



KILL CHAIN

A GAME OF EXPLOITATION, ESCALATION, & RETALIATION

ROOT ACCESS EXPANSION

Leaders Asymmetric Gameplay



A GAME BY SEAN HOWARD & JIM BYRGE



120 Min



AGES
14+



1-5
PLAYERS

Story

Power isn't taken—
it's built from the ground up.

The corporations may rule the city, but the streets—and the system—belong to those with Root Access. In this groundbreaking expansion to Kill Chain, the hacker underworld fractures into unique identities, each syndicate led by a mastermind with their own tools, tactics, and code-born philosophy.

Objective

Kill Chain: Root Access introduces a major gameplay shift: asymmetric hacker syndicates, each with distinct strengths, weaknesses, and playstyles. Whether you specialize in stealth, brute-force intrusion, or double-dealing with corporate contracts, every game becomes a fresh battle of wits and style.

New Core Mechanic: Asymmetric Leaders – Choose from a cast of elite syndicate heads, each with a unique worker placement zone, custom starting resources, and signature character cards.

Faction-Specific Strategies – No two hackers play the same. Master your syndicate's abilities and exploit your rivals' blind spots.

Replayability Rebooted – Every matchup is different, every leader changes the landscape. Explore deep synergies and challenge yourself to adapt.

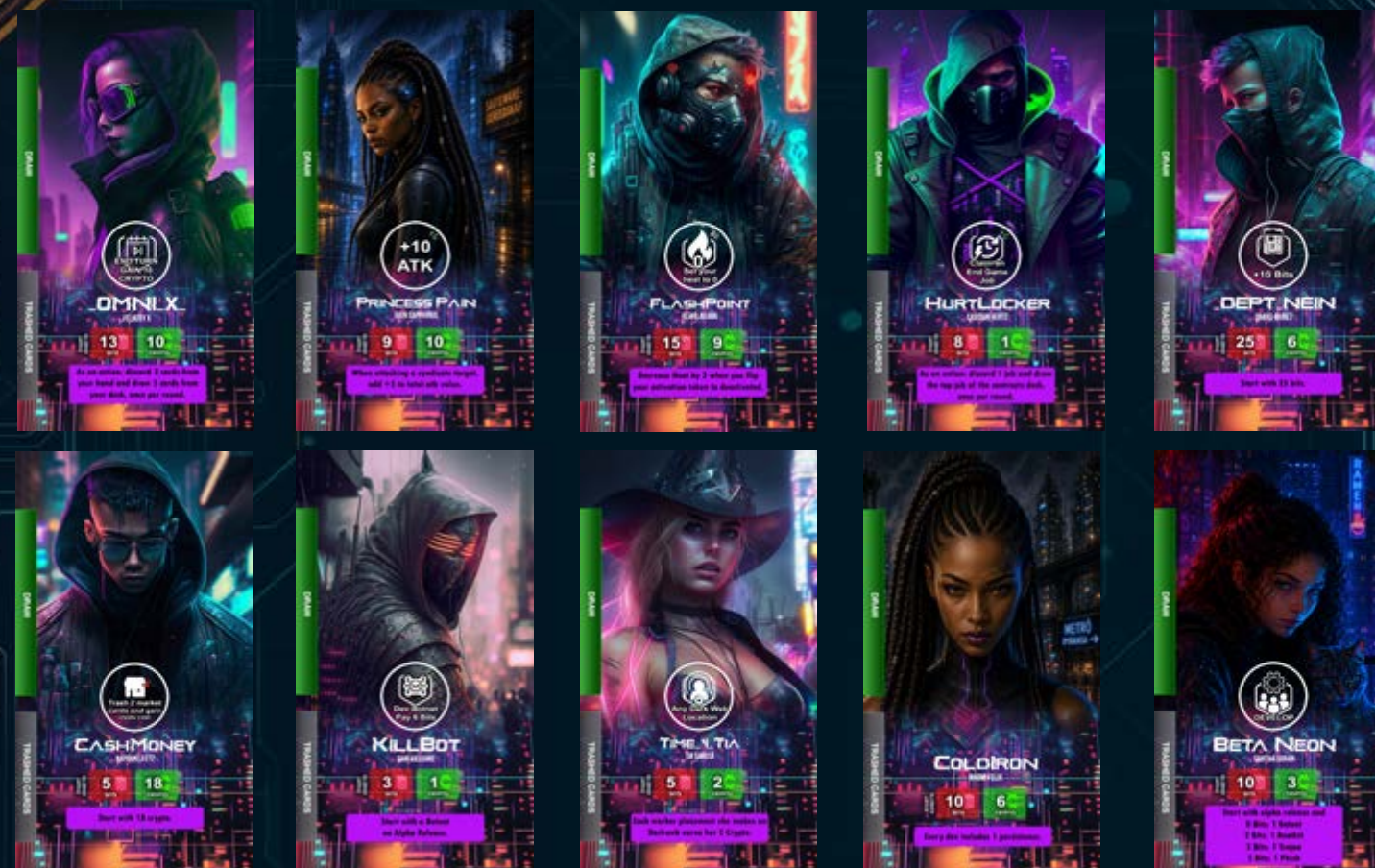
Thematic Depth – Each leader embodies a distinct hacker archetype, from black-market spymasters to data anarchists and cybernetic ex-military ops.

Root Access doesn't just upgrade your power—it personalizes your war.

Plug in. Power up. Play your way.

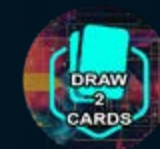


Components Boards

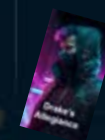


10x Leader Boards

Tokens

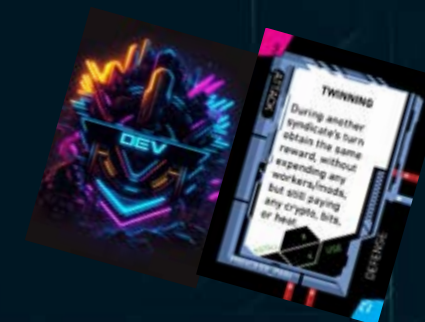


8x Syndicate Upgrade Tokens



1x Drake's Allegiance Token

Cards



20x Leader Cards

9

11

8

7

5

6

2

1

4

3

10

Setup

(1) Begin setup by **placing the Dark Web Boards** (Locations and Market) in the middle of the table within reach of all players.

(2) **Shuffle the Dev Card Deck** and place it on the left of the Market board. Place 5 cards, from the Dev Card Deck, one in each marketplace stall.

(3) **Deal three jobs to each player.** Each player must keep at least one job, but can keep all.

(4) **Give each player their starting components:** one Syndicate Tableau, two workers, one hacker, one starting deck, two crypto tokens, two bit tokens, one heat token, two player aid cards, and an active/done token.

(5) Shuffle the Corporation Boards and randomly place N+1 (where N is the number of players).

(6) Give each player 2 Leader Boards. Each player selects one to slot into their tableau and returns the unchosen Leader to the box. Set Bits, Crypto, Heat, and Hand Size to the values shown on the selected Leader. Give each player their two leader unique starting cards (shuffled into their starting deck). Each player draws their hand size (default is 4).

(7) **Shuffle the DEF Cards** and place them near the Corporation Boards.

(8) Place the Networking Tokens within reach of all players.

(9) Place the Threat Tokens near the Dark Web.

(10) Shuffle and place the Round Rewards deck near the Dark Web boards.

(11) The first player is chosen at random. Give them the starting player token.

Setup Continued

The Root Access expansion comes with Leader boards which are distributed during setup. Each player receives 2 and selects one to use in their tableau. Each selected Leader Board slots into the left side of the Syndicate Tableau using the tabs on the Leader Board and the matching inlet on the Tableau.

Gameplay

Review core rulebook for basic gameplay operation.

Phase A: Prepare

No changes to Phase A.

Phase B: Action Phase

The Leader Board adds 1 new worker placement location to the Syndicate Tableau, for a total of 5 locations. This Leader location is available only to the player using that Leader. The completed tableau shows (A) 5 worker placement locations, (B) a unique ability, and (C) starting resources.

Each Leader has a unique ability printed on the Leader Board. Resolve that ability according to its printed timing and restrictions.

Phase C: Reboot Phase

Review core rulebook for reboot phase operations.

Credits

The following people made this game possible.

Game Designers: Sean Howard & Jim Byrge

Digital Artists: Lorisy Nor
Huryo
Liu Zishan
Sergey Nivens
MMVector
4Luck

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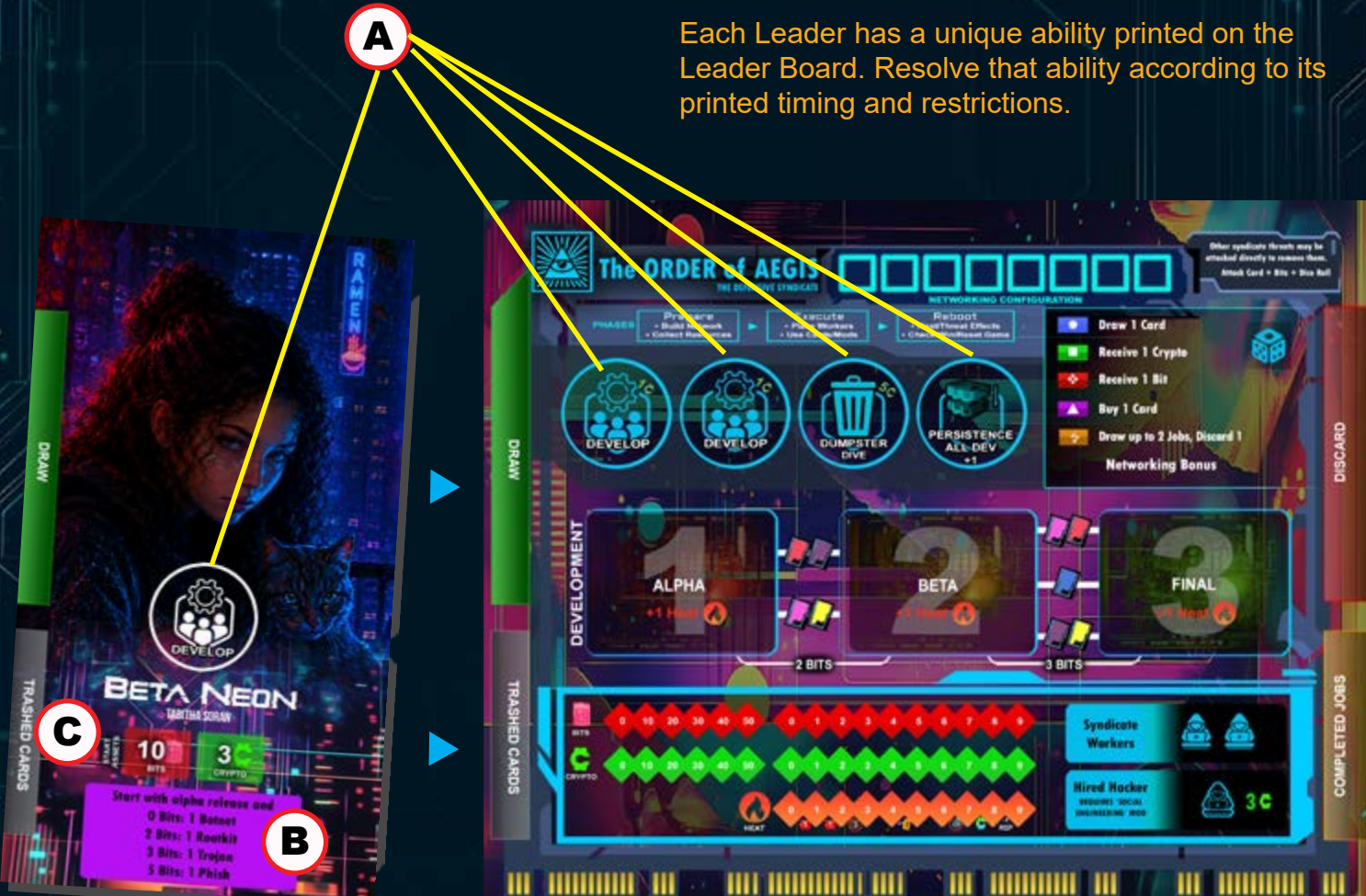
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Phase B: Action Phase 6

Phase C: Reboot Phase 7

Turn Summary 8



No AI art was used in the production of this game.

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Turn Summary

PREPARE (Start of Round)

Build Network: Trash up to 2 cards to gain network tokens.

Collect Network Resources: Gain resources based on your tokens.

ACTION

Dark Web

Marketplace: Pay crypto to take a DEV card directly into your hand.

Contracts: Draw 3 job cards, keep at least 1, discard the rest.

Persistence: Pay crypto per level to place 1–5 Threats.

Crypto: Gain crypto based on location value.

Bits: Gain Bits based on location value.

Pay Off: Pay crypto and roll 1 die to reduce Heat.

Publish: Take the first player token and gain +1 REP.

Syndicate Workstation

Develop: Pay 1 Crypto/X Bits, place threat on Dev Track. Extra Bits = more progress + Heat.

Dumpster Dive: Pay 5 Crypto to take 1 card from a Syndicate's Trash.

Unique Location: Use a Syndicate-specific action.

Activate Mod: Pay crypto to flip and use a Mod card.

Hand of Cards

Execute: Play a card for its effect (non-Mods only).

Install Mod: Pay crypto to install a Mod under your workstation.

Cool Down: Discard any number of cards to reduce Heat by that amount.

Attack/Defense: See Corporation section.

Corporations

Corporate Gains: Use once per round. Flip token to gain the reward.

Temp Locations: Perform effect. Roll a 5+ to immediately move worker again.

Attacking:

Declare target: workstation/corporation & level.

Play ATK card, assign Bits, roll die.

If attacking corporation: draw DEF card and calculate defense value.

Compare values (ties go to defender).

Success: Place threat, gain reward, +1 REP.

Fail: Return threat to workstation alpha slot.

Increase Heat by 1.

REBOOT (End of Round)

Heat Effects: Resolve or lose 1 REP per unpaid cost.

Threat Rewards: Score Threats based on level multipliers.

Check Victory: Any player with 15+ REP triggers game end.

Refresh Hand: Discard any, draw up to 4.

Reset Corporations: Flip Corporate Gain tiles face up.

Recover & Reset: Take back workers. Flip Mods face up.

Flip Active Token: Make it green side up.