

<<Connected to the matrix>>
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 <<So you want to be a shadowrunner?>>

Evening chummers. I have spent the last month or so helping to streamline people's characters. Make sure some stuff isn't missed. There have been some consistencies across the sheets I have glimpsed. So I felt that I should put some of these things here for people to reference.

First is going to just be character creation software. Chummer and herolab are the popular ones, with the occasional spreadsheet. Chummer is free, however it is constantly going through updates and is buggy in many places. It does support all the existing books. Herolab is a paid product with a free demo mode. It at currently only supports core and run n gun, however as a licensed product it has all the text right on the sheet in front of you. Along side this, being a licensed product means that as errata and updates come up they will be forthcoming. My recommendation is Herolab. If for no other reason than you can build your character in it with proper math and rules checking. If you do not have the funds to purchase it, you can then transfer it to either a pdf fillable sheet or into chummer from there for their sheets.

Chummer:

<https://code.google.com/p/chummer5/>

Herolab

http://www.wolflair.com/index.php?context=hero_lab

Now to actually making your characters. There are a couple of things that hold true across role types. There are a few things that hold true across the board.

Attributes

Body/willpower: You will want 3 body/willpower. The difference between 9 and 10 boxes, not even including overflow is huge. In addition willpower helps to protect you from magic. While body will help you soak damage.

Edge: Bad rolls happen, they happen at the worst times. Edge is your answer to that. Allowing you to reroll your failures, or ignoring a glitch is very powerful. If you have enough of it you can feasibly prespend it to completely blow out some tests. That crucial con test that everything hinges on? Blow it out of the water. Can turn a questionable contested roll into a complete success.

Defaulting: You will not want 1's in stats. In addition to making your character functionally retarded. Lets face it, so many people dump stat their logic. A logic of 1 is an incredibly simple creature. The kind of person who probably couldn't live on his own. Other stats

are equally bad to dump. The defaulting mechanic lets you roll 1 less die than your stat. With the aforementioned logic of 1, without skill points in a relevant skill that means you cannot roll for those skills. Attributes are incredibly important. Each attribute is almost like a skill point in all the skills linked to that attribute.

Initiative: I have seen many characters recently that are trying so hard to be a combat monster. Yes, you can roll $14+4d6$ for your init. However lets look at that mathematically. On average rolling $2d6$ will get you a result of 7. So we have $14+14(4d6 \text{ avg})$ thats 28. There are a few actions you can do to spent init on but they are rare. You can easily reduce your numbers to be more mathematically optimal. In the example given you can reduce your reaction stat a few points, increasing your other stats. While still maintaining a good average of 3 init passes.

Init optimizing: In the case of number of passes. $10+2d6$ doesn't do you much good. Needing $5+6$, or $6+6$ to get a 3rd pass. If you were to reduce it to $9+2d6$ that gives you a stat point to move somewhere else. Only losing out on that $5+6$ chance to get a 3rd pass.

Skills

There are a number of skills every runner should take. Some things that don't seem as obvious to newer players. Likewise there are several specializations that you will get significantly more mileage out of. On a similar note there are certain threshold you will want to hit.

Skill optimization: Typically you will want your skill+attribute test to come out to a number/3. As an example a 10 dice pool most of the time will give you 3 hits. The same as a 9 dice pool.

A weapon skill of your choice, (preferably ranged). Regardless of your situation at some point you will at least need to look menacingly with a weapon. Yes even mages. There will be times when you don't want to advertise the fact you are a mage (gets you geeked). There will be times when you are high on drain and taking more may render you unconscious or worse. There is also the appearance factor. A guy walking around without a weapon, even a tazer, screams a few things. He could be someone rich, or important. Clearly a target for abductions. He could be a mage. afterall why would they need weapons? Makes you first target.

Perception:(spec visual, 9). 90% of all perception tests are visual based. It is also a commonly used skill. You wanna search a room? Roll perception. How many guys are still up and shooting you? Roll perception. Is that guy who just sat down readying a weapon under the table? Roll perception.

Sneaking(Spec urban, 9) As a deniable asset doing illegal things at some point you will need to do something sneaky. The urban spec will cover most of your activities as the runs usually take place in populated areas. Keep in mind this also works in reverse. You can also

use sneaking to follow or find people.

The following are highly recommended skills for a variety of roles. Several come as the recommendation that by having 1 point in the skill means you will not have to default when you try to do it.

First aid(bullet wounds): You will eventually get hurt. First aid is the quick way to help fix that up. You don't need many points in it as you can easily get medkits that give bonus dice.

Gymnastics: Want to climb that fence and not look like a jackass? That will be some gymnastics test. Slippery freshly waxed floors? Some defensive actions give you a bonus based on your gymnastics score.

Con(fast talking): Social sneaking. If you have a decent cha, 1-2 points here can help you bluff your way past that suspicious guy. Probably not a guard, but the nosy neighbor probably. Also helps you lie to people when you ask about things you should be asking about.

Hardware/computer: Our world today runs on computers, 2070? So much more integrated on every level. Knowing at least a little bit about them can help you. Note to all you guys you wanna be locksmiths. Hardware is vital in messing with electronic locks.

Running:sprinting: sometimes its time to go. More so listed to bring the attention to the spec that you can get on it than anything else.

Don't bog yourself down with weapon skills. Realistically when will you ever need a shotgun, and automatic and a pistol? Or 4 different close combat options? If later on you wanna pick up some of that other stuff, sure. Pistols govern 3 distinct styles of weapons. With a number of options for any time. Automatics also includes machine pistols, which are about as concealable as pistols

For your key role related skills you will want at least 14 dice. For your specific thing that you guy is the best at? Start at 15 and up from there. Its rather easy to get to. For shooter guys. High agility+skill+specialization+smartlink will get you there. Deckers can pick up cerebral boosters and codeslinger. Mages get foci, and mentor spirits. Social characters can get tailored pheromones and first impression. Adepts, well they are cheaters and get to just be good at whatever it is they choose.

Gear

This is where it starts to get fun. All the good toys and gadgets. You wanna be more machine than man? we can do it. You wanna zip around like batman? totally possible. However there is so many times that the "bare essentials" are skipped over. Which is what I will mostly cover here.

Weapons

Doesn't really matter what your weapon is. There are a few things that hold true.

Non lethal option: From a corporation's perspective, shadowruns happen. Its a way of doing business. Yeah they will never list "illicit illegal activities" on their expense reports but clever bookkeeping will take care of that. Now lets look at what a corporation would do.

If you go in all willy nilly murder face. The corp now has to pay out death benefits to the guards family. They have to face the negative press of a whole bunch of dead dudes. They have to hire and train people for that situation. They have to pay house cleaning on the gore you left everywhere. They will have to pay overtime to the guards while they are cleaning up the mess. They may lose money from shutting down during the cleanup/investigation time. A large impact on their bottom line.

If you go non lethal. You will still incapacitate the guards. Still get your run done. The guard? He gets to go home to his family. He may get reprimanded for his failure. Maybe lose that promotion that he was up for. Yeah, there will be a little clean up of shell casing and spilt milk. The corps reprisal is going to be more manageable than otherwise. In fact they may even hire you at some point for a covert thing.

A silent option For the love of Dunkelzahn, grab some silencers. Preferably a weapon specifically for stealth. Doubly preferably a weapon loaded with non lethal ammo and a silencer. This way when you are in the situation where things need to go loud you can just switch to your more serious weapon.

Ammo:Normal everyday bullets are only good in two situations. Suppressive fire, and drones running fully automatic. Otherwise there are better options. When you are pulling your trigger you are not shooting to inconvenience. You are shooting to put someone down permanently or not. At character creation you really only have 2 options. APDS and Stick N Shock.

APDS, When you absolutely need stuff dead. Removing what is likely a quarter of their armor soak (not armor+body) does several things. It means more of your hits are liable to cause damage. As well as that damage has a better chance of being physical.

Stick N Shock (SNS) There are a few non lethal ammo types. SNS is still my recommended. By dealing electric damage there is a variety of advantages it has. Dealing physical damage to drones/vehicles. Giving -5 ap (unless non conductive), Giving -5 init to anyone hit that combat turn. Giving -1 to all actions that combat turn

The world at the touch of your mind

The matrix is everywhere. One of the best things about shadowrun is the in game mechanics for player metagaming. Each team usually syncs up their commlinks to a group call. That combined with a Direct Neural Interface, allows the team to share what they are seeing, hearing, thinking at near instant speed. No team member ever needs to pretend that they don't know what's going on on the other side of that door. Their other team member be able to instantly tell them.

DNI Direct neural interfaces come in two main forms. Datajacks, or trodes. A datajack is like having a usb port in your body. Typically somewhere on your head or neck. Trodes are a piece of goofy headgear that allows you to have the same options as a datajack without chopping up parts of your body. Without either of these you will be stuck pulling out your commlink to send messages, update your facebook, take pictures.

Commlinks. These are the center of your wireless hubs. They do everything your smartphone does today and things you cannot dream of. However that is not why I am listing them here. Here is where I tell you the importance of the metalink. This rating 1 commlink is a mere 100 nuyen. However his hard working capabilities are often overlooked for fancier links. I recommend always taking at least 2-3 extras of these in addition to your main link. You will find uses for them all over the place. In addition it is illegal to be running silent in civilized society. Something shadowrunners do all the time. Having your metalink broadcasting a fake sin will at least no send up any flares in civilized society. In addition you will find all kinds of uses for them.

- "Untraceable calls". Can't call back a destroyed phone
- Impromptu detonator
- Handing to people who you want to contact you back covertly(the homeless and street urchins make great spies)
- Disposable direct connections(with datataps)
- Planting on people for tracking.
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Seeing the world

The world is full of color, some you don't normally see. There are a number of ways to experience it. I will warn most people away from cyber eyes. Yeah, they are neat. All the vision enhancement options cost more than any other way of getting them. The one exception in this section will be smartlinks. As an augment smartlinks give+2 dice instead of +1. A tangible benefit.

Contacts: Our first layer of vision. This is also where I put the most important things. As if "they" are removing your contacts. You are already having a bad day. They are also inconspicuous compared to some other vision options. At the very least should carry an image link. This will allow you to send and receive images from your connected people. In addition

to this I recommend either a smartlink (for combat non augment types[gun adepts]) or some additional vision type. Elther low light vision, or thermographic. Beats breaking out a flashlight.

Headgear Our second vision layer will come from the serious headgear. Be it a helmet or ballistic mask, or just some boring goggles. This is where we are gonna put the business. My personal recommendation is a ballistic mask. They have 8 slots for customization. 2 of which you should use for a gas mask or respirator (better to have an no need, than need and not have). From there you can customize it in a variety of ways. One thing I would specifically mention is single sensor:ultrasound. This is the best chance and option that mundanes have to see invisible people. (pg 446).

Earbuds:select sound filter These are another cheap option I like to pickup. The sound filter has a variety of uses. Listening in on conversations across the room, cracking a safe, Johnny cab, ignoring blaring alarms etc. The ability to choose what to and what to not hear can come in a variety of useful things. At 300\$ the opportunity cost is so low that you might as well grab them.

Staying alive

At some point you will take damage and who wants to wait around to heal the slow way.

Medkit: A rating 3 medkit is described as pocket sized. I envision it as a couple bandaids, some gauze, and a few aspirin. However the most important function of the medkit is allowing you to use the first aid skill. In addition to this it also gives you bonus dice to your first aid roll.

Trauma patch: Trauma patch's are 500\$. In the case where you need one you will be glad you have it. Its wireless bonus makes it so the stabilization test automatically succeeds. Slap it on and you are no longer in danger of dying.... well immediately. There are other ways for it to happen, this is the only guaranteed option. Everyone should carry one, you cannot trust your team member will always have one, or be willing to use it on you.

Armor

Headgear: Everyone should pickup a helmet or ballistic mask. For 100\$ (150 for mask)it gives +2 armor, in addition to the options for enhanced senses mentioned earlier. People rarely raise eyebrows at helmet(typically motorcycle helmet models). Even less so if you are actually driving a motorcycle. The masks are a bit more obvious, either way you should take it off indoors. It would be rude otherwise.

Body: There is no reason to not have at least an armored jacket(12 armor) after character creation. So far if following advice you would have 17(at least) soak dice. that is not a lot. most weapons deal around 8 damage before armor pen. The jacket will help to keep that damage from being physical. Stun damage heals much faster. Along without all the possible

physical evidence leaving that your blood may cause. There are other options for increasing your concealability for weapons. I am not saying don't have a nice suit and tie for situations that require it. You can definitely pick up some of the high fashion armor from Run N Gun. or just an auctioneer business cloths. To wear on occasion. However when it comes time for business You're gonna want that jacket. After char gen you can pick up some more specialized pieces of gear. Alot of the high fashion gear is nice. Pricey as you would expect for high fashion stuff but nice. Sidenote, Social characters should try and find money for at least a berwick suit/overcoat combo as it provides as much armor as the jacket in addition to increasing your social capabilities.