

**The Moon's
Dark Side** ©1991,1997
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The universe is large enough and old enough that the existence of other beings more advanced than humanity is not merely likely, it is virtually guaranteed. I have known this for a long time. But knowing this and finding a three million-year-old spacecraft is a lot like the relation between knowing that being shot will hurt and being shot.

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Introduction

This is a space adventure for *Cyberpunk 2020* and it is intended for a group of PCs with experience in space. If you intend to play in this adventure, please do not read any further.

Referee's Introduction

In order to properly run this adventure, a copy of *Near Orbit* will be required. This adventure deals with the discovery of a 3 million-year-old alien spacecraft on earth's moon and the events that result because of this.

Getting the PCs Involved:

This adventure is written with the assumption that the PCs are part of the team responsible for the evacuation and transportation of the alien craft. The adventure can be modified if the PCs are not team members (for example, they may be hired to steal it) but this is left to the referee. PCs will be assigned to positions on the team based on their expertise. For example, solos would be part of the security team.

Exactly how the PCs end up on the team is up to the referee. This may be the end result of months of play, or the referee may simply wish to assign them to the team.

-Cpt. Ruth Milkin, NASA Background (Player)

Six weeks ago, a graduate student and his advisor completed an experiment in which the electromagnetic field of the moon was carefully examined. This activity was met with the indifference reserved for most academic endeavors. However, the data revealed an interesting fact: a regularly occurring electromagnetic flux was detected in an area where no human activity was occurring. The advisor suspected it was an abandoned power cell or some other junk. The grad student decided to investigate the site and armed with more precise instruments was able to determine that the flux was a signal of some kind, and apparently not of human origin. To insure he would receive the credit for the find, the student filed his results with NASA and ESA. In response, an ESA/NASA team was sent in to undertake the excavation. A Vacuum Base Camp was established on the site and the dig began shortly thereafter. For various reasons, a media blackout was put into effect

(one of the reasons being to avoid NASA and ESA becoming a laughingstock if the whole thing turns out to be a hoax). The adventure begins as the digging ends.

Background (Referee)

The anomaly is being produced by a craft that is nearly three million years old and is of non-human origin. For details, see the section on the Alien Craft, below.

Maps

Dig Site

The dig site is located on the moon's surface, on the dark side of the moon. Because of this, the expedition will rely on artificial lighting. The dirt piles are composed of the excavated dirt. The dig cover is a section of armored hull material (SP=45) that is being used to protect the dig site. Underneath it is the dig shaft. The VBC is the Vacuum Base Camp.

VBC Interior

The VBC is a portable shelter used in exploration of hostile worlds (the moon and Mars, so far). It is armored (SP=25) to prevent accidents. It is designed to sustain a crew of ten for thirty days.

First Level

1. Airlock: The airlock is designed so that both doors cannot be opened at the same time.
2. Equipping Area
3. Locker: Used to store air tanks, etc.
4. Locker: Used to store suits, etc.

5-9. Quarters: Each room is equipped with a bunk bed, two lockers, a terminal, and low-gravity bathroom facilities. They are double occupancy.

10. Machinery: The machinery required to run the life support, airlock, and so forth is located here.

11-12. Storage/Life Support: The batteries, water, air, and life support equipment are located in these sections.

Second Level

1. Galley: The VBC's food preparation and dining area.
2. Rec Area: This area contains physical and mental entertainments designed to prevent the crew from going space happy.
3. Laboratory: A well equipped scientific laboratory.
4. Control Center: The VBC's systems are controlled from here. The room also houses the communication gear (radio, and laser communication link).

Action

Prior to the events listed below, the referee will want to describe the week of work prior to event #1. A few short role playing sessions can be used to introduce the PCs to the NPCs and the situation. However, the week of digging will be rather dull. If desired, an emergency or two (a life support accident, a nearby crash, a lost person on the moon) can be used to liven things up and make the situation more real for the players.

The Plant

One the NPCs (detailed below) is actually working for a corporation which would like to have sole access to the alien object. This plant will be smuggling information out of the camp via a laser communication device. The plant will also be acting to insure that the corporation gets the artifact and that no evidence is left of this fact. To this end, the plant has been equipped with a small nuclear device. The plant is extremely good at what she does and will set it up so an innocent team member seems to be the plant. She will also strive to create friction among the team members and put them under stress (with “accidents”) and so forth. She will do this to make her job (insuring her corporation gets the artifact) easier.

The Work

The first phase of the work is the scanning of the site with various instruments. This will reveal that a very high density object is locked beneath the lunar surface and that it is emitting electromagnetic energy. The object appears to be encased in fused silicates, which indicates it was extremely hot when it impacted the moon’s surface. The depth of the object indicates that it arrived on the moon 2-3 million years ago. The depth of the object, its encasement in fused silicates, and the extreme caution used in the digging will result in a week being required to unmoon the object.

Event #1 The Uncovering

At the completion of the digging and the chipping away of most of the silicates, a carefully formulated chemical will be used to dissolve

away the rest of the silicate (the excavation shaft is sealed and pressurized for this). After the fumes clear, the object will be visible. It is a dull silver color, but still reflective. When the light first hits it, it will emit a strong and complex electromagnetic signal that will momentarily interfere with the operation of electrical equipment within a 100 meter radius. The lights will go out, vehicles will “stall”, cyber-optics will go blind, and so forth. This effect will last only a minute and then everything will return to normal. The scientists on the team will spend another week examining the artifact to determine if it is dangerous and if it can be transported to a laboratory.

Event #2 Nightmares

Two days after the uncovering of the craft, the plant will introduce small doses of a chemical into the air supply of the VBC (she will take an antidote). This drug induces severe hallucinations in a sleeping mind and will make the team members experience nightmares, most centering on the alien artifact (because it is so central in their thoughts). The plant will pretend to be having the same nightmares. She will also introduce the idea that the artifact is responsible. This talk will serve to enhance and focus the nightmares onto the artifact. Use your imagination when describing the horror lurking within the artifact (reading some H.P Lovecraft would be helpful for ideas). At this point, some of the NPCs will be getting nervous and the atmosphere in the VBC will be tense. The chemical will gradually build up in the team members, resulting in more intense and vivid nightmares. The plant will not simply poison the team off

because she has been instructed to let the team determine if the artifact is dangerous or not before the corporation takes possession of it. The scientists will be baffled by these nightmares, since the artifact is not emitting any form of energy that would be likely to cause the nightmares. Since the plant is the medical officer, she will be able to conceal the chemical origin of the nightmares.

Event #3 Sabotage

Three days after the chemical is introduced into the air supply, the plant will sabotage the VBC's communication equipment and the expedition's moon jumper. She will use special gloves she has prepared (using security records) of a NPC's fingerprints. She will be sure to get the prints over everything and will plant evidence so it appears the NPC was responsible. She will suggest that the artifact might be using some form of mind control and this will explain why the (framed) NPC has no memory of the incident. The extent of the damage and what would be required for repairs or jury-rigging is left to the referee.

Event #4 Disappearance

Four days after the chemical is introduced to the air supply, one of the team members will not be found in the morning. When the dig shaft is examined, the shredded remains of the missing person's space suit (with plenty of blood in and on it) will be found near the artifact (which will also be liberally doused with blood). The suit will also be found to be radioactive. While it appears that the artifact has killed and perhaps eaten a team member, in fact the plant lured a team member outside and killed him. She will bury his body

several hundred meters from the site (after draining out the blood with a piece of medical equipment), shred up his suit and then douse it and the craft with the blood after exposing both the suit and blood to a radiation source. She will then go to sleep and prepare to be as surprised as everyone else the next day. By this point, tensions will be running high and everyone will be afraid or at least concerned about the artifact. The scientists will be very surprised by this event, as the artifact has undergone no changes (a smart PC may realize that if the artifact has not increased in mass, it couldn't have "eaten" the missing person).

Event #5 The Plant Exposed

Since the tests have not revealed anything dangerous about the artifact and the plant knows she is the cause of the events attributed to the artifact, she will decide it is time to take possession of the artifact. She will use her laser communicator to signal the pick up team, prepare to introduce a poison gas into the VBC, and set her nuclear charge in the dig shaft. The charge is equipped with a broadcaster which will transmit a message just prior to the explosion claiming that the Brothers of Jesus (a radical, anti-space cult which has as it's main tenets that the Devil lives in space and Man belongs only on earth) have blown the site up because it was the work of the Devil.

Fortunately for the PCs, the plant's own chemical will thwart her plans. An NPC will wake up due to a particularly bad nightmare and will catch the plant in the act of trying to poison everyone. The unlucky NPC will be killed, but the others will wake up when the alarm is set off. When the plant is subdued or killed,

the remote detonator for the nuclear charge will be found on her.

Event #6 The Attack

Unfortunately for the team, the plant's signal will bring the corporate team to the site 34 minutes after the plant is discovered by the NPC. The attack force will arrive in two moon jumpers. They will be expecting an easy job and will simply set down beside the dig shaft. This assumes that the PCs don't do anything to alert them of what has actually occurred. If they are warned, they will strafe the area until the VBC and any exposed people are torn to bits. The jumpers can be spotted quite a ways off (about a 10-minute warning) because of their engines. If the PCs play their cards right, taking out the corporate team will be a piece of cake. If the PCs lose the fight, they will be killed, the artifact will be taken, and the site destroyed by the nuclear charge.

Event #7 Yet Another Attack

The corporate team's backup will be monitoring the first attack, in case anything goes wrong. If the first team loses the fight, the backup team will send in a jetpack equipped attack force as a distraction. While the survivor's attention is on the new attack, the backup team's moon jumper will maneuver over the dig sight, lift the cover off, and carry off the artifact unless it is stopped. The attackers will attempt to finish off the survivors and once the moon jumper delivers the artifact (a 35 minute trip) it will return (35 minutes later) with another attack team and a nuclear device.

Event #8 The Chase

If the backup team makes off with the artifact, it will be taken to a small

base camp where the teams were waiting. Over the base camp is an OTV and the artifact will be boosted up to it by a small drone craft. The OTV will then head for a workstation which has a shuttle docked at it. The workstation is considered to be the same distance from the moon as L1 for time and fuel purposes. If the OTV reaches the workstation, the artifact will be transferred to the shuttle and then brought to earth. Once on earth, the artifact will be taken to a corporate lab and result in a massive bonanza for the corporation.

Of course, the PCs may have something to say about this. If the PCs can get a working transmitter, they can contact NASA and ESA and they can send a moon jumper to pick up the PCs. The base is 55 minutes away by moon jumper. If they PCs capture a moon jumper or fix one of theirs, they can make the trip on their own. The NASA/ESA base has a Nighthawk STC that is assigned to the team (it was intended to transport the artifact). It is fueled and ready to go and can catch the OTV as long as the OTV is not more than two hours and twenty minutes ahead of it. Since the OTV is unarmed, the PCs should be able to get the crew to surrender.

Finish

If the corporation escapes with the artifact, they will be able to make a great deal of use out of it and will introduce revolutionary new alloys within two years and other products as they solve the mysteries of the artifact. If the corporation escapes with it, but it is known that the artifact was stolen, there will be a worldwide search for it and it will be found. This will spell the end for that corporation. If the corporation

Generic Team Member (Tech)

Int: 6 Ref: 6 Tech: 7
Attr: 5 Luck: 5 MA: 6
Body: 5 Emp: 5

Skills: Jury Rig +4, Z-G Maneuver +4, EVA +3, Chemistry +2, Expert: (in field of expertise) +4, Athletics +2, Basic Tech +4

Cybernetics: biomonitor

Description: Competent NASA or ESA techs.

Team Equipment

The Team has a moon jumper and a VBC. The VBC is stocked with the equipment they will need: tools, chemicals, food, scientific gear, space suits, and so forth.

Corporate NPCS

Team Leaders (3) (Solo)

Int: 6 Ref: 7/9 Tech: 6
Attr: 5 Luck: 5 MA: 7
Body: 7 Emp: 3

Skills: Combat Sense +7, Z-G Maneuver +4, Z-G Combat +4, Leadership +3, Athletics +6, Karate +4, Handgun +4, Rifle +6, Pilot (MV) +3, Melee +4

Cybernetics: Biomonitor, Neural Processor, Boosterware (+2), Interface Plugs, Cyberoptic with IR, Low Lite and Target Scope, Independent Air Supply, Pain Editor.

Equipment: Vacc Suit with jet pack, Techtronica 15 Microwaver, Smartchipped Militech Electronics LaserCannon, Kendaichi Monokatana.

Corporate Team Member(18) (Solo)

Int: 5 Ref: 6/7 Tech: 4
Attr: 4 Luck: 4 MA: 6
Body: 7 Emp: 2

Skills: Combat Sense + 5, Z-G Maneuver +4, Z-G Combat +3, EVA +3, Karate +3, Athletics +4, Handgun +3, Rifle +4, melee +4 (three of the 18 are pilots, with Pilot (MV) +4 and Heavy Weapons +2).

Cybernetics: Biomonitor, Neural Processor, Boosterware(+1), Pain Editor.

Equipment: As per team leader.

Description: Corporate Space Muscle.

OTV Pilots(2)

Int: 6 Ref: 6/8 Tech: 7
Attr: 4 Luck: 6 MA: 4
Body: 5 Emp: 4

Skills: Brotherhood +2, Z-G Maneuver +4, Z-G Combat +2, Astrogation +5, EVA +4, Handgun +2, Athletics +2, Brawling +2, Basic Tech +3, OTV Pilot +6, Melee +2

Cybernetics: Biomonitor, Neural Processor, Interface Plugs, Boosterware(+2), Independent Air Supply

Equipment: Pilot suit, Hammer M-11 Bolt Pistol and two clips, Kendachi Monoknife.

Description: Corporate pilots, in it for the money.

Corporate Equipment:

There are two teams. Each MV-4 has 6 Corporate team members, a pilot, and a leader. The first team has two MV-4s, the second one. The OTV pilots are in an OTV.

Equipment

Alien Artifact

Introduction:

The alien artifact is a three million-year-old probe from a highly advanced non-human race.

Description:

The probe is basically a cylinder with four attached cylinders and what appear to be fins or wings extending from the back (or front). The front section contains the prob's "brain", the next section contains instruments and the power supply, and the section with the fins is the power plant and drive.

Scientific Data:

The probe is four meters long and is of extremely high density. It generates a very odd electromagnetic field and emits what seems to be a signal. X-Ray scans reveal the interior contains what can be best described as "fossilized" equipment, none of which resembles any known human technology. The outer shell is of an extremely dense and tough material, superior to all known human materials. The probe still has a functioning power or battery system, which indicates an incredibly advanced energy technology (after all, human corporations are proud of their 5-year batteries).

Value:

Examination of the probe will lead to advances in material sciences and as the interior is examined, it will enable advances in computer technology, instrument technology and so forth. In fact, the probe is mankind's key to the stars.

Examining the drive system will provide human scientists with the empirical data they would need to develop a new field of research in near light speed drives. Obviously, the artifact is priceless as an item from a nonhuman culture.

Shock:

Proof of the existence (or one time existence) of an alien race far more advanced than humanity would create quite a stir. If the information is released, all sorts of things will happen: cults will form to welcome the aliens who are on their way to save us, the tabloids will go nuts ("Elvis Found in Alien Probe!"), people will start watching the skies, militaries will begin asking for funding for more space weapons, and many books will be written. The exact impact is left to the referee.

MV-4 "Moon Jumper"

Produced by the same company that produces the AV-4, the Moon Vehicle-4 is designed to operate on the moon. It has room for a pilot and copilot in the front, six passengers in the back, and has a cargo section (can be converted to seat six more passengers). It has sufficient power and life support for five days and is equipped with radar, a

multiband/tight beam radio, and has a built in airlock. Its powerful engines enable it to carry a substantial amount of cargo, either with its four cranes or linked to the bottom of the craft (the low moon gravity enables it to carry an amazing amount of material). Top speed is 800 MPH. SP=20 SDP=100. Common (standard armament) consists of a modified M-134 Minigun in a chin turret, and a laser weapon on a top turret. The laser weapon has the following stats:
HVY +3 N R 3-15D6 60 2 UR 800M
It can be adjusted for shots ranging from 3D6 to 15D6. Each die of damage drains one charge from the power pack (which has 60 charges).

Nighthawk STC

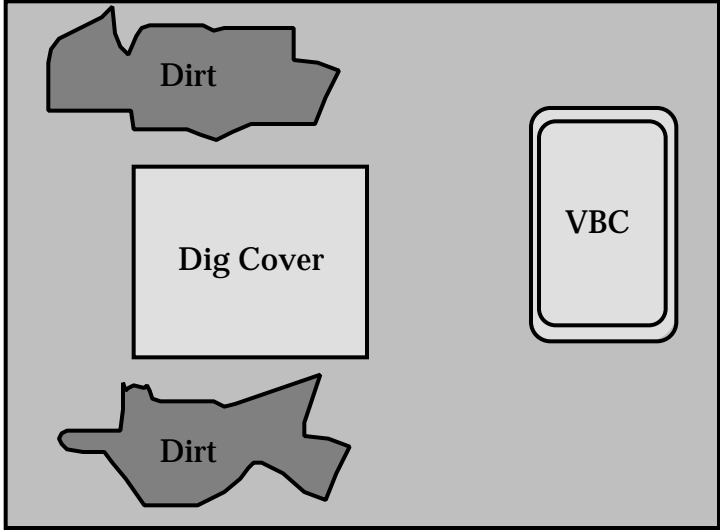
The Nighthawk STC (Special Transport Craft) is a high-speed shuttle vehicle produced by Lockheed AeroSpace. It is designed to transport high priority and special cargoes, possibly through opposition. It is equipped with the latest in avionics and electronics and is fully stealthed for those "special deliveries." It has room for a pilot, copilot and four passengers in the front section. The cargo bay can be fitted with a pressurized section and can carry 20 passengers.

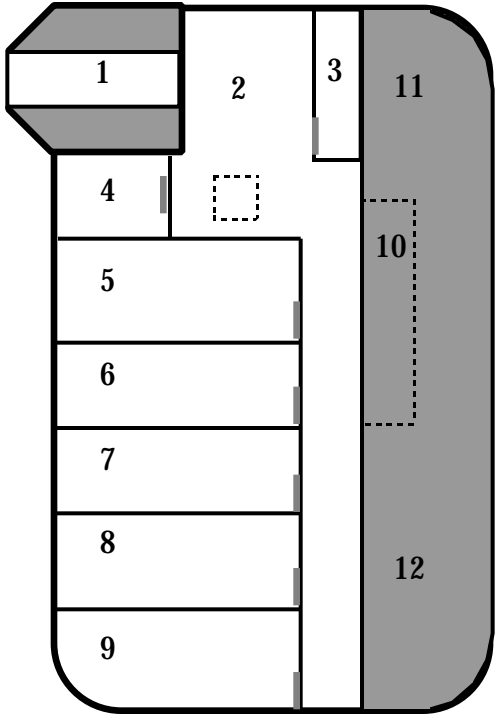
Armaments & Defenses:

ECM
Flares & Chaff
Chemical Laser
Electronic Warfare
Missiles(2)

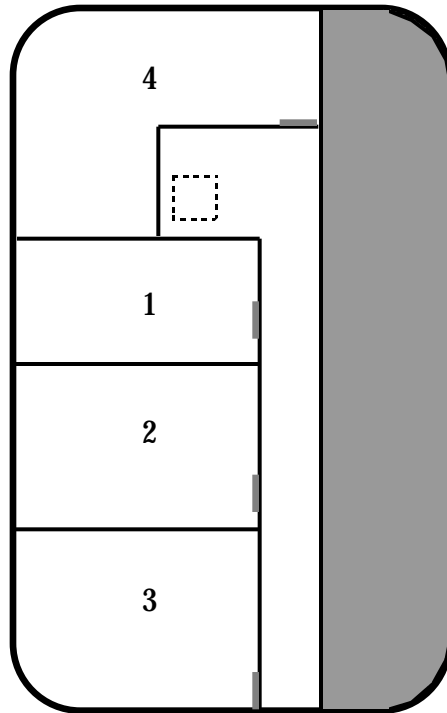
Fuel:

12 Burns





First Level



Second Level