few tries,

AA a very hard task that requires an expert to be done reliably

AAA a complicated task that even experts can only hope to pull off one third of the time,

AAAA an epic, inhuman feat beyond hope for most people.

For example, jumping 2 metres is an average task (*B*). Imagine it's raining, at night (*A*). Imagine further that the jump is between two buildings and you are dazzled by bright lights, tired (*AA*) and in a panic, being chased by a demented replicant (*AAA*). For another example imagine you are trying to force open a door which is a reasonably difficult task (*AA*) that can't really be done by an average person (try kicking in your house door) but the door is only an internal wooden door making it easier (*A*) and is half rotten (*B*). An average person can usually force an old, weak, wooden internal door, probably on his first go.

The ability roll is based on four scores. Two of them come from your appropriate attribute score and ability score and two of them come from rolling two dice. If it equals or exceeds the difficulty the attempt is a success. Totalling the roll can be done by adding the dice results to your attribute and ability values by treating the *A*, *B* and *C* as *1*, *0* and *-1* respectively. Or you can do it visually by removing pairs of *As* and *Cs* and ignoring *Bs* and whatever is left is the result (obviously, if nothing is left then the result is a *B*).

If the action is opposed by another character the task's difficulty is equal to that character's ability roll.

Some actions will therefore be beyond any hope for success - at that point the character should think about changing the odds. Can't kick down the door? Ask for help, shoot out the lock, find a piece of metal to help you.

3.2 Tasks beyond your ability

Normally any task beyond your ability will be an automatic failure but in some situation the GM might rule that the action can benefit from repeated attempts can have its difficulty lowered by rolling two As. If you can't outright bash a door down but you keep at it each double A roll weakens the frame and lowers the difficulty of the task. Same rule can be applied if you're repeatedly firing a gun and homing in on the target - there's no underlying logic for this one other than maybe that you could hit something by accident eventually after enough tries. Use common sense or GM's ruling - the two being not necessarily exclusive but the latter taking precedence.

Don't use this rule on expert tasks that require knowledge or other expertise to be attempted at all.

3.3 Combat

In RPG systems there are two extremities of handling combat. It can be very objective like a game of chess with slightly more complicated rules and it can make for hours of fun - that is if you like tabletop war games - and if you and your players like it this way, feel free to create or supplement the existing rules and fight your battles on hexes. On the other side are systems with descriptive combat with ad-hoc rules and rolls (if any). This system leans more towards the latter.

Combat isn't really the focus of Noir. The combat rules are intentionally simplified and there are very few special rules that distinguish it from any other task. This way the player can do whatever he wants to and use any weapon he can obtain. The job of the GM is to handle the mechanics smoothly and let the players focus on action, rather than tables.

Melee combat

Therefore hand-to-hand combat for example can be reduced to a single opposed action athletics check resulting in a wound suffered by the loser. Hand-to-hand combat covers a variety of engagements, including wrestling for the gun, straightforward punching or wrestling. Everything that involves pure muscle power.

Melee weapons like knives or improvised weapons like a metal pipe should be handled by the GM as a flat bonus to your ability if you know how to use them and are capable of wielding them effectively (brawling perk). A weak character doesn't get much advantage by wielding a club. Whereas a deadly character with a deadly weapon is more... deadly, my thesaurus failure notwithstanding.

In a fight you may choose to try and evade instead of engage the enemy. You can't deal damage to him but you can use your suppleness roll instead to try and wrestle free or dodge.

Movement

A character can walk 2 metres or run 8 metres. You need to start walking before running and unless there's something to stop you you can't stop on a spot. You cannot

run encumbered. Running is less safe, you have a momentum and can't stop mid-stride. You can fall over or be tripped. You can not run with a gun aligned or shoot with any accuracy.

Ranged combat

Shooting is generally a set difficulty action compared to your perception roll. The difficulty is set by the GM who takes into account such factors as distance, visibility, target size and mobility and any other factor he considers meaningful. The following tables are merely a suggestion, they are not definitive and the GM may rule differently since the tables cannot take into account all possible circumstances.

Given that you are able to handle a gun (have a firearms trait) the difficulty of hitting a standard, stationary target is:

CCCC putting a gun barrel into someone's mouth and pulling the trigger,

CCC under 1m (point blank range),

CC within a single range steps of the gun,

C within two range steps of the gun,

B within three range steps of the gun,

A within four range steps of the gun,

... and so on.

Additional cumulative modifiers apply if:

C you spend a turn aiming,

A target is running (except running directly at or away - use common sense),

A target is of a very small stature or crouching,

A you are not familiar with the firearm,

A you didn't have the target aligned (you need to turn around, or you had your gun down)

A target is behind light cover (partially obscuring but not shielding).

AA you are aiming at an arm or a leg (requires a turn of aiming),

AA you lack firearm training,

AA you are walking,

AAAA you are aiming at some body detail such as an eye or an ear (maybe the target is behind solid cover and that's the only available target),

AAAA you are going John Woo during the fire-fight, flying through the air, rolling on the floor, sliding down the handrail.

Some guns fire more accurately than others. A longer barrel, stock and other features of a gun may offer easier aiming. Consult the gun descriptions for the range step and other characteristics.

Hitting the enemy doesn't necessarily cause his instant demise. The factors the GM can take include the gun used, the condition of the character and his physical attribute and endurance. The GM should take into his consideration whether the shot can count as a meaningful; shooting of someone's ear doesn't cause much of a blood loss. On the other hand, shooting him in the head can result in instantaneous death.

When you need to determine the order of actions compare suppleness rolls. Awareness should also be taken into account - a surprise attack has either an appropriate bonus or absolute priority according to GM's ruling.

Timings

Here are some firearm actions that take a single move:

- drawing a gun,
- holstering a gun,
- aiming,
- shooting,
- burst with an automatic gun
- putting away an empty magazine,
- putting a fresh magazine into an empty gun,
- realigning the gun (turn more than 90 degrees).

Depending on the way the GM handles time this may mean a different number of actual seconds dependent on character stats.

Players can find inventive ways to deal with time pressure. Instead of putting away an empty magazine or a gun, you can just drop it on the ground as a free move whilst doing something else. You can start aiming at the door before someone appears in it. You can fire whilst aligning (snapshot with an penalty of A).

Players are encouraged not to be constrained to the limited number of actions listed here. Maybe you need to run but want to fire a random shot behind you. GMs should accommodate inventive actions. Some may end in tears but if the character wants to try something the GM shouldn't disallow it simply on the grounds it's not listed here or might result in the character shooting himself in the foot (metaphorically or literally).

3.4 Injury and death

When you take enough damage (dependent on how the GM keeps track of it) you will fall to the floor or in extreme cases expire on the spot. The state of the medicine is

very advanced and provided you receive medical attention quickly enough, anything barring severe brain damage can be treated.

All injuries are kept track of by the GM and will be communicated to you as penalties to your ability rolls.

3.5 Voight-Kampff

Those characters who went through the necessary training can conduct the VK test on suspects in order to determine whether they're human.

The VK test is a form of interrogation that requires the use of a special electronic device in order to read the emotional reactions of the questioned person. The VK machine measures the capillary dilation of the facial area (the so called blush response), the fluctuation of the pupil and involuntary dilation of the iris. The readout from the machine helps to determine the subject's emotional response. This process however is not automatic. Each subject is different and requires an individual approach. The blade runner needs to correctly choose the provoking questions and set them in the right order responding readings from the machine.

An important issue is the suspect's emotional resistance. It is vital for the success of the test to always tread on the brink of his endurance but never to cross it.

Asking a question

The more provoking the question is the better the result you get but also the more irritating it is. The VK machine comes with a list of questions (see appendix A) of varying emotional intensity. Whilst asking the question the interrogator watches the emotional response readout provided by the VK. He makes a judgement on each one and these taken into account at the end produce an overall result.

The outcome of each question is determined by an ability roll done out of sight by the GM for empathy (a helpful reminder of how ability rolls are made: add empathy and your mental attribute to two dice rolls). The difficulty is determined by the question intensity and subject's acumen and mental attribute.

The GM may take any other factors into consideration. He may use subject's empathy instead of acumen if the subject is human. He may add a penalty if the subject, or the interrogator (how unprofessional), is intoxicated.

The player doesn't know the outcome of each individual question and can only judge the level of stress the subject is under.

Stress

Every question affects your subject emotionally. If you upset the subject beyond a set threshold he will break down or explode in anger, depending on personality, making further readings unreliable.

Each subject has a maximum level of stress dependent on his acumen ability and mental attribute:

CC will finish the test after reaching 20 stress points

C will finish the test after reaching 30 stress points

B will finish the test after reaching 50 stress points

A will finish the test after reaching 80 stress points

AA will finish the test after reaching 100 stress points

Thus, it is important to gauge the intelligence of a person prior to the test with some small talk. You can put the subject at ease by asking a low intensity question. Whilst the GM will not tell you how many unveilment points you have accrued he might give you a hints about the stress levels of the subject.

Each subsequent question puts the subject under more stress, regardless of success. First question adds one stress point, second question - two, and so on. Additional to that different intensity levels of questions affect the number of stress points.

Results of successfully asked questions on the subject's stress level:

A intensity question adds 10 points of stress, after the base rate has been added,

B intensity question halves the base rate added to the stress level,

C intensity question removes 10 points from the stress level after the base rate has already been added

Any failed question only adds the base rate of stress points. The stress level cannot go below zero.

Unveilment

A successful question of intensity higher than *C* results in unveilment points equal to the stress level of the subject before the stress points are applied. A failed question results in negative points. Their sum can go into negative numbers.

C intensity questions yield no points, either positive or negative. They are designed to relax the subject and only affect his stress level.

Ending the test

You can finish the test early if you're confident or wait until the subject goes over the brink. You still get the unveilment points for the last question asked.

At the end of the interview if you have negative unveilment points you will get a erroneous reading. If you failed to reach the required number of points the test result will be inconclusive. If at the end you had enough unveilment points you get an accurate reading.

The number of unveilment points needed depends on the model of the replicant. A Nexus 6 or a human will require a **hundred unveilment points**. Other models are up the GM to decide.

As mentioned, all the rolls are made by the GM concealed from the player. If the player is too careful and asks too many low intensity questions he may come up with a false outcome but if he's is too reckless he may finish the test prematurely without any definitive outcome but with a very angry suspect on his hands.

3.6 Esper

The ESPER machine is an insanely complex device designed to extrapolate three dimensional data from an ordinary two dimensional photograph by analysing light scattering, radiosity, refractions and reflections. This allows the user to move freely through a three dimensional environment. It comes with a laser printer capable of printing hard copies of the screen.

To examine a photograph the character needs access to an ESPER machine. The process is time consuming and requires peace and concentration.

Each photograph is divided into a number of sections depending on the photograph - usually 16 rows by 16 columns. A photo can be torn or damaged thus losing some of its sections or it may contain a small number of details in which case the GM may divide it into fewer sections. Sections are always equal in size. Each clue can span more than one section.

The player chooses the section and rolls an ability roll for perception against a set difficulty. The difficulty is known only to the GM. If the perception roll equals or excels the set difficulty, the GM will reveal the information hidden in this part of the photo. Some sections contain false clues and failing a perception roll on them causes them to be interpreted as real leads and may send the players on a fruitless chase.

The player cannot check any section more than once. Information missed is information lost. If a clue spans more than one section then inspecting other sections can still succeed. It takes 5 minutes to analyse a section of a photo. After each hour or 12 sections the difficulty of each clue rises by one. Penalties are reset the next day when you approach the photo with a fresh mind.

Part II

World

Chapter 4

World of 2019

In the end it wasn't the overpopulation or resource depletion that brought on the ruin. The world had suffered yet another world war, named World War Terminus. The details remain unknown. No one really knows, or cares, who had started it. One certain thing is that there had been no victor. Millions have died and the whole ecosystem collapsed in the ensuing radioactive blight. The new world that had emerged is a bleak one. Almost completely devoid of animals and with much harsher climate, Earth remains a home for remnants of the human race who had not yet fled off to settle other planets.

Those who stay are being exposed to radiation and pollution and are at a risk of being marked as "specials" who are considered less than human and banned from the colonisation programme. The colonisation of other planets is now considered a priority. Unexpectedly many people don't want to leave earth even though they pass the physical and mental tests. Some even believe that the Earth can be restored.

The colonisation process of other planets is very hazardous - even with a personal android servant at your disposal. Androids had been developed from the military project "Synthetic Freedom Fighter" for Off-World duties. Each emigrant received one on arrival. These androids, who were called Replicants, were biological constructs - engineered in the laboratories of the global Tyrell Corporation. Made to resemble humans in almost all possible ways, they were at least as smart and as strong as humans and differed in only one thing - they didn't have emotions. The new Nexus 6 model had been suspected to be able to develop emotional responses over time. That is why its creators have decided to limit their lifespan to four years.

After a bloody mutiny by a NEXUS 6 combat team in an Off-world colony, Replicants had been declared illegal on earth - under the penalty of death. Special police squads - Blade Runner units - had orders to shoot to kill, upon detection, any trespassing Replicant. This was not called execution. It was called retirement.

The world, left shell-shocked by World War Terminus, struggles on. Governments and law exist, but mostly in large cities, the rest being thrown into anarchy and chaos. People lead reasonably normal lives, even though the environment is less than accommodating, with all the pollution and violence on the streets. The pace of life is much slower today and the civilisation is declining. There are much fewer people but they live huddled together around the remaining big cities.

4.1 Technology of 2019

Esper

A high-density computer with a very powerful three-dimensional resolution capacity and a cryogenic cooling system. Personal units are connected to the mainframe located at police headquarters. Among many functions, the Esper can analyse and enlarge photos. Through complicated analysis of light reflections it can extrapolate three-dimensional data from an ordinary photograph. It also serves as a terminal to the mainframe at the police station or elsewhere.

Replicant

A genetically engineered creature composed entirely of organic substance. Animal replicants, called animoids, were developed first for use as pets and beasts of burden after most real animals became extinct. Later, humanoid replicants were created for military purposes and for the exploration and colonization of space. The Tyrell Corp. recently introduced the Nexus 6, the supreme replicant - much stronger and faster than (and virtually indistinguishable from) real human beings. Earth law forbids replicants on the planet, except in the huge industrial complex where they are created. The law does not consider replicants human and therefore grants them no rights or protection.

Voight-Kampff

A very advanced form of a lie detector that measures contractions of the iris muscle and the presence of invisible airborne particles emitted from the body. The VK is used primarily by blade runners to determine if a suspect is truly human by measuring the degree of his empathic response through carefully worded questions and statements. The name Voight-Kampff refers to two experts in android science, Voight and Kampff, who invented the reaction scales.

PK-D Blaster

This hybrid gun was the outcome of a collaboration of two major firearm companies - Charter Arms and Steyr. It combines the best features of both a pistol and a revolver. It's a six chambered revolver with an auto-loading mechanism. It can hold six caseless bullets in the revolver's chambers but regular magazines hold 10 bullets. Upon inserting a fresh magazine any empty chambers are reloaded and the remaining bullets are fed as empty chambers arrive. Each magazine has its own battery supplying power to the laser aiming device and the launcher. Being a police weapon it also sports an additional barrel fitted on top, firing (with the second trigger) a non-lethal projectile which is loaded manually and accelerated magnetically. These are usually mini gas grenades and tranquillizer darts.

Since the top chamber is designed to propel any metallic objects there exists a variety of black market customised projectiles available - such as mini-grenades and even nets.

The gun is robustly designed and guaranteed to never misfeed by the nature of the feeding mechanism. Case-less ammo can't cause a jam and in case of a misfire you can just cycle over the barrel like in a revolver. Designed to be shock-proof and operate in a wide range of environments. The main gun will fire and cycle even without the magazine. The chamber can be opened and loaded manually.

4.2 Los Angeles 2019

The city of Los Angeles hasn't been wiped out by World War Terminus. Many other calamities have however befallen on the city. Much of its population has emigrated off-world and many of those who stayed are now classified as specials. The air pollution has reached such a degree that day is merely a twilight affair and rain is almost constant.

LAPD police stations four of them, each with its designated sector, huge buildings, with staff and design more adhering to military standards rather than normal police (small local police stations have all been closed being no longer viable from the security standpoint).

Right, listen up. This is the... Hey! I said: listen up! Now, this is the Police Station Headquarters in the fourth sector. You're gonna' work here... probably for the rest of your shitty life, so pay attention goddamit. Most of the rest of the building are offices just like this one. On the roof there's the spinner pad... but you already know that. There's the lab on the fourth floor, the mainframe and shooting range are on the third and the lock-up is in the basement. Some else will give you the tour later. But after that I don't want to see you strolling around the building ever again, I want to see you pushing these papers right here. ... My office is on the ground floor but I ain't telling you this so that you can come to me with your problems. I'm telling you this so that you know exactly where you shouldn't come and disturb me. Ever. Actually if you do ever see the inside of my office it'll probably be your last day here. Understood? ... Now, I still can't hear the papers rustling. ... Good.

Hollywood now in ruin, the abandoned studios are full of derelict equipment and homeless who, oddly, find it a good place to squat.

'ave you got the money for a cup of tea, mate? Or fag you could spare? ... Thanks, man. ... So what're you lookin' for 'round here? ... 'aven't seen 'im. ... Me? What does it look like? I live here. Yeah, it's a dump... sure, but it's a safe place to stay. Sure as hell safer than the city. Ain't no one dumb enough to attack us here. It's our turf. ... They used to make movies here, you know. Those warehouses are full of old cameras and stuff. All useless junk. ... Looking for a lost friend, ey? Sure you are. But hey, that ain't my business so don't worry. ... You a kind man, sir. Tell, you what? They know me round here, if you meet anyone, just say that you're Willis's pal. Hope you find your... friend.

Tyrell corporation huge, pyramid shaped buildings, housing the scientists and engineers working on new designs of replicants.

Tyrell speaking. Good afternoon, senator... Yes I did. I wanted to discuss with you my plan of constructing a third Tyrell Corporation building... Yes, I understand it would occupy vast areas of land like the other two - I designed them, senator... But it would be another step to revitalising the wasteland which is supported strongly by the president... Well, we have decided to start a new production line of our Nexus models which requires... Of course. The plans will be sent immediately. Thank you, senator. Goodbye.

DNA row home for many freelance scientists, most of them working for the Tyrell corporation.

Busy, busy. Come back later... OK, OK. What do you want to know? DNA row? It's where I make my eyes. Just genetic design of eyes... For who? Eyes for Tyrell. Ask him, he the genius. But my lab here in DNA Row with cold, freezing eyes. I not only one here in DNA Row. Others too. Like Moragi. We are friends with Moragi. He also genetic designer. He make skin design for Tyrell. And the twins upstairs also make research. Why here, you ask? Here we work in peace. No disturbance, except you. Almost everyone genetic designers. Away from centre so it's quiet. But I'm busy. Come back later.

Chinatown the Chinese, being excluded from the colonisation effort by the US government, had stayed in LA and are no longer a minority, thus Chinatown has grown out of all proportion.

Hey, you! Take that piece out, slowly. Yes, that's right. Coming here alone, you stupid or what? This no place for cops, asshole. On your knees. Search him! ... A cop, no less. Blade runner, huh? There's no reason for me not to off you here and now. ... What were you looking for? ... I said what were you doing here? ... I have all night, but you don't look like you will last that long. You got balls walking in here alone. You cops may think you uphold the peace in the city but not here! Here we rule, we! We're not afraid of open conflict, we got enough arms and men, we'd wipe you all out! ... What're you laughing at asshole?ughh... Shoot him! Shoot him! After him!

Downtown now the main commercial district, where most high class shops and clubs are situated.

Hi, man!.. Me? Just waiting for the client - some old bitch. Rich enough to have a chauffeur but no! She prefers a taxi!.. So I've been drivin' 'round downtown since nine! From one fuckin' high-class boutique to another. She's been buying all that fluffy crap in each of them! Now she's in the club, of course. What do you mean what she's doin' there? Seeing other bitches, I guess. Damn... So. Who's your client? Probably some yuppie sucker if he's at that joint too...

LAX formerly the International Los Angeles airport, now a shuttle station for the moonbus, with the Shimago-Dominguez Corporation having its offices there.

Welcome to the LAX Intergalactic Los Angeles Shuttle Station's Terminal. For those who are waiting for their call, feel free to visit our restaurants, bars and shopping malls. Don't miss the Tax Free Colonial Store where you can buy best quality goods from all explored galaxies. And if you haven't yet, don't forget to book your ticket! Remember: new life awaits you in the off-world colonies, the chance to begin again in a golden land of opportunity and adventure. All brought to you by Shimago-Dominguez Corporation, LA, California.

Animoid row housing many shops offering artificial animals called animoids.

Ah, come in, come in, sir! And Welcome! Looking for a snake? There's no better place to look for snakes than Abdul Hassan's shop! Not in Animoid Row, not in the whole Los Angeles! All snakes manufactured, my own work. All best quality!... But not many can afford such quality. Very few can, indeed... Ah! I see. A special order? For your exotic dancer? Splendid! Oh, I shall get to work right away, yes. Will be ready for Friday evening, I promise. Where should I send it, sir?... Taffey Lewis, fourth sector, Nightclub Row... Thank you, Sir! Doing business with you is pleasure.

Disneyland not a fun place to be any more, its fate similar to the Hollywood studios', but more massively bombed during the war, with less intact buildings surviving.

Disneyland?.. Well, honey, it used to be a beautiful place where all the happy characters from the old DVDs I gave you lived... What happened? Remember when I told you about bad people and the war? Those bad people destroyed Disneyland... No, honey, I'm sure Mickey and Donald are all right. They probably went off-world, just like we're going to do tomorrow... Yes, I'm sure we'll meet them there. Now go to sleep, dear. Goodnight.

Nightclub row offering clubs of various standards and tastes, from high-class restaurants to disreputable joints like Taffey Lewis'.

So I call her and say: "Meet me in Taffey Lewis in fourth sector". You know what she said? "It's not my kind of place"! So I said: "We can go somewhere else" and she just cut the transmission... Well, she was probably right. This whole nightclub row is just a big whore house district with those joints and strip clubs like this one. OK, OK. I'm not saying anything more. Just pour me one - but one good one...

4.3 Equipment list

Even with the civilisation declining overall the progress of technology seems unstoppable. New technology mixes with old junk and many items are again being crafted in small manufactures given the state of the industry and lack of raw materials for serial production.

Trade is flourishing and you will find anything you might want on offer but not necessarily at the price you're prepared to pay. Black market prices ought to be higher and sometimes require a wait (and maybe even a deposit).

This list doesn't even begin to scratch the surface. Use current prices, inflated for high-precision manufacture products and especially for any electronics. Technology has progressed a lot but the manufacturing is occupied with the production of supplies for the Off-World efforts.

Name	Calibre	Weight [kg]	Length [mm]	Capacity	Notes	Range step	Price
COP 357	.357 Magnum	0.80	140	4	can be rigged to fire more than one barrel at a time	5	150
QSZ-92 pistol	5.8mm Chinese, 9x19mm	0.75	190	15	laser pointer mounted on the rail under the barrel	10	180
Steyr M-1A	40 S&W, 9x19mm, .357 SIG	0.8	180	15, 12, 15		10	300
Glock 17	9x19mm	0.7	186	17,19	available 31 round extended magazines	15	500
Beretta PX4 Storm	9x19mm, .40 S&W	0.8	193	17, 14		15	700
SP-21 Barak	9x19mm, .40S&W, .45 ACP	0.7	188	15, 10, 10		15	550
H&K UCP	4.6x30mm	0.9	200	20	rare ammunition calibre	20	900
FN P90	5.7x28mm	2.2	500	50	rate of fire of 900 rpm	30	1600
H&K MP-5	9x19mm, .40 S&W, 10mm Auto	2.5	680	30	rate of fire of 800 rpm	30	2200
FN SCAR	5.56x45	3.5	750	30	rate of fire of 600 rpm	40	3000
Steyr AUG	5.56x45	3.8	805	42	650 rpm, built in scope	60	3800
Benelli Nova	12 gauge	3	1025	4	spread limits the effective range to 60 metres, pump action	40	520
Alpine TPG-1	5.56x45, .338 Lapua	5.5	1100	5	bolt action	100	5600
FN SPR	7.62x51mm	4.9	1120	5	integral magazine, bolt action	150	2200
PK-D Blaster	5.56 mm caseless, custom darts	800	190	10	can hold 6 bullets in its chambers, launcher on top	15	1200

Table 4.1: Firearms

Type	Protection	Weight [kg]	Notes	Price
C	.22, .380 ACP, birdshot	2	common in regular garments	400
B	9mm, .40 S&W, .45 ACP, .357 Magnum, buckshot	4		800
A	.357 SIG, .44 and rifle calibres, 12 gauge slug	8	requires athletics B	1200
A+	armour piercing rounds	12	requires athletics B	1200
helmet B	as type B	2	open	500
helmet A	as type A	4	fully enclosed	1000
stab-proof	stabbing and slashing	1	can be an additional layer on your regular vest	400

Table 4.2: Armour

Name	Weight [kg]	Notes	Price
Paramedic Bag	3	Contains all the necessary supplies to stabilise a patient until he can be given proper attention	1200
IV gen nightvision	3		2500
Military webbing	3	Any type of military webbing, in different camos and puch and hoslter setups	100
Biohazard suit	10		2000
Evidence Kit	2		500
Locksmith Kit	5		800
Explosives Kit	5	Primers, detonators, etc.	1200
Pocket spectrometer	4	The future is here.	1800

Table 4.3: Miscellaneous Equipment

Name	Weight [kg]	Notes	Price
Toughbook	3	Military style laptop that can handle abuse and has a battery that could run a car.	2000
Mesh Network Box	0.2	A box that you can drop anywhere and create a local network, has an ultra efficient battery that will keep the network up for a month if it's not in constant use. Range of 500m in open air.	350
Directional mic & recorder	0.2		400
Laser mic & recorder	1		1500
Camera	2		2000
Satellite Phone	1	Comes as prepaid or on a contract, like mobiles today	1000
Radio	1	For local communications	200
Signal jammer	10		3000
Motion detector	4	Ultrasonic, microwave, infra-red.	1800
Esper	40	Draws a lot of power.	4000

Table 4.4: Electronics

Name	Seats	Notes	Price
Civilian spinner	4	Max speed artificially limited to 200km/h, unsafe at any greater speed depending on make	50K
Military Spinner	2 (6 in back)	Armoured, safe up to 400km/h	150K
Transport Spinner	2 (in hold 12)	Slow acceleration and unwieldy but has a cargo hold, max speed around 180km/h	100K
Performance Spinner	2	Can outmanoeuvre any spinner in an urban setting. Max speed at around 300km/h	100K
Sports Spinner	1	Essentially a VTOL jet plane, 600mk/h	600K

Table 4.5: Spinners

Part III

Game master

Chapter 5

The system

The system is here to aid you in certain situations when telling the story. It's very simplistic though and contains many approximations. You won't find many tables and strict rules that will handle all the possible situations - just enough (hopefully) to anchor you and let you fill in the gaps yourself. You will often have to fudge the rules to fit the situation.

The weakness of the system - wild approximations, exceptionally rough scale, basic rules - can also be considered its strength. The system is designed for storytelling and quick play with players not really needing to learn any rules. All the basic rules that the player needs to know can be handed to him by the GM in about a minute. All the specific rules can be taught while playing. This means you can hold a session with your friends without forcing them to study any complex rules beforehand. These, if used, are handled by the GM and ought to be transparent to players.

5.1 This is how I roll

The rules should prove easy and non-intrusive during the session; if you roll more than you talk, consider dropping some rules. Don't force the players to check their abilities too often. Keep in mind that there are only two dice to roll for an ability check, varying the result by 2 at the most. If the player has a perception ability at B and his mental attribute is at B then you only need to check his ability against the task's difficulty if it's in the range of CC-AA. Most often a task will be an automatic success or a failure so it is essential to keep track of all your players' statistics and not make them roll needlessly.

The rules should actually be seldom necessary since the aim of the game is not to kill enemies and gather loot. The biggest emphasis is put not on the action but on the story and atmosphere.

Chapter 6

Combat

The most roll-intensive part of any session are usually combat encounters. The detailed combat rules are optional and should only ever be used in important fights. Not every hostile action should be treated as a skirmish.

6.1 Time in combat

Try and force the players to take immediate actions when it comes to combat. Combat can't be real-time but don't let the players communicate and plan unless they are doing this prior to combat or are willing to waste in-game time discussing their situation. With the exception of rules enquiries which should make the time stop, if the players fails to decide what he wants to do when asked make him lose a turn. Take advantage of the minimal amount of dice rolling in the system and try and keep a healthy pace when in combat.

Essentially, combat in Noir is still turn-based, but with simultaneous turns and no initiative rolls so it should be mostly descriptive without having to resort to hexes and planned, chess-like gameplay, with every move pondered and probability of success calculated.

6.2 Quantum mechanics

Players shouldn't be burdened with any more rules. You on the other hand may choose to implement additional rules in order to underlay the seemingly arbitrary decisions with objective logic. This is optional, and you may wish to simplify it for games where combat is unimportant.

For this purpose we'd like to introduce quanta - think of them as the smallest common denominator of time, damage and exhaustion. Anything that is less than a quantum is negligible - there are no half-quanta.

Health and stamina

How much Damage and Exhaustion Quanta you can soak up are determined by your physical attribute and your endurance ability:

AA 8,

AB 6,

B 4,

BC 3,

CC 2.

One quantum of damage or simply one DQ is the equivalent of receiving one flesh wound. Use the list below as a guide on how damage can be gained:

1 DQ flesh wound, 10 minutes of bleeding, 1 second of extreme temperature applied to a large surface, FMJ bullet,

2 DQ deep stab, JHP bullet, buckshot,

3 DQ impaling, high-powered shotgun slug, large calibre bullet.

Any substantial damage (your judgement call) adds a *-1* penalty to all rolls. An injured character may be treated, and in some cases the penalty may be negated even if the injury remains.

A normal person spends 9 hours sleeping and 15 hours awake. Therefore, 1 exhaustion quantum (EQ) is the equivalent of 2 hours of strenuous activity or 8 hours of normal functioning. Sleeping 8 hours replenishes your stamina. EQs can also be gained by taking a serious beating and in other situations which are up to the GM to decide.

You should keep track of these for the players, out of their sight, and when they reach the limit, tell them they are fatigued and they can put that on their character sheet. You can keep dropping hints when they're nearing the fatigued status.

A fatigued character adds a penalty of *-1* from every roll (where appropriate - use common sense). It's cumulative with the wound penalty.

Time passage

Time Quanta needed to perform a single move are determined by your physical attribute and your suppleness ability:

AA 2,

AB 3,

BB 4,

BC 5,

CC 6.

Use this during a combat situation in order to differentiate between the nimble and clumsy characters by using a type of a simultaneous turn system. All actions take place at once. They are be divided into time quanta or turns. Characters require different amounts of time quanta to complete a move. A move can be drawing a gun, aiming, reloading, walking, running etc.. Time passage is synchronised for all characters, so it's easy to unambiguously determine the progress of each of their moves. Some actions are too small to be considered a move, such as pulling a trigger or pushing a button. These are considered to take place in the first quantum, regardless of player's statistics and the remaining quanta (if any) are the recovery time.

If two actions happen exactly in the same turn and one precludes the other, the character with higher scores goes first, with a roll-off if needed. In normal play this shouldn't ever happen often and the preferred resolution is having both actions happen simultaneously.

To keep track of actions of all the characters with different number of time quanta per move you can use ruled paper, with a column for each character and the steps marked out beforehand. This way you can easily keep the action synchronised between participants.

For the purpose of illustration, let's try a simple example.

A blade runner (Player) is confronting a replicant (NPC). Both of them understand the situation. The Player decides to draw his gun and try to shoot down the replicant. The GM decides for the replicant to charge at the blade runner with his bare hands. The distance between them is roughly 10 metres. The blade runner requires 4 TQs for each move, the replicant only 2. It takes the skinjob 6 TQs to reach the blade runner who needs 4 to draw his gun and 4 to shoot. After 4 TQs the blade runner is holding his gun and the replicant is running fast towards him, after his 4 metres run up, but is still 6 metres away. It would take less than 2 more TQs for him to reach the blade runner but it only takes 1 turn for the blade runner to pull the trigger. Taking into account the point blank range at which the bullet was shot it's an obvious hit and the replicant suffers 2 DQs. Having such a great momentum he continues to run at the blade runner and knocks his weapon out of his hand whilst the blade runner is trying to take another shot at him.

This has been written up verbosely but it shouldn't take more than 20 seconds of play-time plus dice rolls if any.

6.3 Locational damage

Hit placement can be done arbitrarily, favouring the torso unless a body part was being aimed. Optionally you can also use any hit dice that works for you. The setup below is provided for your convenience.

Get 3 blank 6 sided dice (or regular dice and use a table). Use one to determine left and right. The other two paint as follows:

torso on 3 sides,

legs on 1 side,

arms on 1 side,

head on 1 side.

Roll both dice at once. The result which is higher in the order listed above is the hit location. You can use colours going from cold to warm to help you remember the order. So if you roll *arms* and *head* the hit location is *arms*. This favours the torso, making it the hit location half of the time. A head-shot (which is usually immediately lethal) occurs on average once in 36 shots.

Don't use these dice if the player is aiming for a specific body part.

Chapter 7

Player Characters

You are, of course, encouraged to nurse the character creation process and help the players with the statistics. After all the details are written down the character creation process is over - at least as far as players are concerned. This leaves you with one more optional task to perform which is described in detail in the next chapter.

Having all your characters ready you can plunge them into the story. Always keep in mind that the characters are what really matters in this system. What you are really doing is creating an environment and situations for them to act in and interact with each other.

Handling characters is very much the same as in any other system - all good advice you can pick up from other systems will work here as well - with the exception of character development. Unlike typical RPG systems a session doesn't end with experience points being distributed. There are no experience points in this system.

7.1 Character development

Character attributes are constant - they describe each of them and can't be raised even over an extended period of time. The steps in the ABC scale are so large that it is highly unlikely that any character may train his body or mind up to the higher level. They are more a description of the character rather than a statistic.

While attributes are "what you are", abilities are "what you can and know". abilities can be learnt but the time span of the adventures your characters are likely to get into is so short that any significant change is highly unlikely. This isn't to say that it's impossible for a character to improve his abilities. But it can only happen under very special conditions and there are no rules for it. It's all up to you to decide. What you must keep in mind is that improving abilities takes time, learning and practise. Also, some characters just aren't cut out of some specific abilities. A player may decide to spend a week on the shooting gallery but that doesn't necessarily help in any way to raise his perception ability. At best he can gain the marksman trait if he spends a long enough time. But just maybe he's just lousy with weapons and always will be.

The only reasonably common change in the statistics is gaining new traits. Again you have to rely on your own reasoning. You may let the player go on a five day

first-aid course and if the character is smart enough he should learn it. But it all has to happen in the world, the player can't just say: "I spend a week learning first-aid". He has to find and probably pay for the course or get his boss to send him on one and more importantly the character ought to have a good reason to want to do it. Try to merge these into the ongoing play rather make it a weekly shop at the character upgrade supermarket.

The reason why raising statistics is rare is also the nature of the work the players are doing. It's dangerous and they will most likely get killed quite often. Then we come to the point when the player needs another character to play and this can be easily dealt with. The superiors might simply replace the missing employee by assigning a rookie to the team. Since there's not much character development the new character will not fall short in respect of his abilities as compared to the rest of the team.

The aim of the game is to develop the players not the characters.

That line would work better if it was read out loud by one of those voice over actors who smoke too much and do narration for film trailers.

7.2 Perdition and Redemption

Having stated how there's no experience points it's time to concede that at the end of the day players need shiny things awarded to them or their unions will kick up a fuss. At the end of the session (or less frequently - your call) you may award your players points. Depending on their actions these will be Perdition Points for selfish acts and Redemption Points for acts of sacrifice and humanity. You may award both or none if the player sat on the fence on the moral quandaries. One point per session ought to be plenty.

The points are self reinforcing as they can only be used in similar circumstances - selfishness or sacrifice. They work similarly to fate points in other systems. They are the director's cut of any action where the player failed. The action is redone as many times as the player wants provided he has spare points.

7.3 Character retirement

A player who has accumulated 10 or more either of points may choose to "escape". If Noir was a roguelike this would be the character ascension at the end. The player should come up with a plausible story - maybe he got fed up with Earth and finally emigrated (10 Perdition Points) or maybe he finally gave up on the city, escaped to the countryside to live out his days in peace (Redemption Points). If the player is looking for more flair he could work something more dramatic into a session, sacrificing his life for the good of the team, or doing something otherwise suicidal. Have fun. The character is retired either way - can be neither played nor contacted as an NPC.

7.4 Do Players dream of electric sheep?

This step is optional and depends hugely on the campaign type you're running. Having copied all the information from the players' characters sheets to your group sheet

you need to perform a solemn duty and record one more attribute for each character. For each perform a single roll. Try to do this discreetly. If the result is an A then you put "Replicant" beside the name. Otherwise the character is human.

You should withhold this information from players as long as you can by giving them false hints and misleading trails until there is no escape and they need to face the truth.

Then it's up to them to decide what to do about it.

At this point all hell breaks loose. It can only be avoided in the unlikely possibility that all player characters are human. But it's most likely that one or more characters are replicants. The revealing moment is critical. At this point the players will need to decide what to do.

If they choose to be loyal to their partner then you have a fairly basic scenario where the remaining human characters help the replicant with his plans.

If they choose to retire their friend then you have two further possibilities. If they manage to kill the replicant in the ensuing fight then you simply have a dead player character problem, described in the previous chapter. However, if the replicant manages to escape with his life then you get a special situation similar to the annoying splitting the team problem encountered in all RPGs.

At this point you need to split the party in two. The players shouldn't know the moves of the replicant and vice versa. This is a technically difficult situation since you have a group of friends, possible in small quarters and you need to communicate with both parties. This may seem a burden but it's most probable that the replicant won't last long. He will either try something really desperate, like assassinating Tyrell, in which case you have a great opportunity to organize a hunt and the entire story is created by the player playing the replicant rather than prepared by you. The other possibility is that he will give up and head north, escaping the society and retirement which is not much different from getting killed since he's out of the game.

Chapter 8

People

Having this exciting and detailed world with interesting characters which the players might know from the book, film or game allows for interesting encounters. Here is a short list of prominent or otherwise noteworthy people you might want to assail your players with.

Eldon Tyrell

More of an institution than a real man. The real Eldon Tyrell is long dead, having died in cryo-sleep due to Sebastian's unfortunate mistake. He was the evil genius of genetic research, head of the biggest and richest corporation in the US - the Tyrell Corporation. He was the pioneer of the replicant technology. In his time he had secretly made a replicant of himself.

Eldon Rosen (NXMCA61417)

The replicant copy of Eldon Tyrell, now running the corporation. Only Sebastian and Chew know his secret.

Rachael (NXFCB31019)

Tyrell's experiment, made believe to be his niece. In reality she only has her memory implanted, as an attempt to make her develop emotions.

J.F. Sebastian

One of Tyrell's genetic designers and a trusted friend. Designated a special on account of his Methuselah syndrome (accelerated gland aging). He lives alone with his replicant toys as company. On account of his tragic mistake Tyrell died in his cryo-sleep.

Hannibal Chew

Genetic designer working for Tyrell, specialising in eyes. His workshop is located in the DNA row. Tyrell's trusted friend.

Markus Eisenduller

A researcher at the Tyrell corp. studying the influence on off-world gravity forces on replicants. Overweight and unpleasant.

Moragi

Genetic designer working for Tyrell, specialising in skin design His workshop is located in the DNA row.

Harry Bryant

Police captain in the fourth sector police station, head of the Blade Runner squad. A harsh man, old-fashioned, close to his retirement and with liver problems.

Holden

A very experienced blade runner, was the best one in Bryant-s squad after Deckard's left. Talks smooth, dresses fine and smokes at least five packs of cigarettes a day. Currently in hospital after interviewing a replicant and drawing his gun a split second too late.

Rick Deckard

A former Blade Runner, one of the best, he resigned but has temporarily and unwillingly returned to active duty. Broken marriage, alcohol problems, a complete lack of style and taste and a propensity to bruising pretty much sum him up.

Gaff (NXMAB82318)

A replicant commissioned by the police, in a secret experiment. The idea was to make a replicant hunt other replicants. To make him cooperative he had been given memories and knowledge of one of the best Blade Runners at that time - Rick Deckard. The experiment, for unexplained reasons, had been a failure and Gaff barely got out with his life (giving him a limp). Eventually he discovers his own nature and in an act of empathy let's Rachael and Deckard escape.

Roy McCoy

A rookie blade runner who has just joined the police forces. His role model is Rick Deckard, though McCoy has a slightly better taste, doesn't drink that much and thus is a much worse blade runner.

Garland (N6MBA51217)

One of the replicants who organised a false police station in LA and became its captain. Legal authorities are not aware of the station's existence and actions. It provides protection for replicants but also deals with minor crime to deceive LA citizens and human policemen working for the station.

Phil Resch

A human blade runner employed by Garland. Resch is not aware of the fact that his boss and most of his colleagues are replicants. He's cold, sarcastic and actively enjoys his job of retiring replicants at which he excels.

Crams (N6MAB71518)

An officer in Garland's police station and a replicant who helped organising it. He's the one who is responsible for keeping contact with and helping other replicants hiding in LA.

George Gleason (N6MAA60118)

A combat type replicant who escaped with Garland and Crams. Working for the false police station, pretends to be a blade runner but in fact he is supposed to protect replicants from them.

Taffey Lewis

Both owner and manager of a strip club in Nightclub Row. Arrogant and unpleasant. He has connections to the underworld and is involved in different criminal enterprises including hiding replicants which he employs in his joint.

Abdul Ben Hassan

Producer and distributor of artificial, animoid reptiles. His work is of high quality, especially snakes. His shop is located in Animoid Row.

Spencer Grigorian

Founder and leader of the Movement Towards Replicant Liberation. An idealist and activist who believes that replicants are human-like and should be considered human. His organisation is a perfect contact cell for replicants, although Grigorian is not aware of the fact. Personally an insecure gay with no backbone.

Part IV

Appendix

Standard set of VK questions

SET A:

- You're in a desert, walking along in the sand when all of a sudden you look down and see a tortoise. You reach down and flip the tortoise over on its back. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over. But it can't. Not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that?
- You're reading a novel written in the old days before the war. The characters are visiting Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. They become hungry and enter a seafood restaurant. One of them orders lobster, and the chef drops the lobster into the tub of boiling water while the characters watch.
- You become pregnant by a man who has promised to marry you. The man goes off with another woman, your best friend; you get an abortion.
- Your pregnant girlfriend gets an abortion without your knowledge or consent.
- You're dating a man and he asks you to visit his apartment. While you're there he offers you a drink. As you stand holding your glass you see into the bedroom; it's attractively decorated with bullfight posters, and you wander in to look closer. He follows after you, closing the door. Putting his arm around you.
- Walking the streets you come across a runaway dog. You approach and it stares at you with his big lovable eyes. You kick the dog hard on the belly and walk away.
- You're walking through the city at night. You see a person being assaulted on the street. You turn around and run away without calling the police or helping him. How do you feel the next day?
- You are going die. Soon. Rot, Decay. It will happen. You're afraid, instruments don't lie. Don't worry, I won't tell anybody.

SET B:

- You are watching an old movie on TV, a movie from before the war. It shows a banquet in progress; the guests are enjoying raw oysters. The entrée consists of boiled dog, stuffed with rice.

- In a magazine you come across a full-page colour picture of a nude girl. Your husband likes the picture. The girl is lying face down on a large and beautiful bearskin rug. Your husband hangs the picture up on the wall of his study room.
- You rent a mountain cabin in an area still verdant. It's rustic knotty pine with a huge fireplace. On the walls someone has hung old maps, Currier and Ives prints, and above the fireplace a deer's head has been mounted, a full stag with developed horns. The people with you admire the décor of the cabin.
- Your son comes home from school with a black eye. He tells you his teacher hit him.
- A dirty, drunken bum approaches you and asks for some money.
- You have a little boy and he shows you his butterfly collection, including his killing jar.
- You're sitting watching TV and suddenly you discover a wasp crawling on your wrist.
- You are given a calfskin wallet on your birthday.

SET C:

- Tell me only the good things that come into your mind about your mother...
- You find a wallet with cash in it. What do you do?
- Do you like your job?

...and any kind of small-talk - improvise.

Notice board

Lastly, you might want to consider or at least skim through these, mostly general, tips on hosting a good game.

- Don't get tied down by the rules. You are free to bend and break them when needed. Strictly abiding by the rules will slow the gameplay and distract both you and the players. Good Game Mastering lies in good storytelling and resorting to rules only when in need of arbitrage.
- Having fun is the primary goal. Everything else is just a way of achieving it.
- Always keep the players guessing. Never tell them everything outright, hint at things. Leave much in the sphere of suspicion.
- Watch the film, read the book and play the game to get a good feel for the setting.
- Keeping the atmosphere is crucial. We know all too well how difficult it is to keep the atmosphere while your friends are telling jokes, dozing off or simply sidetracking in any other way. Don't let this happen. If you manage that, please tell us how, because we'd never succeed in that.
- Put music on the stereo (the film soundtrack would be perfect, especially the ESPER edition).
- Be organised - don't leave gaps whilst your trying to find what comes next. It will stop players from making side-conversations.
- Try not to focus on one player character alone, this could make others disinterested in the game. If the party is split make frequent switches between them.
- Maybe you want booze/beer, maybe you don't; it depends on your players' habits. If it makes them more imaginative and comfortable than fill up the glasses and have fun. If alcohol makes them a little bit too comfortable or unruly then lock up the booze and keep them sober.
- Make the players feel uncertain; let them imagine the worse, play with their suspicions.
- Every player ought to have his own set of dice, pencil, eraser and character sheet. This isn't vital but makes playing much more comfortable.

- Preparing maps, photos, writing down the plot etc. makes the play go more smoothly.
- If you want your session to be remembered make sure each player gets his 5 minutes of fame and glory. Give them the opportunity to play to their character's strengths.
- Character development is often the drive of a system. Players play good in order to earn points. There is no such motivation here. In this respect our system is similar to a book. The players simply want to know what's next. They want to solve the case. You have to work extra hard on the story for this to work.
- For best play value it is advised for the party to consist of no more than four players (three is an optimal number). It's simply the nature of the game. It's hard to maintain an atmosphere of isolation and danger when you have a crowd of Blade Runners walking around bunched together.