Nanopunk: Detroit
Friday run
Rules and Scenario

The following are the rules for *Nanopunk: Detroit* , a real-time, real-space roleplaying game sponsored by the MIT Assassins' Guild. You are responsible for knowing these rules. Many of them are nigh-impossible to enforce and rely upon the honor system. Do not cheat. Do not abuse loopholes. Play fair. Be your own harshest critic.

The **gamemasters** (**GMs**) run the game. If you have any problems or questions concerning the game, contact a GM. Rulings they make are final. They may violate the letter of the rules to preserve the spirit. The GMs promise to be as fair and reasonable as possible. Neither they nor these rules are perfect.

This game is intended to be fun. Getting into character, roleplaying, being dramatic, and playing competitively can all increase the fun of the game. Do not take the game too seriously. Even if you are losing, keep a good attitude. When the game is over, the real winners are the players with the best stories.

This is only a game. Everyone involved should act with courtesy, sportsmanship, patience, and taste. The GMs may expel anyone they believe to be violating the spirit of the rules or the game. Emotions may run high. If you think things are crossing the line from game to reality too much, or if you are just getting too stressed, calm down and maybe take a break. Stay in control. Use common sense. Always, play safely, then play to have fun.

This game is a work of fiction. Although it may refer to things in the real world, it does so only for the sake of the scenario. It does not represent the opinions of the GMs or the MIT Assassins' Guild. These rules are modifications of those used in previous games. This game and all materials thereof are copyright 2007 by Jake Beal, Ken Clary, Dennis Perepelitsa, and the MIT Assassins' Guild.

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1 Scenario

The four decades after the turn of the millennium were a period of political and social turbulence, disastrous warfare and corporate ascension. A market crash of cyber stocks in 2007 threatened to turn into full-scale global war, but for the intervention of the United Nations. In the ensuing chaos, several nuclear weapons were detonated in the Middle East, turning much of the region into an uninhabitable wasteland. The decades that followed saw a nuclear winter and daily reports of atmospheric radioactivity became common. Widespread poverty and crime turned the United States of America, formerly a liberal democracy, into a fascist entity. Despite the instability, the corporations of Earth continued to grow into huge international entities, with power approaching that of small nations. Zero-gravity high orbit manufacturing, banking and asteroid mining paved the way for their expansion into space. By the time the nano-revolution rolled around, several megacorporations had attained a foothold in space. One of them, InSystem, even colonized Mars and a few large asteroids.

The advent of nanotechnology in 2042 rapidly and radically revolutionized every aspect of human existence. The first self-sustaining nano-assembler - capable of primitive and slow self-replication - was built by a United Nations science team based in sub-Saharan Africa. Under the auspices of the UN, uncountable trillions of nanobots found their way into daily life all over the world. Relief supplies and industrial infrastructure flooded all the impoverished nations of Earth. Permanent injury and even death became much less common. Gender, race, and appearance could be varied at will. Weapons of heretofore unimaginable power were stopped only by their counterpart in medical advances. The quality of life for the average citizen skyrocketed. Scientific progress expanded by leaps and bounds, particularly in the abstract field of artificial intelligence. Gleaming, mile-high, nanobot-built cities seemed to challenge the glory of the sky itself.

Flushed with success and respect, the United Nations became the ascendant power on the planet, extending its reach into space, demolishing autocratic regimes in Europe and even partitioning InSystem into slightly smaller megacorporations. The UN's ambitious social program of universal welfare, careful monitoring and correction of nanotechnology, and establishment of a pervasive underground police force all helped to curb violent crime and poverty. It was only the sudden invasion by a spacefaring alien power and a resurgence of armed National Socialist forces in Europe that broke the power of the mighty United Nations.

The aliens, commonly known as "lizardmen", arrived in a fleet of hovering, silver saucers and attacked the Americas, Africa and Asia with overwhelming force and unknown technology. Despite savage and often heroic fighting in places like New York City, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Tokyo and Beijing, the aliens eventually crushed all major opposition and drove humanity underground and into the wastelands. Australia disappeared under an enormous opaque dome with the same properties of an alien shield, and has been hidden ever since. Most orbital bases were destroyed or lost in the years of guerilla war that followed. New alien technology had a devastating and demoralizing effect on human resistance forces. Gravity-ignoring hovercraft, near-invincible shields and nuclear-reaction suppressing fields were some of the most dramatic surprises in store for Earth. The latter two effectively rendered conventional United Nations nuclear weaponry useless.

On the same day, a fanatic, well-armed and widespread group of neo-Nazis quickly captured every institution of government in Berlin, proclaimed the Fourth Reich under the clone of Adolf Hitler and immediately declared war on France and Poland. Within days, the Nazis quickly recaptured the continent, re-establishing the Festung Europa of old times. The remaining elements of the United Nations, caught off guard from two sides and acting from remote locations outside of Europe, activated a desperate contingency plan and released numerous military-grade survival cyberware and nanotech devices to the people. This capability, combined with widely distributed auto-doc systems made humans possible to revive after death in many circumstances. Unable to understand this technology and surprised at the refusal of the human resistance to stay dead, the alien advance stalled.

Within the year, all human territory came under the control of the Nazis or the aliens (at which point the mysterious and unspoken alliance between them became common knowledge) with several exceptions. Great Britain and Israel held out for a while against the encroaching Nazi forces, and later sued for peace under conditions favorable to the Reich. The United Nations forces guarding Moscow began to fail, but the Russians retreated farther eastward and underground and the invasion became untenable. Even now, more than two decades later, the Russian front is at a stalemate, and little information about what happens on the other side is available. There are reports of human civilization still existing in the asteroid belt, but these are unreliable and increasingly sporadic. While capturing North America, the aliens flipped the city of Chicago upside down as a show of force, effectively pacifying the region. A few days later, the same thing occurred to Tokyo, but overnight and with no warning. Whether or not this was an act of retaliation by the aliens is still unknown. In a surprise move, one of the three saucers garrisoned in New York City, then United Nations headquarters, was destroyed in what appears to be a nuclear explosion. The consequences for the entire Eastern Seaboard were severe.

Faced with no real military options and the prospect of a grinding, cataclysmic conventional war, the free nations of the Solar System surrendered. Officials from the Fourth Reich and the aliens met with the scattered United Nations and orbital leadership, and agreed to a peace accord. Unwilling or unable to manage Earth, the aliens kept conventional military and scientific forces in the area, while the Nazis administered day to day affairs from Berlin. The Reich fortified their position and began to transition from a wartime economy. However, it widely rumored that the Nazi regime released a comprehensive set of cleansing nanoplagues into the world, as a final act of war. This was denied by governement forces, but the degradation of widespread UN military cyberware was considered evidence to the contrary. The aliens slowly pulled out of the Americas, Africa and Asia, leaving them in ruins, and took up a patrol orbit around Earth. The mysteries of Russia and Australia ceased to occupy the foremost of everyone's mind. Battered but not broken, humanity began to heal.

A full generation of mostly-benevolent neglect passed under this uneasy peace. Megacorporations, military interests and politically correct science flourished under the Reich. Though nominally ruled completely and autocratically by Chancellor Hitler, in practice the Reich's interests are served by a conglomeration of generals, corporate leaders, scientists and advisors. The cyberware released decades ago by the United Nations has all but failed completely - the promise of resurrection after death is gone. Alien actions indicate that leaders on the alien homeworld have taken more of an interest in the social and technological progress of the race of man over the past generation. In particular, a large amount of Earth's scientists are exported offworld by the aliens for what is dubbed "benevolent research needs" in alien laboratories across the galaxy. No scientist has yet come back. North America's eastern seaboard has fielded a particularly high percentage of scientists in the past, though now Europe feels most of the brain-drain. As a result, renewed interest in nano- and cybertechnology has been slow to develop. On the other side of the Atlantic, things are much different. . .

Much of North America lies in ruins or severe neglect, with pockets of resistance deemed too insignificant to investigate by the Nazi regime. However, some inhabitants have started to rebuild the shattered civilization around them. A new type of city-state has begun to emerge in the wastelands - one in which, by nanotechnological standards, life is harsh and security scarce, but which has been making progress. One of these is the state of Greater Michiana, based in the ruins of the once-great city of Detroit. Some technology has survived the devastation of war - many hydroponic nanofarms and environmental terraformers still function, providing food and clean air to the residents, respectively. The knowledge needed to usefully fix the current infrastructure or build more, however, has been largely lost. There are other, similar civilizations - an anarchist hacker's paradise in the radioactive desert of what used to be Nevada and New Mexico, a civilization rumored to still be adept with nanotech submerged in the Caribbean, and a commune undergoing a cultural renaissance that survives in Compton Island after it broke off from the mainland of Southern California.

The technological capability of Greater Michiana is that of the early twenty-first century, but it has been able to secure a kind of stability in the region. Michiana has managed to revive the old mentality of industrialization - and has been steeply building its cities stronger and higher. In the great libertarian and isolationist traditions of midwestern America, Michiana takes its sovereignty very seriously, and is reputed for its strong border patrol and reconnaissance operations. "Live free or die" is the unofficial motto. For the most part, the Nazis don't venture out into North America, but when they do, Michiana never hesitates to offer armed, if ultimately futile, resistance.

A few hours ago, it became common knowledge that a small division of lightly-armored Fourth Reich soldiers left Berlin, speeding towards the heart of Detroit. Their purpose is unknown. City leaders have declared a stage of siege pending the arrival of the Nazis, and the Detroit militia has declared that anyone found outside after curfew will be shot. What is about to happen on the streets is anybody's guess.

1.1 About the Game

Game occurs in three phases, each lasting 45 minutes, followed by a 15 minute break/debriefing. There are a number of teams of varying size. Each phase, teams earn **victory points**. Each team receives one victory point for each enemy they kill (measured in poker chips, see below). Some transferable items are worth victory points; you only receive them if you finish a phase with the item.

Each team has a color. You should try to costume in your team's color. The Nazi team wears black. They should not wear swastikas, armbands, or other nazi or fascist insignia. They may dress in a sharp, military black.

Each team has a logistical commander. This player receives the packets of abilities and items for each phase for their team. They are nominally in charge of distributing abilities and leading their team. They may always defer to other team members if they wish.

What We Are Playtesting: The primary goal of this playtest is to determine how well players can deal with the combat system, in particular keeping track of HP and hit chains while accounting for DR, CR, and chain abilities. We also want to get an idea of how difficult some chain abilities are, and how well they balance against other factors.

Team balance, ability slots, the rez mechanic, and the specific stats of some abilities are not the direct subject of the playtest; they are designed to hopefully encourage lots of diverse, fun action to test the underlying mechanics. When in doubt, try something new. If game is becoming unbalanced or degenerate enough to no longer be fun, let us know, and we'll try to fix it.

Game Area: Game is played in the 1st through 3rd floors of buildings 34, 36, and 38, and the 3rd floor of building 24. You may not use elevators.

2 Getting Started

2.1 Character Packets

Bluesheet: A bluesheet describes information common to members of a group. You will have one that describes your team; everyone on your team has the same bluesheet. Do not show or read a bluesheet to other teams.

Ability Cards: Your team commander will have 3 packets of ability cards, one for each phase of game. Each card takes up one ability **slot**. You may not use duplicate abilities at the same time. Some cards may take up more or have further restrictions. During Phase 1, you have **2** ability slots and may only use abilities from your team's Phase 1 packet. During Phase 2, you have **3** slots and may use abilities from your team's Phase 1 and 2 packets. During Phase 3, you have **4** slots and may use abilities from any of your team's packets. You may change which abilities are assigned to your slots only when you start a new phase or start a new life within a phase.

Items: Some of your weapons and other items are represented by abilities, meaning they can't be stolen or traded (except by the ability slot rules). All other items can be traded, stolen, or used by anyone. All items are **unstashable**: you may not hide them anywhere, and you must always leave them in another PC's care. You may leave one in an obvious, open area if there are other PCs around (e.g. set it down before fighting over it).

Poker Chips: You have three poker chips that match your team color. These poker chips represent your lives during a phase. When you die, you give one poker chip to whoever killed you. When you have none of your starting poker chips left, you can no longer resurrect (see below). If you are killed by "friendly fire," you keep your chip and give two to the next enemy who kills you (teammates should not kill each other to keep poker chips from being captured).

Each poker chip from a different team that you hold at the end of a phase is worth 1 victory point for your team. Chips can't be traded or stolen. They reset between phases.

2.2 Reality and Game Reality

There is a big difference between reality and game reality. Players must treat each other with courtesy and explain to each other what their characters perceive in confusing situations; e.g. "My character's hands are covered in blood," an **out-of-game** statement. Characters are under no such restrictions, and may do what it takes to further their goals; e.g. "Uh, hi Bob. Just got back from the butcher shop," an **in-game** statement.

Metagaming is inferring in-game knowledge that is inappropriate for your character from out-of-game information. Do your best to not metagame and especially to prevent the risk of metagaming. Be your own harshest critic.

Halts: A halt pauses game action. To call one, say "game halt" in a clear and audible voice; other players around a corner should hear you, but you shouldn't scare some poor grad student. End a halt by saying "three, two, one, resume." Call a halt for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, for safety and similar out-of-game issues, or to pause game and fetch a GM (which you should avoid).

Not-Here: You go not-here by putting a hand on your head, which is visible from a distance. Go not-here for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, to leave game, or to fetch a GM while in a halt (which you should avoid).

When you are not-here, your character is not there. Your character cannot see, hear, or remember any game actions or information you (the player) happen to encounter. Avoid other characters, common game areas, game signs, or any sort of game interaction.

Non-Players: Use tact and common sense when dealing with non-players (**NPs**). You are encouraged to spread the gospel of real-time, real-space roleplaying; however, many NPs prefer to sleep, study, or work undisturbed.

If an NP comes by during any significant game action, notably combat, call **NP Halt**. Resume game when the NP is gone.

Mechanics: Many actions your character can take, such as walking, talking, and general interaction with other characters, are represented by you doing them. Others, like combat, are performed via abstract mechanics, which are described in ability cards and rules. Become familiar with your mechanics before game starts, especially those which occur under time-pressure (like combat).

A **kludge** (and derivative forms like "kludge-ite") is something impervious to logic and cleverness, usually for game-balance. You can't affect a kludge without a specified mechanic.

Zone of Control (**ZoC**) is a rough distance measurement. You are within ZoC of someone if your outstretched fingers can touch their outstretched fingers. Double-ZoC is twice this distance, triple-ZoC is three times, etc.

Headbands represent obvious visual effects; wear them visibly on your head. If you see a headband and don't know what it represents, ask. If you are wearing a headband, tell people what their characters see.

A white or yellow headband represents an observer: someone not playing the game who has agreed to watch. They should stay out of the way; you can always ask an observer to leave. If a friend who is not playing wants to observe game, send them to the GMs.

Safety: This is a game. Real violence is unacceptable. Game action should cause no real-world damage, either to people or property. If something dangerous is happening, call a halt. Stay in control, use common sense, and do not endanger yourself or others.

You should not run or otherwise force your way into or through someone else's ZoC, and you should not make physical contact with another player without permission. Do not try to physically block pathways or block doors. Be extra careful in stairwells and other precarious situations.

3   Violence, Damage, and Death

Hit Points: Your Hit Points (**HP**) represent how much wounding damage you can take. Your HP may not go above its starting max value. Normal, adult characters have about 10 HP. When you reach **0 HP**, you die.

When you die, you give a poker chip of your color to whomever killed you, and may resurrect yourself if you have any remaining chips of your color. Rezzing takes 2 minutes, and you must go out of line-of-sight of any PCs from opposing teams. You may fudge the time slightly to make rezzing as a team more convenient. While rezzing, you may change which abilities you are using.

Incants and Damage: Combat, both ranged and martial, is based on incants. In the heat of combat, people may have trouble hearing incants or noticing hits. If you cannot understand an incant, make it clear by calling "**Miscast**." Miscast attacks are not used up. The attacker is responsible for making incants clear and understood; speak clearly, don't shout over others, and wait for openings.

Incants specify damage, e.g. "5 Damage" for ranged attacks and "Wound 5" for martial attacks (see below). Your **Damage Resistance** (**DR**) represents how hard you are to hurt. When you receive a damage incant, subtract your DR from the damage. If there is any remaining positive damage, subtract it from your HP.

When you receive a "Wound" incant, subtract the **higher** of your DR or CR (see below).

Weapons: You may only wield one weapon per hand. Any weapon will have either an obvious physrep or a headband tied to your dart gun.

Everyone has a **dart** gun that may not be stolen or confiscated. It is used to mechanic innate skill, cyberware, melee weapons, and other equipment. A dart gun may have headbands tied to its barrel, representing noticeable flavors of cyberware and equipment: a **red** band represents some form of laser, blaster, or plasma weapon (ranged or melee), **blue** is a force or energy field, **black** is claws or other offensive physical cyberware, and **white** is a physical shield.

Most combat cyberware requires you to draw your dart gun to use. Abilities and items will specify when and how you may use your dart gun.

Ranged weapons (that are not attached cyberware) are represented by a variety of toy gun physreps, usually nerf microdart guns and disc guns. Disc guns and any rapid-fire weapons, such as magstrikes, powerclips, wildfires, etc. are burst weapons.

Ranged Combat: Ranged combat is real-time and mostly based upon player skill at firing and dodging physreps. Keep it safe. Hits to anywhere on the body count the same; don't aim for the head. If a projectile hits clothing or long hair such that it would not hit the body when passing through, it doesn't count. Hits to an item you hold count as a hits on you, not the item. If there is a conflict over whether or not a projectile hit, the shooter calls the shot.

If a shot is fired with no incant, it has no direct effect; it may represent some form of maneuvering, so you may still want to dodge. If a shot is fired with a damage incant, it does the stated amount of damage.

A **burst** weapon is fired in bursts with at least one shot per second. A burst has a single damage incant: if one or more shots hit, the incant takes effect once. You may repeat the incant during a burst for clarity. Once a second passes without a shot, the burst ends, and you must wait at least **3 seconds** before starting another (even if the next burst is from a different burst weapon).

All ammo is unlimited. Do not hoard ammo. You may not call a halt to sweep ammo.

Martial Combat   All characters have a **Combat Rating** (**CR**) stat. This represents your basic skill in martial combat; you use the same number for attacking and defending. Some abilities and items will change your CR either in total or for specific cases.

To martial-attack someone, shoot them with you dart gun, stating your attack and CR ("Wound 2", etc.) as the incant. When receiving a martial attack, if your CR is the same as or higher than the attack's, say "**resist**" and the attack has no effect.

You may only use the attacks granted by your abilities and items. There are two kinds of attacks:
  - Disarm: when using, you point at an item held by the target. When hit, if your CR is lower than the attack's, drop the item pointed at. You may carefully place bulky or fragile physreps on the floor.
  - Wound: when hit, subtract the higher of your CR or DR from the attack's CR, and take the result as damage.

Hit Chains: Hit chains represent different kinds of both offensive and defensive combat maneuvering. They are by default performed with dart guns, but can be performed with non-burst ranged weapons when specified by the item. Any hit chain abilities you can perform will be specified by your items and abilities.

A hit chain is a series of successive hits on the same target with the same weapon. A chain ends when 10 seconds pass without another hit. Any hit from the same weapon keeps a chain from expiring, but only hits without incants will increase the current length of the chain. Chain abilities require you to achieve hit chains of certain lengths to be used, and are only effective against the target of the chain.

A **passive** chain ability, e.g. "passive 2 hit chain ability," is used by spending the given length of chain, and remains on until your chain expires. You may choose to end a passive ability early. You may not stack a passive ability with itself. An **active** chain ability is used by spending the given length of chain per use of the ability.

A **ranged** chain ability is active and lets you make a ranged attack (with the same weapon you are using for your chain); e.g. a "ranged 2 hit chain ability" lets you make a ranged attack as the 3rd shot. Similarly, a **melee** chain ability is active and lets you make a specific martial attack.

You may maintain hit chains against multiple targets at once, and, given multiple chain-capable weapons, maintain multiple chains against the same target. These are probably difficult, but for the playtest we want to see just how difficult.

4   Default Stats

Everyone starts with 10 HP, a DR of 0, and a CR of 3. If they are wearing a green headband on their arm, they have between 15 and 20 HP.