

BLUE BOOKING: THE LOST ART

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Remember when you knew so much about your character, you could have almost sworn he or she was one of your best friends? I do. Unfortunately, when I try to get a blue book from someone, I get a text that is so scratchy, filled with holes, and inconsistent that it is WORSE than not getting one(which is more often the case).

Lemme start off as saying:

PEOPLE, IT IS NOT THAT HARD TO DO THIS!!! TAKE A LITTLE TIME AND IMAGINATION AND PUT YOUR WRITING CLASSES TO GOOD USAGE!

What is a blue book? A blue book, as far as I understand it, came from those little examination books they force students to use for midterms and final exams in college. In terms of gaming, a blue book is a written, detailed view of the character. It is above and beyond the character sheet. Blue books typically cover everything from a brief overview of the character's past to his worst fears. A complete blue book will include a character's history, likes, dislikes, hopes and aspirations, a brief overview of his personality and his motivations. For some games like Cyberpunk, it is a wise idea to also detail relatives.

My character's blue book currently contains only his history. To this I plan to add more.

Cyberpunk's LIFE PATH and BACKGROUND determination system makes blue booking a snap. Think of blue booking this way: all the details you have on your hard copy make up the skeleton of your character, a blue book puts meat on the bones, fleshes out the character.

R. Talsorian Games provides the player with a jumping point for character write ups. They give you all the basic starting information, all you have to do is develop it. It is as if R. Talsorian gave you a lump of clay and said, make a pot. Now, everyone's interpretation of a pot is different, however, the principle of the pot will not be denied. It can be anything from a pinch pot, to a pitcher of some sort. You can make it as flowerful and detailed or as simple as you desire.

Now here is my view on the basic way to start blue booking your character:

- Catalogue all important and/or relevant data (this is the most important step, without this, you can't do the others)
- Organize the data into a chronological order
- Decide on settings, characters, dialouge (if you are up to it and if relevant)
- Start to fill in the details and start tying things together
- After the history, describe the character's current situation, pursuits, etc. Remember, the more blanks you fill in, the more realistic the character becomes.

I know some players are reading this and thinking that this is just a tool or trick created by GMs to torture, molest, and make a player character's life a complete and utter hell...well, for the most part you are wrong. I admit the usage that blue books get is mostly for plot hooks, but most GMs I've talked to and worked with use it for the same things I do, as dramatic hooks and situations. That old lover or hated associate just might come back to haunt you ... they seem to have a strong tendancy to do that, don't they?

Well, this concludes what I have to say about blue booking. I hope I was able to clear some things up for you. Remember, all it takes is a little imagination, organization, and time (and sometimes a six pack of Jolt).