CHALLENCE ™

The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming

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77

TRAVELLER® THE NEW ERA
Short Nap
Michael R. Mikesh

DARK CONSPIRACY™
The Beast Under The Bed
Michael C. LaBossiere

STAR WARS®
Pandora's Box
Peter Rausch

plus—
MORE TRAVELLER®
TWILIGHT: 2000™
CYBERPUNK®
SPACE: 1889™
and More

Special Shadowrun® Campaign:
New York City Subways

GDW

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Issue 77

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ABOUT THE COVER
"Running Short" by John Zeleznik, the cover painting for an upcoming **Shadowrun**® adventure which will be released later this year by FASA. **Shadowrun** enthusiasts should see page 62 for this issue's **Shadowrun** feature, "New York City Subways: 2054." Can you spare a token, Chummer?

Whither (NOT to be confused with "Wither") Traveller?

An Editorial Excursion by Some Long-Winded GDW Guy

Rather than a separate editorial and letters column, the editorial for this issue will consist of a letter and my response to it. I received this letter a couple weeks ago, and in answering its concerns, realized that I was talking about crucial underlying principles of **Traveller: The New Era**. Because this would interest a larger audience than just the letter's author, I decided to put it into **Challenge**. I also realized that I had to somehow recoup the large amount of time that I had spent on my response, so I turned this into the editorial and struck that task from my to-do book, then added a little more to the letter. Old Mother Necessity has many legitimate and illegitimate children, one of which is the multiple-bird-killing stone.

I have written or talked to a great many people about the evolution of **TNE** and its assumptions, intentions and goals. I have done this so often (as has Frank) that I feel like everyone in the world must certainly know all the philosophical underpinnings of this game. But when I think about it, it is obvious that no one has heard all of it, and the vast majority of **Traveller** players have heard none of it. It's meaningful to think that everyone who has bought a piece of the **Traveller** system is in some spiritual (but not legally binding, let me get that out of the way right now) way a kind of "part owner" of **Traveller**. When you spend years of your life with your friends carefully crafting your own campaign, it's impossible to not have a sense of connection to the game that represents so much work, so much fun, so many memories. With that understanding, the comments inspired by the following letter belong to all **Traveller** players, and this is a good place to make them widely available (especially seeing as how it also gets this editorial out of the way).

So anyway:

Dear GDW Staff,

*I've been a loyal customer of yours for about four years now (okay, maybe six) and I recently bought your **Aliens of the Rim Volume 1: Hivers and Ithklur.** Up until that supplement, I've been very happy with **Traveller: The New Era,** but **Aliens of the Rim** brought that happiness to a screeching halt. When DGP did the two alien sourcebooks for your **MegaTraveller** setting, they were awesome, but your sourcebook fell short.*

You left out some of the neat features of the old alien books, such as:

1) The sector maps of the race's area of space.

2) The sector map of one of their most populous sectors.

3) A sampling of the race's robots and vehicles.

4) The race's spacecraft.

5) World information of their home, and:

6) Other important worlds.

Not to be completely negative, the Hiver section was quite good (although lacking the above info). Character generation will help me get a better grip on this very alien race. The Ithklur section was horrible. I cannot believe you have the first blissful warrior named San*klaass (Santa Claus).

Come On! (written two lines high in original, reduced for reasons of format—ed.)

and the wearing of a red cap with white fur and a pompon,

(profanity, scrawled two lines high, deleted)!

I like humorous slants to RPGs, but this was way over the line. Please do better next time, PLEASE!

A loyal customer?
Ed Tumber
Clearwater, Florida

Dear Ed,

First of all, don't blame the entire GDW staff for what you dislike about **Hivers and Ithklur.** I thought the credits were clear that those who disliked the book were supposed to blame me (via divine intermediation, of course), but Frank often points out that I am too subtle. Maybe I'll listen to him one of these days. By the way, so you don't have to skip down to the end of my letter, my name is Dave. Ed, Dave; Dave, Ed.

First, I want to thank you for your support of **Traveller** and **TNE** for the past four to six years. We work very hard on this stuff, and your happiness means a lot to us. We also pay attention to all of the comments we receive about any dissatisfactions you might have.

Having cunningly segued to the dissatisfaction thing, I will now address yours in order: what I left out and what I included.

Everything I left out in comparison to the DGP books I left out for a reason, and this goes back to the basic concept behind Traveller: **The New Era.** Where **MegaTraveller** presented a smorgasbord of space which could not be effectively tied together into a unified whole, **TNE** is intended to present a coherent story. The same way that a novel or movie has to introduce new characters, plot developments, etc., in a planned way so that they develop rather than dilute the storyline, **TNE**'s releases have a sequencing and content intended to advance the story we are trying to tell. This is actually quite a departure from the philosophy behind the earlier avatars of **Traveller,** so please indulge me while I explain.

From the **TNE** point of view, the main problem with the DGP sourcebooks is one that was shared with the alien modules from original **Traveller:** They presented aliens as a sort of Alien of the Month Club. Each race was complete in and of itself, on its own home turf, with UWP information, subsector and sector maps of their home space, etc. In addition, rather than concentrating on the dynamic instabilities that exist within a society and between the alien society and the neighboring Imperium, these supplements usually presented alien societies as the socio-political equivalents of a steady-state ecological climax community.

Because players naturally use what you give them, the combination of well-detailed alien home space and the lack of clear hooks to pull these alien races into the larger Imperial storyline encouraged **Traveller** groups to jump their campaigns from one unrelated corner of space to another to follow the latest published material. When the Aslan book came out, groups started an Aslan campaign in order to use the cool information. When the K'kree book came out, groups jumped their campaigns over to K'kree space, followed by further abrupt campaign shifts when Vargr, Zhodani, Hiver, etc., books came out. This tendency undermined the ability to present a campaign in which the Imperium, or later, the "Rebellion," could be experienced in any kind of coherent way. (For example, the only way DGP was able to tie this disparate material together was to bodily haul their *Travellers' Digest* campaign around the entire Imperium, an unusual solution that is unsuited to most existing campaigns.) And because much of **MegaTraveller** was about the Rebellion, this lack of focus was a problem, perhaps even a fatal flaw. When a unified campaign background is fragmented into a number of separate neighborhoods, it becomes impossible to give all the players the campaign support they want. An Aslan campaign book does not meet the needs of the Vargr, K'kree, Zhodani or Hiver players, and vice versa. Furthermore, human-centered Imperial or Rebellion material answers the needs of none of the alien campaigns.

Nevertheless, some **Traveller** fans aren't bothered by the difficulty of tying together unrelated campaign fragments, as they just like all the cool background material. This raises another important point: There are at least two constituencies of **Traveller** fans, which I will call "players" and "collectors." Naturally there is extensive overlap between these two groups, so the division is perhaps best thought of as two poles of interest, between which all gamers are stretched to varying degrees of agony. **Traveller** fans who gravitate more toward the player pole enjoy **Traveller** primarily as a means to play a science-fiction roleplaying game in a broad, detailed, diverse and relatively "hard-science" setting. Those who gravitate toward the collector pole get their primary enjoyment out of being

immersed in the large mass of interesting pseudo-reality source material. This is the same enjoyment that history lovers get out of historical material; *Star Trek* fans get out of all the encyclopedias, blueprints, Klingon dictionaries, spaceflight chronologies, and technical manuals; and Tolkein fans get from Tolkein glossaries, Middle Earth maps, elven poetry, and Christopher Tolkein's examinations of his father's notes and unfinished manuscripts. **Traveller** collectors get most of their enjoyment from what Marc Miller called "solitaire **Traveller**"—designing starships and vehicles, generating sectors, writing histories, or simply having fun reading all the cool stuff. Because **Traveller** is 18 years old, many of its staunch supporters have reached the age where it is hard to fit roleplaying get-togethers into the demanding world of families, careers, hair loss, etc. These supporters are therefore inclined to move toward the solitaire/collector pole.

Neither pole, player nor collector, is better or worse than the other. However, material targeted more toward one pole than the other will not be wholly satisfactory to the untargeted group. While a collector wants the **Traveller** equivalent of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Jane's Fighting Ships*, The Bible, *Dune* and *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, players are better served by adventure-oriented material: The past is prologue; adventure starts now!

An excellent example of the difference in needs and enjoyment between the collector and the player is their approach to sector data. Collectors want to be able to see all of Charted Space, and clamor for more and more sector data. The leading response to the publication in 1984 of **Atlas of the Imperium** (long since out of print) was, "Okay, so now give us all the UWPs." Players, on the other hand, know what a task it is to detail a mere subsector to the level required for roleplaying. They don't want more sectors—they want help in breathing life into the worlds they already have.

We seek to satisfy both groups with our **TNE** material, but it is hard to walk a fine line between two demanding goals, and in many cases we have to err on one side more than the other. So which side? What do we make, **Atlas of the Imperium** or **Tarsus**?

In order to answer this question, we have to first decide what the purpose and goal of the game is.

Original **Traveller** was not intended to become a huge system. It was a loose, open-ended framework for a broad variety of science-fiction adventure. But as its popularity grew, it evolved, a piece at a time, into a system that had not been envisioned when it was first created.

In time, this system turned out to be too static, with an omnipotent Imperium surrounded by climax communities of aliens. One **Traveller** contributor calls this background "airliners in space," in which you racked up frequent flyer miles going from one civilized world to the next. While this is an exaggeration, it is true that many, perhaps most, players had to create opportunities for adventure by breaking the law—if not Imperial law, then local law. The Imperial *laissez-faire* approach to home rule actually encouraged contempt of local authority, which led to lots of campaigns filled with bank robberies, jail breaks, stealing starships, robbing weapons depots for battle dress, abusing unsophisticated locals and staying one step ahead of the law.

At the risk of sounding old-fashioned, I find it troubling to think of a game in which the only way to do anything interesting is to break the law (again, an exaggeration, but grounded in truth). So, apparently, did the Forces for Galactic Harmony resident at GDW circa 1986-7, who decided to open up the **Traveller** background so that players could unleash mayhem *legally*. (Considering the success of the militantly anarchic cyberpunk genre, it is interesting to speculate that perhaps **Traveller** was ahead of its time, but that's water over the dam.)

The result was **MegaTraveller** and the Rebellion. Breaking the Imperium into chunks broke the omnipotence of the Imperium and allowed adventures to be more free-wheeling. Allowing certain of these chunks to be nominally good or evil allowed players to engage in greater amounts of spiffy combat, and in the name of what passed for a good cause.

However, there was confusion over whether the Rebellion was a means to an end or an end in itself, and **MegaTraveller** wound up with feet planted in both camps. This was not good for **Traveller** fans. Players who wanted to see the Rebellion unfold were disappointed, as were those who simply wanted to fast-forward to a campaign with many little imperia instead of just the one really big one. At the same time, collectors were equally disappointed by the lack of source material on the single most important historical event in 1100 years. **MegaTraveller**'s greatest story, the Rebellion/Civil War/Final War, was left essentially untold.

So now it's late 1991, and we had to figure out how to approach **Traveller: Take 3**. In the interest of making newer, better mistakes instead of just repeating old ones, we attempted to learn the lessons of **Traveller** and **MegaTraveller** to determine what characteristics the new edition should have. Among these were:

• An open background that allows free-wheeling adventure without having to look over your shoulder for the Imperial Fun Police.

• A background that allows *exploration*. It used to be that the only reason for landing on a planet in **Traveller** without knowing in advance what it was like was because you forgot to look it up.

• A background which would still allow areas for highly developed, high-technology societies.

• A background that follows from, and is consistent with, previously published **Traveller** material.

• A background which *affirms life* in some meaningful way. A tough line to walk in a roleplaying game, dealing as they do with violent conflict, but one to which we are committed. Why? Because some things are just plain right, dammit.

• A background with a clear focus of attention, rather than an attempt to detail everything at once.

• A background with a story to tell. Original **Traveller**'s steady-state societies were unrealistic. Life is dynamic: Certain powers are always waning while others wax. History is about the constant readjustments and jockeying for position within these patterns, and an adventure roleplaying game must be especially so.

• A background that allows room for mystery. **Traveller** has tended to be too reductionist, too matter-of-fact, too well-defined. It is criminal to take a campaign background as large as Charted Space and allow it to become too comprehensible, too domesticated, too dull. **Traveller** should be larger than life.

It was clear that accommodating the above points would require another watershed event in the campaign storyline.

"Considering the success of the militantly anarchic cyberpunk genre, it is interesting to speculate that perhaps Traveller was ahead of its time, but that's water over the dam."

The first thing was to get away from the Rebellion. It was already too late to properly handle the unfolding of the Rebellion, and to satisfy the **Traveller** players who were pulling for their favorite factions. In addition, I found the whole Rebellion concept to be ever more morally repugnant as time went by. I was determined that this as-yet-unspecified watershed event would not remotely rationalize the excesses of the Rebellion, but would categorically repudiate them.

So what's the event? Frank had already floated the idea of a computer virus and Star Vikings who come to pick up the pieces, and we re-visited it. When Frank had first mentioned the idea at some con, the response was, "That's impossible. We have virus protection software now, so no virus could ever bust up the Imperium."

My first reaction to that was an inarticulate sputter. "If man were meant to fly, he'd have wings." "Trains will never be able to go faster than 50 mph because all the air would get sucked out of them and the passengers would suffocate." "The *Titanic* is unsinkable." "The Maginot Line

The Rocket's
Red Glare

By George William Herbert
Art by Tim Holtrop

The briefing opens in a large hangar on the grounds of Moffet Field in Mountain View, California. About 20 soldiers are gathered on the chairs set up in the middle of the hanger. One common feature is that all seem to have some experience with Asian languages, preponderantly Japanese. A USAF colonel wearing a kevlar vest walks up to the front of the assembled chairs; obviously, the briefing is about to start.

"Welcome gentlemen. I'm sorry that you've been brought here with such little information, but this is an extremely important and delicate operation. My name is Colonel Sanderson, and I'm going to be the mission controller for your group.

"On July 12, 1997, two Russian tactical nuclear bombs destroyed the Chinese space vehicle launch facilities and primary design center, both in Shanghai province. The engineering team had been warned by the attacks on troops in the field in the previous days, and escaped along with many of their notes and plans. As the situation in China disintegrated, these engineers sought and were given safe asylum in Japan. Shortly thereafter, Japan was effectively destroyed by nuclear attack.

"Ten days ago, some Milgov agents in Japan discovered that many of the Chinese and Japanese engineers survived that attack also, and they are still

alive. They have indicated that they would like to relocate to the United States and continue working as possible, and Milgov has agreed to assist them. Your job is to extract them from Japan, along with as much of their plans and surviving rocket hardware as possible. A newly fitted-out transpacific-capable ship will transport your team there and return your team and the 300 engineers and about that many dependents.*

The engineers are currently on the island of Tanegashima, where the Japanese space launch complex was located. This island is approximately 150 kilometers south of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands. It is less than 50 kilometers long and significantly less wide. The engineers will gather at the launch complex seaside for pickup. No opposition is foreseen at the pickup, but your team is being assembled as a contingency.

The ship you will travel on is the USS Jones, a small converted containership. She departs in three days and will take three weeks to cross the Pacific. You will embark in 48 hours from this base; please be here at that time. Equipment requisition is to be handled on a priority basis by the base S4 office. Maps and intelligence reports will be available to officers immediately. This briefing is adjourned."

The additional information to officers includes maps of Tanegashima and intelligence reports on the situation in

southern Japan. A quick summary is that nothing seems to be happening; Kyushu's cities were significantly damaged in the attacks, and their inhabitants are now working the land and sea feeding themselves. Except for around the cities, little large-scale conflict is going on.

Materials available to the contingency team are basically anything from what's available. Only a small landing craft and two medium (35-foot) motor yachts will be available for transport from shore to the containership, so large vehicles make little sense (even if they were available). Up to two antitank missile launchers (one man portable, one tripod or HMMV mounted) or light artillery (a recoilless rifle or 120mm/107mm mortar) pieces are available, along with one HMMV (the largest vehicle that can fit in the landing craft). Personal weapons can be whatever the characters want, within reason (there simply isn't more than one PSG-1 in the area that can be requisitioned, nor too many antitank rocket launchers, etc.) For "normal" weapons (basic load types), extras will be provided to cover losses that may occur during the operation. Additional equipment (body armor and miscellaneous equipment) is generally available.

The ship is a 700-foot-long containership with a steam turbine engine that was recently converted to burn coal. Four of its holds have been replaced with coal bunkering space, and the rest of the belowdecks space has been made

into crude barracks for the 600+ evacuees. Notable on deck are several large cranes, cradles holding the three mid-sized boats (all running on Ethanol, of which 30,000 liters are also on board) and four small speedboats, a deck-mounted FOGM missile rack, several light (up to 35mm) cannon, and a Rapier antiaircraft missile launcher. The naval crew has been strengthened with marines to operate those weapons, and the crew is also training with several hand-held SAM missile launchers.

EXTRACTION

After three weeks of eventless trans-pacific voyage, the *Jones* arrives at Tanegashima. As it appears over the horizon, lookouts with binoculars begin scanning the island. As the launch site begins to become clear, something seems wrong; several columns of smoke are visible. The engineers on-shore don't respond to the radio signal. The captain (and mission commander on scene) halts the *Jones* five kilometers off-shore and orders the contingency team to go in to investigate. Remind the team that they are operating at sea, and probably want to wear floatation vests and not carry so much that they can't swim (for at least a short while).

The most obvious feature of the launch complex are the three large structures, all damaged by exposure over the last four years. The oldest launch tower has started to crumble. However, the newest (and never used) H-II launch tower and assembly building still tower majestically over beautiful coastline, perched on a plateau overlooking the water. Anyone looking further down the shore will notice a flat area near the beach about two kilometers from the launchers. Anyone observing it with binoculars can see crowds of people there, some waving.

The characters will probably approach, with caution. The people on-shore (men, women and children) will wave enthusiastically; a few are armed. When the characters are close enough, several people on the beach start yelling:

"O-kuni wa? American desu ka? (Where are you from? Are you the Americans?)"

The characters can respond in English or Japanese—the message will be communicated. Next comes a garbled bunch of yells:

"Enjinia desu! Tasukete! (We're the engineers! Help!)"

"The warlord's men are coming!"

The characters will sort it out in a little

while (faster if they speak Japanese). A new warlord from the island of Kyushu, Atsuki Kono, is attacking, and the engineers and dependents (and 400 additional island native refugees) have to be evacuated quickly. Apparently, no heavy weapons are in use, but the locals and few armed engineers are being pushed back toward this beach. They should report this back to the ship, at which point the captain will order the ship to move in closer (one kilometer off-shore) and order the characters to begin ferrying people out to the ship. It will take about five minutes trip time, one way, for the boats to run out one kilometer, then they need to unload, return and pick up another load. They can take up to 60 people each trip on each boat. The characters have to figure out how to organize the beach rescue and help hold off the warlord's men at the same time.

About five people can handle organizing the refugees, once the evacuation starts to go for real. It will take about 15 boat trips (five each boat) to get everyone out to the ship; the hard part will be rescuing the rearguard. The rest of the characters are free to go investigate the warlord's attack; if they brought their heavy weapons and/or vehicle, all the better.

About 250 lightly armed marauders are attacking down a 500-meter-wide valley, toward the seashore two kilometers away. About 75 lightly armed islanders and engineers (Chinese and Japanese) are holding them off. If the characters appear, one of the engineers with a shotgun will recognize what's happening and usher them over to the "command post" for the defenders—a small brick house with a light machinegun behind a barricade out front. Occasional bursts of fire go in both directions, but there seems to be little danger immediately.

Inside are two runners and two men with binoculars and a map; the older strides forward to meet the characters. "I am Okuchi Ito, director of the Tanegashima launch complex. You have arrived in time." His forces are giving ground, but are several hours from being forced back to the beach. A counterattack by the characters, however, may disrupt the attack enough to prevent any more casualties to the defenders and allow a safe rescue from the beach for all. The characters have an hour until the rest of the civilians are to the ship, and may take whatever actions they feel are appropriate.

Unless something goes badly wrong, they should be able to retreat to the

beach and start to withdraw in an hour or later. Just as they reach the beach, however, a machinegun on the hill above (700 meters away) opens fire on the defenders getting on the boats. One of its first victims will be Ito. His dying words are, "Rescue the rockets...the city near the shuttle... in the moon."

The characters can silence the machinegun. Ito's last words remain a mystery for the time being.

ROCKETS

Interviewing the engineers back on the ship will give a probable answer to the meaning of Ito's dying words; the Chinese arrived in Japan via the port of Kitakyushu, at the north tip of Kyushu. In Kitakyushu was an amusement park called Space World, with a replica space shuttle. The Chinese further report that they had brought some operational rocket engines from an unfinished rocket, but left them in Kitakyushu. Unfortunately, only Ito and some now-dead engineers knew where in that city. The captain of the Jones (and Colonel Sanderson, consulted by radio) agree that it's worthwhile to try to find and salvage the engines, but not at the risk of the engineers or ship. The Jones will move to near Kitakyushu, but stay off-shore. The contingency team can take two of the three larger (and two or three small) boats and whatever equipment they want, and try to find and salvage the engines.

KITAKYUSHU: 2000

Kitakyushu, which narrowly missed being the target for the US bomb that finally hit Nagasaki in WWII, was not so lucky this time. Its steel production centers were primary targets. One was right next to the amusement park. Much of the population has fled to the surrounding areas due to residual radiation.

The characters have two leads; one, Ito's cryptic mention of the shuttle and the moon (presumably meaning some reference to the amusement park), and the area around where the Chinese stayed, in a separate section of town.

Investigating the park, which is near the water, will show that it and the surrounding area are radioactive (moderate dosages; 1D6 rads per 10 minutes). It's unhealthy for the characters to do much searching. Visible are several rusting rides and buildings, and an amazing sight—a still shiny, full-sized mockup of an American space shuttle, standing erect as if it were ready for launch. Philosophical characters may note the optimism that the shuttle

Tanegashima

Launch Pads

1 Kilometer

Control Center

Beach

Beach

Kitakyushu

3 kilometers

HONSHU

Bridge

Nuclear Craters

Space World

Mall

KYUSHU ISLAND
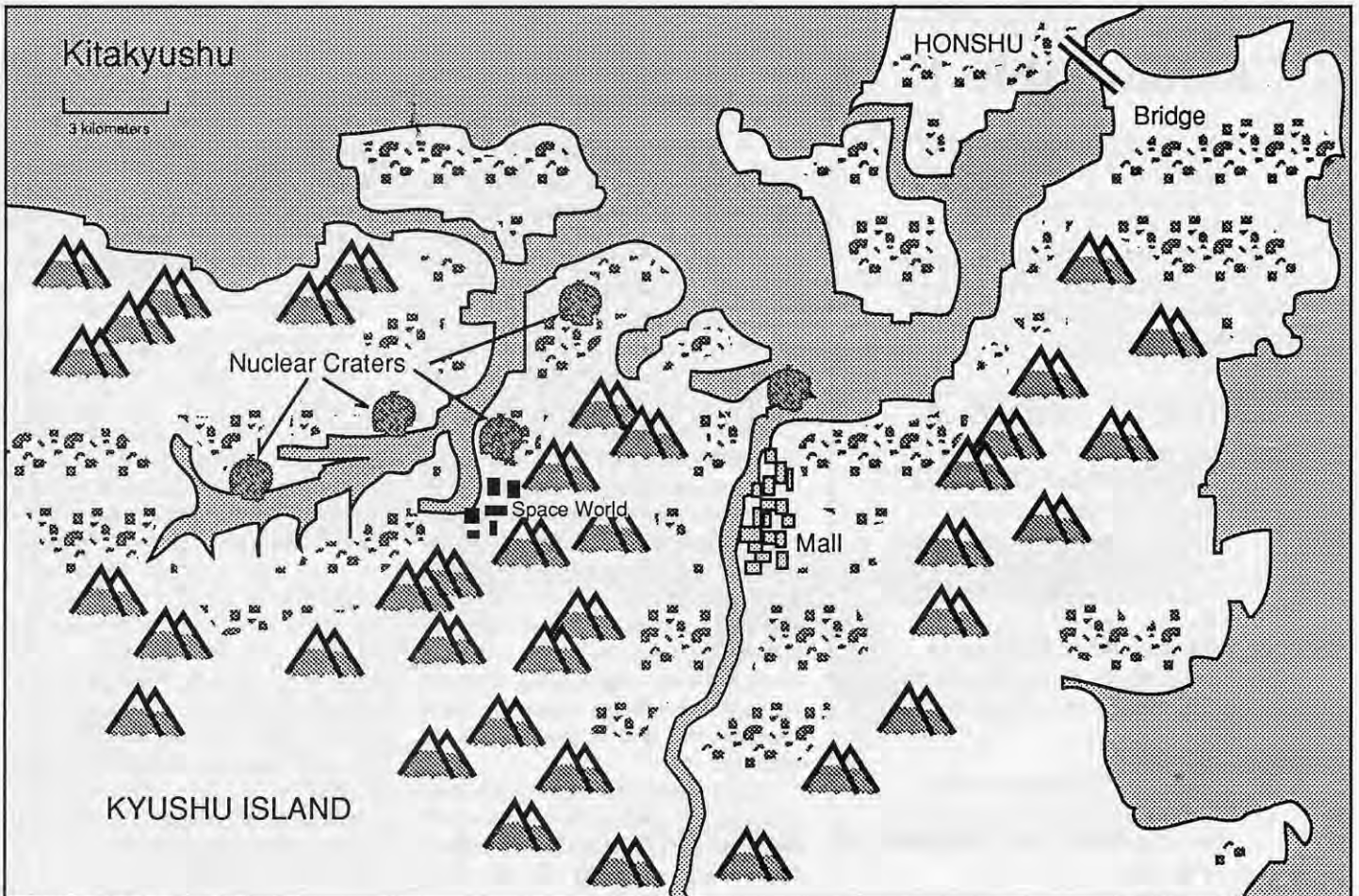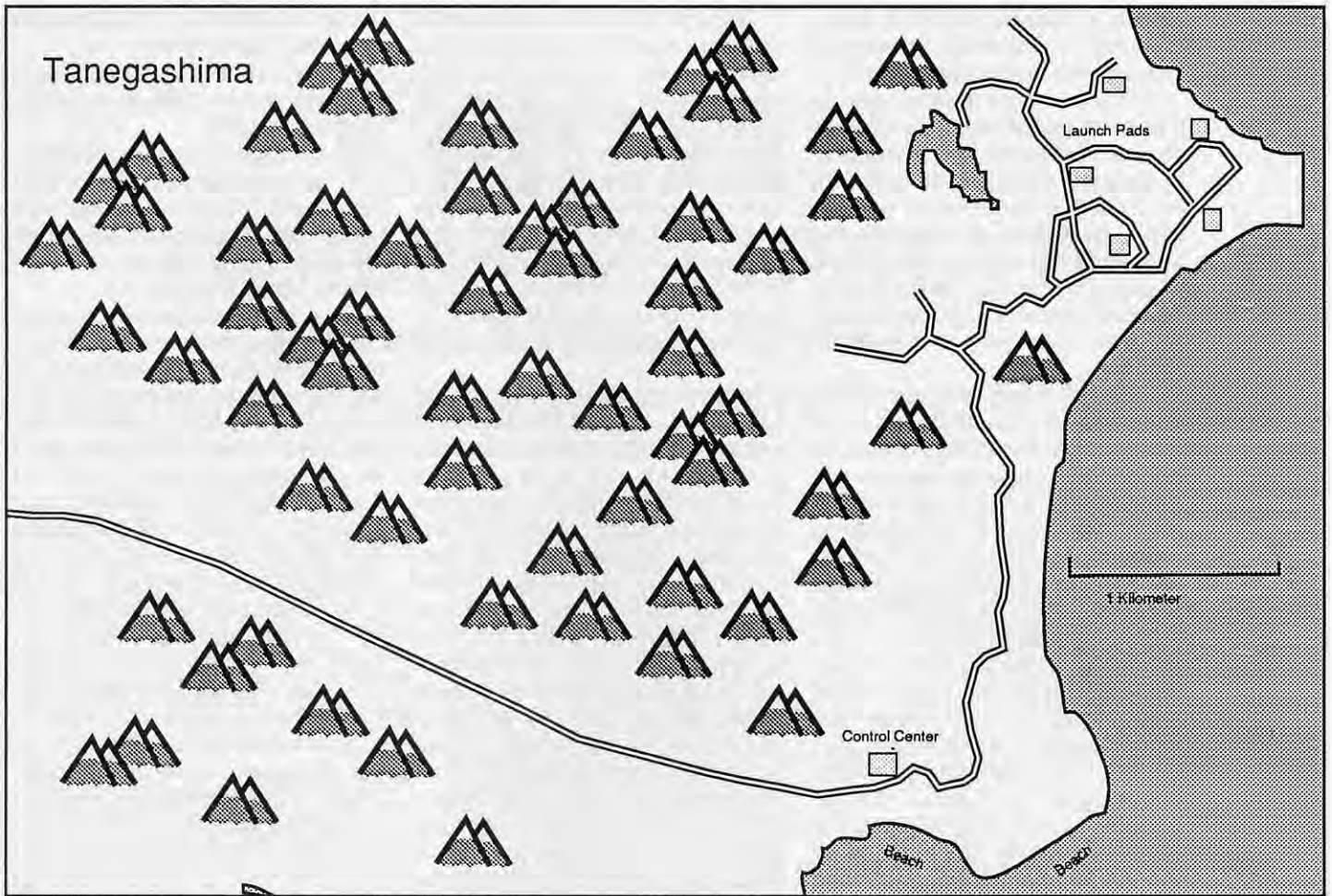
projects, still standing within kilometers of a major nuclear strike, still reaching for space in a mostly dead world.

If they leave the park or land to explore the part of the city the Chinese described, they will find a crowd of locals (some lightly armed) approaching. If the PCs don't threaten them, an elderly gentleman will stride forward and look them over. After a short pause, he smiles and extends his hand to the nearest character. "I am Mayor Ichikaro. Welcome to Kitakuyshu," he slowly announces.

The mayor's English is poor, but an interpreter soon comes forward to assist. The mayor is curious as to what the characters are seeking in his city and will politely ask. If they try and pull a fast one, it likely won't work: There's no reason for Americans to be there except something special, and any cover story had better be well worked out beforehand or the mayor will spot holes in it. Telling the truth is easier and will gain cooperation. The mayor will respond candidly: "I do not believe we know where these rocket engines are." But he is friendly and offers to let the characters stay as guests of the city and look for them. They are invited to the Kokura section of the city, away from the amusement park, but where the Chinese stayed.

Rumor Table 1

1D6	Rumor
1	The Chinese dropped some boxes in the Kokura harbor. Maybe the rockets were in there.
2	The mayor sold the rockets to someone from Tokyo last year.
3	They were probably nuked.
4-6	No information.

Rumor Table 2

1D6	Rumor
1	A longshoreman who helped unload the Chinese ships confirms that there were some rocket engines, in crates, but that they disappeared a couple of years ago.
2	Some spirits of the dead are haunting the amusement park; stay away if you value your soul!
3-5	No rumor.
6	The old fireworks man hired some kids to move a lot of boxes out to Space World two years ago.

That night, the mayor invites the characters to dinner. They are escorted to a high-rise hotel, and the first of many surprises in Kitakyushu is that there is still some electrical power. An elevator whisks them to the top floor, where a commanding view of the city and a multi-course dinner in mixed Japanese and French cuisine awaits them. The mayor and several other officials dine with the characters. After the meal, an assistant pours a round of sake, then the mayor starts to address the characters.

He slowly explains that while the city has weathered the war and years since well, it is economically dying due to lack of markets for most of its remaining industries. Most of Japan and Asia have been reduced to subsistence level, and can't afford new steel, machinery, electronics or aerospace hardware. He tells the characters that in exchange for the rockets, if they can find them, they must try and convince their government to use its transpacific transport to begin trading with Kitakuyshu. He will stay up and discuss the city, Kyushu, or anything else the characters wish, but neither he nor anyone else in his government know anything about the rocket engines. The characters are free to locate them on their own, if they agree to minimize personal weaponry (nothing bigger than submachineguns) while within the city and obey the normal laws. The city will provide two translators if they need them.

SEARCH
The next day, the search for the rockets can begin in earnest. There are a number of possible ways to go about searching: They can look around docks and warehouses near where the Chinese stayed; they can ask people for information; or they may devise some other plan. If the party splits up, each group may perform search tasks.

If the party searches warehouses and docks, roll 1D6 each day (eight hours) of searching. On a result of 6, they locate several tons of boxes and containers which have Chinese markings and are full of rocket parts, apparently abandoned. But the fully assembled engines are still missing, no matter how hard the characters may search. If they keep looking, they will find more incidental equipment each day they roll a 6 again, but still no engines.

If they search for information, their success is based on what they're asking about. If they just ask for information about the Chinese rockets, every period (four hours) of search will allow one roll on the Rumor Table 1.

All these rumors are false, though the characters may investigate the first two if they want to.

If they look for more general information, such as about people who helped out with the Chinese while they were here, or who used to work around the amusement park, they may also roll on Rumor Table 2 once per day.

Obviously this has some more promise. The longshoreman's story is true, though only slightly helpful. The spirit story is actually an old wives' tale that parents use to scare children away from radioactive areas. The rumor about the old fireworks man is true, but nobody's seen him for a while. If characters start to look for him, they just are told that he lives somewhere in the pedestrian mall near Kokura. The mall is block upon block of three-story, covered, pedestrian streets with massive stores right next to warrens of room-sized shops and five-seat noodle shops. Characters who have never been to Asia before will be overwhelmed by the flashing lights, lamps in smaller shops, smells and the incredible density of people and businesses. Finding him will take 2D6 days of hard searching in the more than 30 square blocks of pedestrian mall.

When finally located, the man turns out to be dying of cancer. If the characters are kind (especially if they bring painkiller medicine for him) he will tell them that he moved the last big boxes out to Space World to protect them, and tells the characters where to find them (in the SpaceCamp building). The party can now proceed to retrieve the engines and say good-bye to their hosts in Kitakyushu.

FURTHER ADVENTURES
Though the rocket engineers and hardware are all likely recovered intact during this adventure, there are many potential continuing adventures in Japan and around Kitakyushu. Milgov will decide that the manufacturing and technology base in Kitakyushu is important, and may start a regular trade route going using the *Jones* or other vessels. The characters could be assigned to this route or to be permanently stationed in Kitakyushu. Possible adventures include scouting the rest of Japan to determine its current condition, defending Kitakyushu against organized warlords, or counter-espionage missions to determine who's trying to steal designs from Kitakyushu's remaining electronics factories. Ω

GERMAN
COMBAT EQUIPMENT
By Hans-Christian Vortisch
Equipment fielded by German forces in the war

BUNDESWEHR FORCES

The Bundeswehr's three branches, *Heer, Bundesmarine* and *Luftwaffe* (army, navy, air force), are all issued (more or less) the same equipment, which consists of personal weapons, fatigues, boots, combat web, pack, steel helmet, kevlar fragmentation vest, NBC-protective mask, first-aid kit, gloves, poncho, parka, shelter half, sleeping bag, eating utensils, canteen, flashlight and gun-cleaning kit.

New-style fatigues sport a woodland camouflage pattern similar to one used in WWII, while old-style combat clothing is universally olive drab (blue for navy). Winter camouflage is also issued. The different arms are easily distinguished by the color of their berets—e.g., armor (*Panzertruppe*)-black, infantry (*Panzergrenadiere, Jäger*)-green, airborne (*Fallschrimjäger*)-red. Navy personnel substitute a cap for the beret. (By the way, the *Bundesmarine* has the equivalent of SEALs: These are called *Kampfschwimmer*, with their insignia being the swordfish). Fragmentation vests were adopted in the late '80s and are now standard equipment with most troops.

Some changes to the personal weapons list in the basic rules are as follows: First, although the G11K2 passed the rigorous tests of the *Bundeswehr* in 1990, it is very doubtful that it will already be standard issue by the year 2000. It is far more likely that it will only see service with *Fallschirmjäger, Fernspäh* and selected *Jäger* and *Panzergrenadier* units, while other troops will use G41, G3 and AK-74 N rifles.

The G41 is thought to become a supplementary weapon in case the G11 is accepted, being nearly equally effective at a lower cost as well as fitting better into existing NATO supply lines. This Heckler & Koch weapon is based on the G3 and HK33 series and chambered for the 5.56mm N round. It is built to NATO STANAG specifications, accepting M16 magazines and all NATO rifle grenades. Capable of full automatic fire as well as three-round bursts, it can also easily mount the HK79 or M203PI

underbarrel grenade-launchers. Additional features include a folding carrying handle, dust-proof ejection-port cover, cleaning-kit in the grip and optional wintertrigger and bipod. The G41A2 variant, like the G3A4, sports a collapsible shoulderstock. Note that the German-issue variant of the G11, the G11K2, differs from the one presented in the rules in some minor exterior details, the most outstanding being that the top of the fore-end is designed to accept two spare clips positioned parallel to the magazine in use, to facilitate recharging. And, more importantly, the G11K2 is capable of full automatic fire in addition to the three-round-bursts. Full magazines weight any 0.5 kg, not 1.0 kg!

With the takeover of the huge stockpiles of the (then) East German army, the *Bundeswehr* also had large amounts of brand-new German-built AK-74 in its hands. These are and probably will stay in service, perhaps rechambered to fire the 5.56mmN round.

And finally, as the difficult to produce caseless ammo of the G11 gets increasingly scarce, it's also likely that the old trusted G3 will see a revival, especially with reserve and territorial units.

The PSG1 is more a police weapon and is unlikely to enter service, a more promising contender being the Heckler & Koch MSG90 (*Militärisches Scharfschützengewehr*). This is the more rugged and reliable, yet lighter, military version of the PSG1. It is equipped with a 12X telescopic sight, bipod and adjustable stock and trigger.

In older days, G3 rifles fitted with 4× scopes (known as G3A3ZF) were issued on squad-level, with some Mauser SP 66s given to selected marksmen. The SP 66 scoper rifle is a conventional bolt-action rifle with a 6× scope and thumbhole grip. Both will certainly be still around.

Officers, vehicle crews and military police (*Feldjäger*) in units not equipped with the G11 receive MP2 (UZI) submachineguns. *Feldjäger* and officers should also have the option to choose a P1 (modified Walther P38), P6 (German-built SIG P225) or P226 pistol instead of the new standard sidearm, the P7M13. Walther PPKs are also still in use.

The standard machinegun for all troops is the proven MG3 (modified MG42).

Light support weapons include the Heckler & Koch CAW, HK69A1 (*Granatpistole*), HK79 underbarrel grenade-launcher and DM34 HAFLA (*Handflammpatrone*) disposable incendiary/smoke grenade-launcher. Note that the HK69 needs extensive modifications to be mounted under a rifle, its variant suitable for underbarrel use being the HK79.

Heckler & Koch G41A2

Heavy firepower is provided through *Armbrust* and *Panzerfaust* 3 rocket launcher as well as the various MILAN, TWO and HOT missile launcher variants. The Pzf3 was introduced in 1989 and can use HEAR, HE and smoke rounds of various calibers.

The Swedish *Carl Gustav* recoilless rifle is also still in use.

Standard hand grenades are the DM51 concussion/fragmentation and the DM24 incendiary/smoke grenades. The DM incorporates a detachable fragmentation sleeve which permits its use either in the defensive (with the sleeve fitted) or in the offensive role (without it). The DM24 differs from most other inc/smoke grenades in that it is filled with red phosphorous rather than WP, making it considerably safer to use.

All soldiers receive a *Kampfmesser* (knife/bayonet, may not fitted to the G11).

The German forces also make use of the INKAS integrated night-fighting system. This consist of a rifle-mounted infrared laser projector and image-intensifying goggles worn by the soldier. The laser can be fitted to many of the Heckler & Koch weapons directly in front of the fore sight. It's beam is invisible except with IR-goggles or similar night-vision devices. Suitable weapons include the G3, G41, MP5, HK21, HK33 and HK53. INKAS allows effective night combat with the laser considerably enhancing hit-probability through its simple point-and-shoot system.

BUNDESGRENZSCHUTZ (FEDERAL BORDER GUARDS)

Although nominally police, these must be considered to be paramilitary because they receive special training and military equipment, including APCs and light tanks. The famous antiterror unit GSG 9 is part of it. They wear combat fatigues in German police green and green berets. Steel helmets and kevlar vests are available, with bullet-proof vests given to high-threat teams. The BGS, like all German police, make extensive use of all MP5 submachinegun variants, including MP5A2/A3, MP5K and MP5SD.

Standard sidearm is the P7M13 but some use other police pistols like the P9S or the Walther P5 (modified P38 with short barrel), while still others field .357 magnum revolvers. Standard sniper rifle is the PSG1. A special automatic rifle is also in use, called the G8A1. This Heckler & Koch weapon is based on the HK21 light machinegun series and was built on specifications of the BGS. It fires the 7.62mmN round and features a bipod, assault grip and selective fire including three-round-burst limiter. The G8A1 will accept G3, PSG1 and MSG90 magazines (which are in fact all the same) and a special 50-round drum which weighs 2.0 kg loaded. Because of its high accuracy it can be used as a sniper rifle and is usually issued with a 4× scope. Like the police, they are equipped with some G1 (FN-FAL) and G3 rifles.

EINMANNVERPFLEGUNG (EPA)

These are German combat rations which provide one day's worth of food for one individual. They include two complete pre-cooked meals, various instant drinks, a small package of cookies jokingly referred to as *Panzerplatten* (armor plates), paper, matches and even chocolate and chewing gum. 1.25 kg *Price:* $10 (S/R) Ω

Equipment and Price List Update

This list corresponds directly to the text, giving complete game statistics for the new items, and provides exact nomenclature and more precise weights and prices for some already published ones.

G1	Use FN-FAL
G3A3	Use G3 except: Wt (empty): 4.4 kg
G3A3ZF	Use G3 except: Wt (empty, w/scope): 4.8 kg
G3A4	Use G3 except: Wt (empty): 4.7 kg Blk: 4/5
G8A1	Ammo: 7.62mmN Wt (empty, w/scope): 9.1 kg Mag 20/50 Price: $1250 (R/—) RoF: 3/10 Dam: 4 Pen: 2-3-Nil Blk: 6 SS: 1 Brst: 3/9 (2/4 w/ bipod) Rng: 65 (75 w/ bipod)
G11K2	Ammo: 4.73mmC1s Wt (empty): 3.7 kg Mag: 50 Price: $750 (S/R) RoF: 3/5 Dam: 3 Pen: 1-Nil Blk: 4 SS: 2 Brst: 3/3 Rng: 55
G41	Ammo: 5.56mmN Wt (empty): 4.1 kg Mag: 20/30 Price: $450 (C/S) RoF: 3/10 Dam: 3 Pen: 1-Nil Blk: 5 SS: 2 Brst: 4/6 Rng: 55
G41A2	Use G41 except: Wt (empty): 4.4 kg Blk: 4/5
AK74 N	Use AK74 except: Wt (empty): 3.6 kg
PSG1	Use PSG1 except: Price: $1500 (R/R)
MSG90	Use PSG1 except: Wt (empty): 7.2 kg Mag: 5/20 Price: $1250 (R/R)
SP66	Ammo: 7.62mmN Wt (empty): 6.1 kg Mag: 3i Price: $850 (R/—) RoF: BA Dam: 4 Pen: 2-3-Nil Blk: 6 SS: 4 Rng: 75
MP2A1	Use UZI except: Wt (empty): 3.5 kg
MP5A2	Use MP5A2 except: Wt (empty): 2.5 kg
MP5A3	Use MP5A2 except: Wt (empty): 2.85 kg Blk: 3/4
P1	Use P38 except: Wt (empty): 0.8 kg Price: $600 (S/R)
P5	Use P38 except: Wt (empty): 0.8 kg Price: $650 (S/R)
P6	Use P7 except: Wt (empty): 0.75 kg Mag: 8 Price: $500 (S/R)
P95	Wt (empty): 0.9 kg
P226	Use P7 except: Wt (empty): 0.75 kg Mag: 15 Price: $550 (S/R)
HK79	Use HK69 except: Wt (empty): 1.5 kg+Wt of rifle
Pzf3	Ammo: 90mm, 110mm or 125mm Wt (empty): 12.0 kg Price: $4500 (R/—) RoF: 1 Rld: 2 Rng: 150
	110mm HEAT C:6 B:6 Pen: 125C
	110mm HEAT C:12 B:12 Pen: 10C
	110mm Smoke B: 150
DM24	Wt (empty): 0.35 kg Price: $20 (S/R) Dam: C:0 B:12 (smoke)
DM51	Wt (empty): 0.2 kg (0.5 kg with fragmentation sleeve) Price: $5 (C/S) Dam: C:4 B:0 (C:4 B:12)
INKAS laser	Wt: 0.2 kg Price: $1000 (R/—) Effect. Rng: 200m in starlight goggles Wt: 0.5 kg Price: $500 (R/—) Effect. Rng: 300m (any other IR-goggles may also be used. The goggles allow the character to freely act at night times, and the laser reduces the final hit number by 1)
4.73×33mm cls	All 4.73mmC1s ammo is prepackaged in sealed, air-tight plastic packs (50 rounds a piece) which also serve as magazine loaders. loaded magazine: 0.5 kg Price: $50 ammo pack: 0.4 kg Price: $36 case (1800): 15.0 kg Price: $1300 (S/R)
110mm HEAT round: 6.0 kg Price: $250 (S/—)	
110mm HE round: 6.0 kg Price: $250 (S/—)	
110mm smoke round: 6.0 kg Price: $200 (S/—)	
Base Equipment: 16.0 kg	
German kevlar vest (AV 1): 2.75 kg Price: $900 (C/S)	
German steel helmet (AV1): 1.35 kg Price: $150 (V/C)	
German bullet-proof vest (AV 3): 8.0 kg Price $1500 (R/—)	

SHORT NAP

By Michael R. Mikesh
Art by Jason Panoke

When the player characters awaken from cryogenic sleep, they find themselves in the New Era on a space station now occupied by raiders. This adventure serves as an opening to a New Era campaign. The setting used is the Egg system (Diaspora 2631) in Khulam subsector (TNE page 103-104). However, this can be adapted to almost anywhere in the Wilds.

"Short Nap" assumes the characters entered cold berths before the beginning of the adventure. If the characters are not already an established group, they may be strangers, frozen at widely varying times and places. Freezing could have occurred anytime from weeks to decades before the adventure. Several possibilities why the characters might have entered cryogenic sleep follow. The character was:

- A crewman on a distressed vessel, forced to use an emergency cold berth.
- Travelling through space on low passage.
- A member of a timers club using cryogenic sleep as a method of time travel.
- Among a world's unemployed, frozen until better economic times.
- Kidnapped by a slavery or shang hai ring.
- A political criminal, frozen as punishment or awaiting trial.
- Frozen for medical purposes, awaiting specialized treatment/medicine/drugs (which creates obvious complications for such characters).

Exactly how each got to the space station might never be learned. But all are here because the raiders at least believe the characters have valuable technical knowledge.

The player characters might be from a nearby pocket empire or possibly the Reformation Coalition. But the most valued characters to the raiders are those from Imperial times with skills to handle or repair the relics they have acquired of that era. Adventurers with no technical skills might still be here because slavers falsely presented them as from the Imperial era to the raiders.

AWAKENING

The first characters to awaken from cold sleep will do so in darkness. There's nothing to see except the dim indicator lights on nearby low berths and the vague outlines of cargo modules. The only sounds are the hum of freezer units and ventilation. The characters are not in sight of one another initially and need not emerge at the same time.

This first segment of the adventure can be presented with an atmosphere of horror. They do not know where they are, but clearly something has gone wrong. Worse, something lurks in the darkness, and they are unarmed.

Each character must roll Average: Intelligence. Even those who fail should be told they feel a sense of danger. Characters who succeed also notice acoustic changes in the background as though something is moving around. Those that make an Outstanding Success see something glistening for a moment, like two (or more) eyes moving in the darkness.

The lurker is actually a Hiver named Blertih. In desperation, it began cycling occupants out of berths it could operate. Without an electronic translator, and not knowing how the characters will react, the alien will avoid them initially and listen.

Cold berths normally involve some risk and possibly death for the occupants. The player characters are in berths with automed-like features specifically to assist revival as would a skill level 3 physician. But do not use the rules for reviving from low berths. Simply assume all player characters awaken without incident—those who fail are nonplayer characters. The awakening adventurers might hear the death throws of one such ill-fortuned NPC. While recovering, the NPC will suddenly start convulsing violently, making choking and gurgling noises. The thrashing sounds are not unlike someone struggling desperately against a powerful attacker.

Should a character try to move to the NPC's aid, he stands a chance of blundering over Blertih also moving there. If this should occur, run the encounter as unarmed melee combat. Treat all Blertih's attacks as grapples (that always fail), and in the process describe fleshy tentacles trying to encircle the character's limbs. In truth, the Hiver is flailing in confusion and will flee as soon as the human disengages.

If a character does reach the NPC, there's nothing that can be done even with proper medical equipment at hand. The revival failure was catastrophic.

Sooner or later, the characters will join up to discuss their predicament and begin exploring their surroundings. They will find the room is a storage area, approximately 26 meters long by 13 meters wide. Two metals doors are along the east wall, and two more are along the south wall. All doors are heavy and securely locked. The room lights will not come on.

Although the group will have little light to read by, they can discover that the crates and cases around them contain expendable supplies of many kinds—coolants, lubricants, batteries, paper products, replacement lights, tape, food rations and so on. Most are still good even after 70 years of storage. Among the first things they can find is a case of usable emergency cold light tubes. Also available, after careful searching, are 1D6 crowbars which can also serve as clubs.

The interplay between the lurking Hiver and group is left to the referee to resolve. But ultimately, the group should make cooperative contact with Blertih.

THE HIVER

Blertih was a tech rep aboard a RCES exploration ship. The Hiver and three humans were taken captive when they were ambushed by the *Azazel*, a raiding ship preying upon worlds in Diaspora. The raiders then took them to their base in Khulam subsector, an Imperial-era station in the Egg system belt (Diaspora 2631).

When the *Azazel* left again to participate in a raid, the three human captives made a failed attempt to capture the station. The remaining raiders spared Lanna Melbrook, but spaced the men, Harn Joreson and Peter Wilks. Blertih fled during the executions. Although the alien was not involved in the takeover attempt, the raiders now seem too dangerous to cooperate with.

The Hiver has spent the last day hiding in the ventilation ducts and maintenance shafts. Without a way of escaping the station, Blertih entered the stor-

Wyngate Station Two

**A Module,
Middle Deck
(Guest Staterooms)**

1. Typical stateroom (for scale)
2. Maintenance office
3. Guest Services
4. Blertih's stateroom
5. Lanna's stateroom
6. Lounge/Dining area
7. Clinic
8. Storage and low berths
9. Lift shaft

DOCKING BAY

0 10 20 30 40
meters
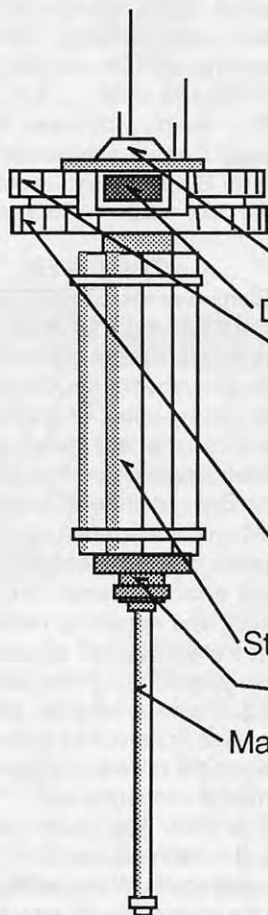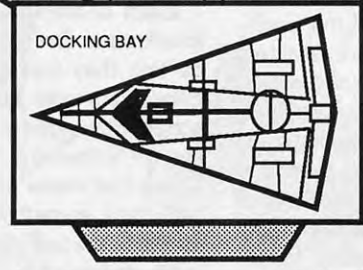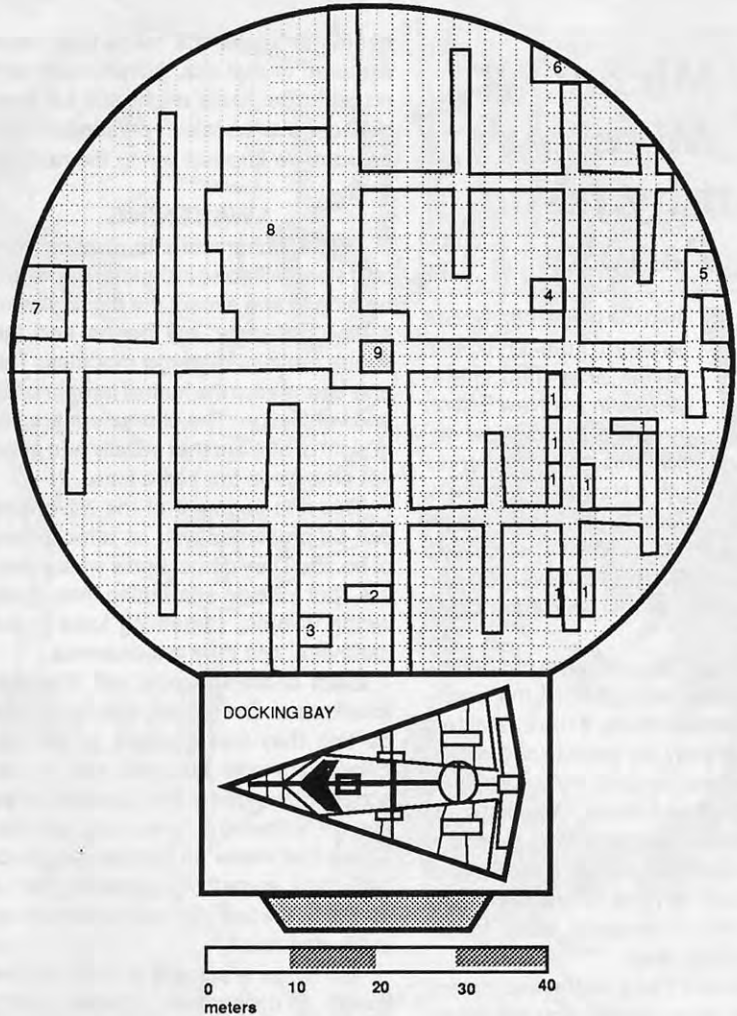
Wyngate Station Two

Bridge

Docking Bay

A Module (3 decks)

Top Deck: Offices, work areas, employee's quarters
Middle Deck: guest staterooms
Lower Deck: lounge, restaurant, dispensary, casino,
passenger loading

B Module: station facilities, cargo loading, shuttle
servicing

Stores, fuel

Power Plant

Maneuvering, attitude control

50 meters

age area via the ventilation and started reviving individuals from cold berths in hopes of finding allies.

Blertih understands spoken Anglic, but not the written language except to recognize common public signs and write its own name. It is otherwise dependent on electronic translation programs. The raiders locked Blertih's portable language translator in its room.

The Hiver will at first try to mime its answers, but will soon resort to drawing pictures on paper. After getting the basics across of where the characters are, the alien will make a rough map of the deck they are currently on. The map will include the scout/courier in the docking bay, although the Hiver will indicate the ship is inoperable.

Treat Blertih as fitting the Hiver Tech Rep NPC template (**TNE** page 68). The referee might define its specific assets on the fly so as to compliment player character skills and avoid upstaging them.

At this point in the adventure, the characters are too ill prepared to successfully capture the station and repair the scout/courier. If they do not decide on a course of action right away (e.g., reconnaissance and intelligence gathering), Blertih will suggest two short objectives. First is recovery of equipment from its room. Second is to rescue Lanna Melbrook.

The group might also decide to open the few remaining low berths. These units, however, are unsophisticated and without automed-like features. The number remaining and the personalities in each are left to the referee. As possibilities, they might include a human technician "rescued" from a vampire ship, a criminal with a history of turning traitor and naval officers from opposing sides in the Rebellion.

WYNGATE STATION TWO

In Imperial times, Wyngate Station Two served as a center of supply, administration and recreation to miners working the asteroid belt in the Egg system. In 1130, a virus in the central computer killed all the occupants by opening the hatches to space. Otherwise, the station was in good condition by the time the raiders took it over decades later.

The characters awaken from cold berths about midnight station time. They will probably find no means of leaving the storage room they start in other than to climb into the ventilation system. Opening the storage room doors requires tools they do not begin with.

The main ducts form a rectangular circuit about 47 meters wide and 41

meters long following the corridors to link vent openings over each intersection. The fans and air processors are behind the west wall of the storage room. These ducts do not allow access to other decks nor to rooms other than storage. A narrower ventilation network serves the individual rooms.

As on many starships, the corridor lights are dimmed to simulate night. The characters should move stealthily, especially near rooms occupied by the raiders. As long as the raiders believe only the Hiver is at large, there will be no constant guard. The characters could, however, encounter a late-night wanderer. (See Encounters below.)

All doors the adventurers are likely to find will be locked. Most, however, are light enough that they can be opened with crowbars by rolling Difficult: Strength. Unfortunately, this will damage a door noticeably and cause noise audible for 30 meters along the corridors.

A room search is Average: Intelligence, resolved as an uncertain task taking 10 minutes. Most rooms have nothing of particular value, although the following do:

Maintenance Office (Room 2): Three usable tool sets can be found here: electronic, mechanical and metalwork. One tool set (referee's choice) can be found on Some Truth, but the others require Total Truth. If a player rolls Outstanding Success, he also finds a pair of working belt-clip communicators.

Guest Services (Room 3): The first search roll resulting in Total Truth will reveal a panel near the "switchboard." All communications for the deck are routed through here, providing an ideal place to tap into conversations among the raiders. Some Truth will result in electronic keys to innocuous places, while Total Truth will provide keys to various places (referee's choice). If a player rolls Outstanding Success, he instead finds the combination to the office safe, which contains a confiscated body pistol-8 with silencer.

Lounge/Dining Area (Room 6): The adventurers will find food and kitchen knives even on No Truth. Because the raiders spend much of their waking hours

here, other things might also be found. On rolls of Total Truth, the characters can potentially find the following: ballistic cloth vests (2), musket-3 with 20 shots (raiding trophy), and a hand grenade (Dam: C:3, B:15; Pen: Nil).

Station Clinic (Room 7): A surgeon's kit and two medical kits can be found here. One medical kit can be discovered on Some Truth, but the others require Total Truth. Some truth on subsequent rolls will result in various medicinal drugs (referee's choice). If a player rolls Outstanding Success, he instead finds a working pocket medical scanner.

Lift Shaft (Room 9): The raiders currently have little reason to visit other levels. The lift shaft is sealed, as are any other possible routes, to assure the Hiver is contained on this deck.

Docking Bay: This is occupied by a stock scout/courier simply designated as S-7833. The ship requires eight weeks of work to restore it. What must be repaired can reflect the skills the characters have. S-7833 has a general wear value of 4.

ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1D6 for a possible encounter when the characters are in the corridors and refer to the table below. A roll probably need not be made any more than once per hour.

Treat "night" as from 0000-0800 hours and "day" as from 0800-2400 hours. Use the Not Alert columns while the raiders are expecting nothing more dangerous than Blertih. In this period, their snub pistols will be loaded with tranq with which they hope to recapture the Hiver. Each raider will also be armed with a blade weapon.

Unless the characters somehow reveal themselves, the raiders could pass the first night unaware. If the characters rescue Lanna, the raiders will discover her missing by 0800. Otherwise, begin rolling on the Hourly Encounters Table at that time. Even if the characters are in hiding, on a 1, the raiders find evidence and are alert to them. The referee might extend the frequency or add a die modifier depending on how well the adventurers have concealed their presence.

Note that in rolling the number of

Hourly Encounters				
	Not Alert	Not Alert	Alert	Alert
Period:	Night	Day	Night	Day
Encounter On:	1	1-3	1-2	1-4
No. Raiders:	1D6-4	1D6-1	1D6-2	1D6
Weapons:	Snub-8 Tranq	Snub-8 Tranq	Snub-8 HE	Assault Rifle-7
Armor:	None	BC Vest	BC Vest	BC Vest, Helm

raiders, 1 is minimum. There are seven to 10 raiders on the station. Treat these as having the following characteristics:

Level: Experienced

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon and Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade).

Other Assets: Any three Space Tech, Technician or Interaction skills at 9, Environment Suit 8, Zero-G Environment 8.

The raiders are actually members of the Merchants Guild (**Path of Tears** page 144-145) from deep inside Diaspora sector. The Guild is primarily interested in maintaining a trade monopoly among worlds. Some elements are not above looting worlds by force and taking slaves, such as this one.

BLERTIH'S ROOM

While in the ventilation shaft, the alien overheard in a conversation that its room was trapped. Unfortunately, Blertih does not know the trap's nature.

The sliding door to the room is locked. Opening it is a Difficult test of either Electronics or Mechanics, with similar tests to detect and avoid the trap.

If the trap is triggered, a signal is sent to the raiders. Tranquilizing gas is also injected into the corridor in front of the room extending to include the north and south intersections. Characters not at least wearing respirators must roll Difficult: Constitution each turn they are in the gas. Any character who fails goes unconscious in 1D6 turns.

In the room is Blertih's hand computer, electronic language translator, neural activity sensor handset, vac suit (no tanks) and 9mm auto pistol. Although these are Hiver models, their characteristics are essentially the same as described in the **Traveller** rules. The pistol is a bulbous design and extremely clumsy in human hands. Using it during combat should be treated as two difficulty levels higher.

LANNA'S RESCUE

Lanna's room is locked from the outside and guarded by Hun, the watchdog (*Weight:* 25 kg *Hits:* 4 *Armor:* None *To Hit:* 6 *Damage:* 1D6 *Weapon:* Teeth *Behavior:* Am F8 *Move:* 15/30/60 *Initiative:* 5). Hun's nylon cord is attached to the door. It's five meters long, just short of letting him reach the corridor intersection.

Hun sleeps only lightly and has keen senses. If characters fail an Average: Stealth roll in approaching the corner, Hun's barking will summon the raiders, who will reach the intersection north of their rooms in 1D6+2 turns. If the characters make their rolls, Hun will only be suspicious and growl. If any approaching character makes an Outstanding Success, assume Hun is fast asleep.

The dog wears the key to the door clipped to his collar. An adventurer who sees Hun has a chance of noticing it if he makes an Average test of either Observation or Intelligence only. If the raiders are alert that the characters are about, they will have taken the key.

Food will keep the dog from barking. He will growl and avoid the group, but will not attack unless someone reaches for him. After 2D6 turns, though, Hun will be sated and will bark if he still detects the presence of the characters.

**Lanna Melbrook
(Star Viking Space Specialist)**

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon.

Other Assets: Astrogation 12, Gunnery (Energy Weapon) 12, Survey 12, Geology 9, Sensors 9, Communications 9, Environment Suit 8, Zero-G Environment 8.

Motivation: *Heart 7:* Although Lanna was never romantically involved with Harn Joreson or Peter Wilks, they were teammates since entering the RCES and were as family to her.

Club Jack: Lanna hates the raiders for the murder of her comrades. She will usually cooperate with the player characters, but will kill raiders at every opportunity with little concern for the consequences.

OUTCOMES

The PCs can potentially capture the installation with some ingenuity. Although they start with no weapons and are outnumbered, they can find other resources and have the advantage of surprise. Further, the raiders left in charge are not the most capable of the raiders. After the characters repair the scout/courier, they can go where they will.

However, by bad luck or design, it might not be possible for the group to repair the drives on the scout/courier and escape before the *Azazel* returns. The *Azazel* is a well armed patrol cruiser with a crew of 19. They are more skilled in combat, resourceful and better equipped than the raiders left on the station.

Give the players plenty of time to consider their options. Blertih will recommend negotiation and possibly even extortion if the group can find the right lever. Lanna will prefer laying an ambush and use every means to destroy them. A third option is to prepare for recapture.

If they must surrender, the characters can do much in advance to take advantage of a future opportunity. They can hide weapons and equipment, prepare secret computer accesses, put wire taps in place, make duplicate keys, sabotage items and so on.

The raiders from the *Azazel*, however, are careful. The adventurers will be thoroughly interrogated and thereafter ruled through terror. They will be put to work repairing the scout/courier, restoring robots down in the stores or rebuilding weapons in closely watched work areas. Captives who do not prove their value will be frequently reminded they could be put to death.

Ultimately, however, the group will have other opportunities to escape. The *Azazel* might be summoned to join other Guild ships; visitors could disrupt the routine; or a RCES clipper might arrive at the system. Once the characters are finally away from Wyngate Station Two, they can begin searching for their place in the New Era. Ω

Clarissa Noir

A Traveller: The New Era NPC by Greg Videll
Art by David Wilcox
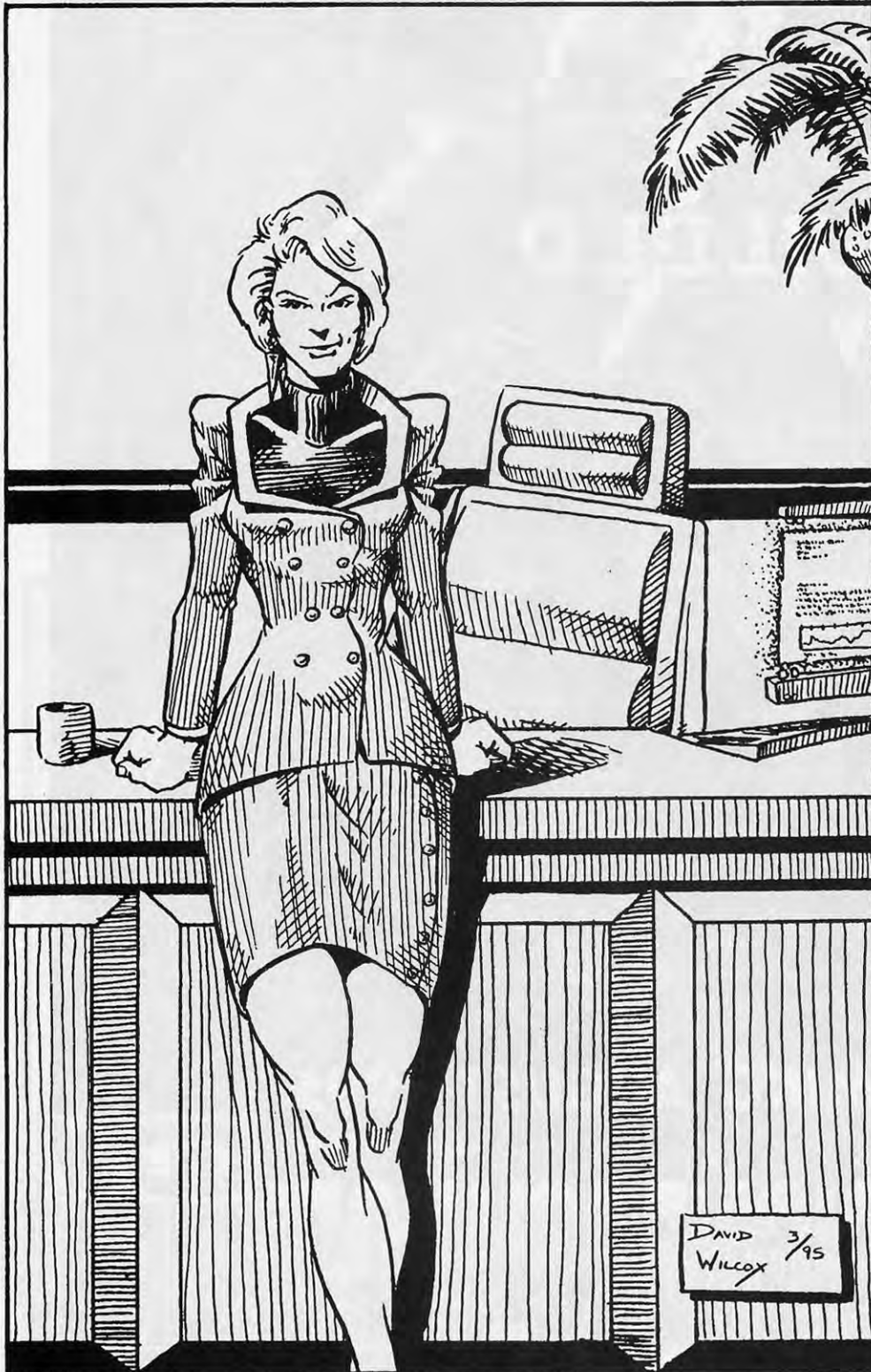
larissa al-Hamid Noir holds the position of corporate liaison with Aurora Applied Technologies, a major corporation based on Aurora (0535 Old Expanses). It's her job to represent AAT in its dealings with various businesses, planetary governments and even the Coalition itself. While the position normally requires quite a bit of travel, Noir can most often be found at AAT's branch office on Aubaine (0738 Old Expanses), close to the Coalition's seat of power. She's cultivated numerous commercial, governmental and military contacts during her three year tenure. As with most things, though, there's more going on than meets the eye.

In addition to her functions as a corporate liaison, Noir heads up the local field intelligence branch of AAT. A small cadre of operatives are at Noir's disposal to gather economic and technological intelligence, especially information regarding the recovery of relic technology. Given the competing interests of the various worlds which make up the Coalition and their many and varied business entities, her organization doesn't lack for work.

Unlike in the days of the Old Imperium, though, the realm of corporate intelligence is now more of a gentlemen's game. The prevailing social and political climate won't support the kind of quasi-military operations undertaken by the old megacorporations. Instead, the emphasis is on open source intelligence gathering, passive surveillance and subversion of key personnel.

Through both her personal contacts and the corporate assets at her disposal, Noir is a well connected, well informed individual. Information which comes into her possession is used to improve AAT's position in the marketplace and to garner support from or for Coalition functionaries. Noir also uses those little items she, and AAT, have no direct use for and trades them for more vital data in the possession of other "information brokers." As a result, Noir has accumulated a few enemies over the years. These enemies are eagerly looking for information with which to turn the tables.

Noir is known as a hard bargainer who sets a fair value on what she buys and sells. It's critical to note that Clarissa Noir is absolutely loyal to AAT. This may be due to the fact that the corporation pays her exceedingly well, but it may also be the result of AAT having something damaging on her. Whatever the truth may be, Noir has never shown an

interest in either political power or increased corporate position.

While Noir has the services of a number of trained operatives at her disposal at all times, she's been known to hire temporary help for those assignments where discretion, and often deniability, are required. She pays well for such services, but expects the same kind of competence and confidentiality she gets from her own agents. Those who have double-crossed Noir in business dealings inevitably pay for such acts in subtle ways.

Whether it's the current word on the true political situation of a Coalition world, the schematics for a relic or a manufacturing secret, it stands to reason that Clarissa al-Hamid Noir already has a line on it.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

Initial adventures involving Noir can include those where the PCs have information she is actively seeking. Perhaps the characters witnessed certain events, met specific individuals or visited a system Noir has an interest in. The PCs may be approached openly or covertly with an offer to recount their experiences.

PCs might also be recruited for a particular assignment by the corporate liaison. In this case, the characters are hired by AAT to participate in a survey, recovery or other type of mission, at least on the face of it. In reality, the PC team is there to keep an eye on the competition, get to the important relic first or influence Coalition personnel assigned to the mission. Just how much the PCs are told about what's actually going on depends on the particular assignment and their need to know. As is usually the case, if the PC team performs well, it can expect to be hired again in the future.

Another way in which Noir can be integrated into an adventure or campaign is by allowing her to be a contact of one of the PCs. Keep in mind that she buys, sells and trades information for a living. As a contact, she's willing to help the character, but there'll be some kind of quid pro quo involved.

There are some less direct ways in which PCs can come into contact with Noir. The characters could be looking for information and be pointed in her direction by contacts and/or rumors. A certain amount of legwork and contact with shadowy individuals will be required to accomplish this. Or, there could be individuals and organizations which wish to neutralize Noir's advantage over them. The characters could find themselves unwitting pawns in an

attempt get at the broker or her protected databases.

This has the distinct disadvantage of potentially putting the characters on Noir's "bad side."

It goes without saying that Noir, once befriended, is a highly useful contact. The kind of information she can provide can help move an adventure or campaign forward when all other avenues seem blocked. Additionally, although Noir prides herself on trading in solid, reliable information, she could also be a source of misinformation which unintentionally places obstacles in the PCs' path. Finally, referees would do well to remember that Noir is a loyal employee of AAT and that its interests take priority over the PCs'. She may not be available when the characters need her most. Ω

NOTES ON
COLLAPSING WORLDS

A TNE ARTICLE BY MARK "GEO" GELINAS
ANNOTATED BY DAVE "WHO?" NILSEN

In processing collapsed worlds, I try to remain as faithful to the original sources as possible. My primary source of information is the **Atlas of the Imperium (AOI)**, supplemented with information found in **Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society, Challenge**, *Travellers' Digest, MegaTraveller Journal*, and *High Passage*. However, I realize that not all these sources may be available to you, in which case, you will have to use whatever data you have available.

Most people collapsing worlds will have gotten the raw sector data that has been made available by Digest Group Publications in various places and which I shall call Second Survey (SS) data. Some of the steps I describe here involve checking the accuracy of SS data, and some involve updating it to **TNE** standards.

PART I: PRE-COLLAPSE DATA

The first thing I do is break the SS data down to the subsector level. All current GDW products list each subsector individually, rather than using the sector as a whole. However, note that the numbering system remains that for the whole sector. I.e., subsector A uses columns 1 - 8; subsector D uses columns 25 - 32; subsector P uses rows 31 - 40, etc. For an example of this, check Khulam in **TNE**.

Pre-Collapse data is circa 1117.

Title: The title section should follow the standard format listed below:

> XXXXXXXXX SUBSECTOR
> (Subsector Y of ZZZZZZZZ Sector)
> (Pre-Collapse data circa 1117)

XXX: Subsector name in all caps.

Y. The subsector's location within the sector, position A - P. Page 181 of **TNE** shows these designations.

ZZZ: The sector name.

Header: Each column should have an appropriate header. If your word processor has the capability, save a standardized header in a separate file and paste it in. This way, you can standardize the column spacing between all the subsectors that you are working on.

Name: There is not much that you can do here. AOI does not include the names of all worlds. You can check to see that the names of the Hi Pop worlds are consistent between AOI and SS.

Please avoid as much as possible goofy names. I know that we've all read the Larry Niven books with names like "Wemadeit" and "Lookatthat," but these are really only quaint when you can wrap a history around them. Otherwise, they get old really fast. Remember, people with some modicum of self-respect must live on these worlds. Ask yourself what name these people would create to call themselves.

None of us can resist the occasional goofy name; my old campaign featured a prominent world named "Dog's Breath," but such names must be few and far enough between that they seem fun, and not over-done. One trick is to couch your joke in a foreign language. For example, in the real world, names like Grand Tetons have make it into official usage with scarcely a ripple. (Be advised, however, to not attempt to sneak obscene, insulting, or other offensive usage into published material hidden in foreign terms.)

However, I make it my policy to delete world names like, "Rah Rah," and "Nukeus." I'm no fun.

Dreary Dave

Hex: Check the SS listing against AOI to see that all the worlds are present and in the proper places.

UWP: Under the atmosphere listing, change all type "E" atmospheres to type "F" and all type "F" atmospheres to type "E." This corresponds to a change made to these atmosphere types in **TNE.**

Why? Because elliptical worlds which protrude from their spherical atmospheres seem statistically less likely than thin atmospheres that are breathable at low altitudes. Some things just bug me.

Trade Mods: SS data did not include several bits of information, and **TNE** changes

some information that is found here. These modifications are noted below:

Barren Worlds: If a world is Barren, then its TL should be "0." (As the author, you may decide that a world actually has a few residents on it, in which case disregard the modifications made here and remove the "Ba" code in the Trade column.) Barren worlds do not have the Trade codes of "Lo" or "Ni," so remove any that appear. Under PPG, the population multiplier should be "0," and the Allegiance column should have a "—" denoting that the world has no allegiance because it has no population.

Low Population worlds: TNE has raised the UWP designation for "Lo" worlds from 3 to 4. Add the "Lo" designation to all worlds that have a population of 4.

I live in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, which has a population digit of 4 (and a multiplier of 9), and it can't even keep all its restaurants open in the summertime. I shudder to think of this population being in charge of an entire planet. I rest my case.

Owned Worlds: Every world that has a government of 6 (this is pre-Collapse, and therefore standard government types) should have the owned designation O:XXXX (where XXXX is the hex number of the owning world) in the Trade column. When selecting owning worlds, I try to use the following criteria:

• The owning world should be of equal or greater tech level than the captive world.

• The owning world should have a population equal to or greater than that of the captive world.

• The owning world cannot have a captive government.

• The owning world should be relatively close to the captive world (1-4 parsecs is best).

• The owning world should have the same allegiance as the captive world. (This last one is tricky as Rebellion ownership lines can cut a subsector in half.)

• For convenience, I try to keep the owning world and the captive world in the same subsector, but this is not a requirement.

• There is nothing saying that one world cannot own several other worlds. In fact, if several captive worlds are in the same area, it is convenient to have only one owning world.

And it helps with visualizing what's going on.

Droyne and Chirper Worlds: Another area that SS data does not include. The **Droyne Alien Module** produced by GDW has an extensive set of guidelines for determining the presence of Droyne or Chirpers on pre-generated worlds. These are fine—if you only have a few worlds to do. However, you are probably collapsing several subsectors, so this can get a little time consuming, besides which you may not have that particular Alien Module. Since I have been collapsing whole sectors, I have adopted a variant of that system.

If a world meets three of the following criteria, it is a candidate for a Droyne or Chirper population:

• Size of 2-6.
• Atmosphere of 6-9.
• Hydrographics of 3-7.
• Population of 6-7.

After scanning the subsector's UWP data and finding several candidates, I select several of them to have Droyne or Chirper populations (this is arbitrary, but you should use most worlds that meet all four criteria). For the selected worlds, a 6+ on 2D6 indicates that the alien population is Chirper; otherwise it is Droyne. Then roll 1D6 for the percentage multiplier (representing 10-60% of the world's listed population). This done, make a notation of D:X for Droyne or C:X for Chirper; the X being a single digit representing tens of percent of the population (for example the notation C:4 means that 40% of that world's listed population are Chirpers).

Although I said earlier that this system is the official collapsing system, the Droyne/Chirper procedure is an optional step, and a sector which does not have these marked should not be considered incomplete. After all, we do not have a similar procedure for establishing the presence of Vargr, Aslan or various minor races. Such details are best left to referees based on the requirements of their campaigns.

By the way, if you own the **Droyne Alien Module**, it includes a map showing rough locations of Droyne and Chirper worlds. The map is good enough to get it down to a subsector. If you have this module, you may wish to consult this map. The Droyne worlds on this map can be considered to have 90+% Droyne population and should have a Droyne name.

I am less confident of the accuracy of this map. For some worlds, the placement doesn't even seem to get the subsector right.

Subsector/Sector Capitals (Cp/Cx): Each subsector should have a capital, and the sector should have an overall capital which also serves as the capital for the subsector in which it is located. SS data may not include this information, so you will have to make a determination as to which world is the subsector capital. In most cases, the subsector capital will have the highest TL in the subsector, and probably a Naval base. However, these are not hard and fast. The subsector's name might also contain a clue as to the capital, but again, that is not always true. If you have a map of the X-boat routes, they should touch the subsector capital. In any case, use your best judgment. Fortunately, the sector capitals are shown on most maps (including page 79 of **TNE**).

Research Stations (RsA, etc.): Again SS data may not contain this information. As chrome I include 1D6 + 2 research stations per sector. I try to find "interesting" locations for these, but their placement is pretty much random.

Note: There is a misunderstanding about the naming of research stations held by many Traveller players. Research Stations are named by sector, not by the Imperium as a whole. Thus each sector will have a Research Station Alpha, Beta, Gamma, etc. Likewise, the name of a research station does not denote its purpose. I.e., all Gammas are not psionic research stations, for example.

TPPG: For Travel Zone, Population Multiplier, Planetoid Belts, and Gas Giants. See below.

Travel Zone: SS data has a space between the "A" or "R" designation and the PPG numbers. Eliminate the space by moving the code over to the PPG numbers.

Population Multiplier: As previously noted, Barren worlds should have a "0" in this spot.

Planetoid Belts: Watch this one. Asteroid belts and planetoid belts are not the same thing, but are specifically defined as being different on page 184 of **TNE** (and on various pages of earlier editions of **Traveller**). An asteroid belt is an inhabited belt which is the main world of a system. A planetoid belt is any other such belt in a system. A number in the planetoid belt thus does not include an asteroid belt if present, but shows the planetoid belts *in addition to* any asteroid belt. Thus, a system can have an asteroid belt as its main world and still have a "0" in the planetoid belt column.

This means that the asteroid belt is the only belt in the system.

Gas Giants: A quick scan of AOI will show you which systems in a subsector do not have gas giants. Accordingly this spot should have a "0." I use systems without gas giants as a reference because they are less common.

Allegiance: In the Allegiance column add three extra spaces between the allegiance code and the Stellar data. This will allow uniformity when you add the "Wi" designation to the 1201 data. The SS data lists all of the Third Imperium as "Im." However, the convention at GDW has been to list it by the faction that held that world during the Rebellion. In this case, change all "Im" codes to "Li" or the code for the particular faction which held this area in 1117. The best places to find that information are **Survival Margin** (page 11) or the **Rebellion Sourcebook**. Some of the adventures published for **MegaTraveller** may have more detailed information on certain sectors, but they may not be available or applicable to the work you are doing.

And in any case, a great many worlds will have changed hands over the course of the fighting.

Faction	Code
Aslan	As
Barren World	—
Brothers of Varian	BV
Client State	Cs
Domain of Deneb	DD
Droyne Dominated	Dr
Federation of Daibei	FD
Federation of Illelish	FI
Hiver Federation	Hi
Julian Protectorate	JP
K'kree	Kk
Lucan's Imperium	LI
Margaret's Domain	Ma
Non-aligned	Na
Solomani Confederation	So
Strephon's Imperium	St
Restored Vilani Empire	RV
Vargr	Va*
Zhodani Consulate	Zh

Note that in TNE the second letter is no longer arbitrarily struck down. It is left lower case only if the word's spelling makes it logical.

*Note: There are a variety of codes which encompass each of the various Vargr groups involved, but these are not widespread, so the generic "Va" will work as well. Those interested in the more specific codes can find some of them in Mega-Traveller Journal 2, page 49.

This list is not intended to be all inclusive. There are codes for several of the smaller states in and about the Imperium, but if you have source material for that state you very likely have the codes. Also, you probably have a personal interest in the area you are collapsing, so are likely to have researched it thoroughly.

Stellar Data: Make the following corrections to stellar data to make the data compatible with **TNE** upgrades. Further modifications to stellar data may be made after collapsing the system, but this will be discussed under the New Era data section.

• Change all class "D" stars which are the primary star for a system to class "V" stars.

Why? Because degenerate stars ("white dwarfs") are the hot cores remaining from stars which have already passed through the red giant phase, and therefore burned their planets to tiny cinders. Such stars would not have worlds with atmospheres close enough to be habitable.

Optionally, if the world has no atmosphere, the primary star may be left as a "D," as the world clearly is a cinder world. Such worlds may be a miner's paradise, with all light materials stripped away, leaving only exploitable metals.

• Change all class "VI" stars to class "V" stars.

Modern astronomers no longer consider class VI "subdwarfs" to be a legitimate classification. Rather, these stars seem to be old, metal-poor Population II main sequence (i.e., class V) stars common in the galactic halo, thus not part of the galactic plane depicted in Traveller.

• Check the class "IV" stars. Change the class of any star which is "K5 IV" through "K9 IV" and all "M IV" stars to class "V" stars. These spectral ranges do not exist for the "IV" class of stars.

Notes: The note section at the end of each subsector should have certain basic information. Listed below is the standard format note that I use, which I derived from **TNE**:

Notes

Under the Trade Classifications column, the "O:" entry indicates that the world is owned by the world in the indicated hex. For example XXXXXXXX is owned by xxxxxxxxxx.

A "D:" or "C:" entry indicates a planet populated at least in part by Droyne or Chirpers (effectively degenerated Droyne).

The number following the colon indicates how many tenths of that world's total population consist of these races.

TPPG indicates Travel Zone, Population Multiplier, Planetoid Belts, and Gas Giants. If the Travel Zone digit is empty, it is a green zone. "A" and "R" indicate Amber and Red zones respectively.

Al is the Allegiance column: Li = Lucan's Imperium.

• If the subsector does not have any captive governments or Droyne or Chirper worlds, those entries may be eliminated.

• Include all allegiances listed for that particular subsector; if there are no Li worlds, eliminate that entry.

• Explain any unusual entries in the Trade classifications column.

• Note the abbreviations and explanation for any unusual base types.

Blurb: Following the notes should be a brief paragraph giving some important details about the subsector. Listed below is a standard format that I use which I have derived from **TNE**:

XXXXXXXX Subsector: In 1117, XXXXXXXX subsector had a population of xx.x billion. Its highest population was x billion, on xxxxxxxxxx. Its highest tech level was xx(x), at xxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxx, and xxxxxxxx.

• Use a numeral for the TL, then put its hexadecimal equivalent in the parenthesis.

• When counting population (and this applies for New Era data as well) only count worlds with populations of 1 million (UWP population code 6) or more. Populations of less than 1 million are generally incidental to the subsector's overall population, unless the highest populated world in the subsector only has a population in the millions.

• The highest tech level may exist on more or less than three worlds. I use three in this blurb (which I paste into my subsector file) because it is a good average to start with. List all worlds with the highest tech level.

• The 1117 blurb should have some statement about the allegiance of the worlds in the subsector. I do not include it in my paste blurb because it varies from subsector to subsector.

• This paragraph is a good place to discuss unusual conditions which may exist on one or more planets in the subsector.

Naturally the material appearing in the blurb is highly customizeable, and is best determined by the needs of the referee's campaign, or the purpose for producing the subsector.

PART II: COLLAPSING HINTS

1. Format: When collapsing a subsector, take the 1117 data, and print it with several spaces between each world's entry. This then becomes your worksheet.

*Or, try it my way. Print out your subsector with an extra line beneath each world, and you can write in the new UWP digits directly beneath the pre-Collapse digits. This is the system shown in **Path of Tears** on pages 12, 13, 98, 100, 110, 112, 134 and 140.*

2. Maximum Sustainable Population (MSP): Instead of automatically becoming Barren Worlds, worlds with atmospheres of D, E, and F have a –3 modifier to MSP. This is an official correction and appears in the second printing of **TNE** *(Mark I, Mod 1, December 1993 appearing on the title page).*

3. Barren Worlds: A quick check through the UWP listings for atmospheres will quickly reveal those worlds which are Barren. I go ahead and change the starport to X, and the last four digits of the UWP to 000-0. Then, on my worksheet, I highlight the worlds which are not Barren. This way, I can concentrate on the surviving worlds, which require more work.

4. TL Decline: Remember, if it suits your purpose, a certain amount of fudging is allowed. However, when I fudge, I try to stay within the ranges which would be allowed by the die rolls. (TL 0-8: loss of 0-3; TL 9-A: loss of 1-6; TL B-D: loss of 2-12; TL E and above: loss of 3-18).

*Yup, fudging is the name of the game, but Geo is right: Try to stay within the permitted die roll ranges. However, other changes are permissible (in **World Tamers Handbook**, we even change an atmosphere code). In this case, remember, the storyline is the driver. If you can explain historically how it got that way, then it's a go. But be reasonable. Remember, too many "local exceptions" to the rules, and there are no rules—everyone who collapses a sector will want to pack his with "local exceptions." Extend that trend over the entire Imperium, and what do you get? A real mess. One pocket empire per sector is a crucial concept.*

5. Starport Decline: Time saving hint: If the TL decline is greater than 6, skip the roll. The Starport is X.

6. Balkanization: Time saving hint: If the balkanization number is 1 or 0, skip the roll, because the world cannot be balkanized. By the same token, if the balkanization number is 12 or more, skip the roll, because the world is automatically balkanized. Be sure to note which worlds are balkanized. You will be making a notation in the TPPG column later.

7. TED Determination: Time saving hint: If the TL loss on a world with population code of 5+ is greater than 10, skip the roll. The world has a TED.

8. Recovery Determination: This is one of the most arbitrary parts of the collapsing process. You could have two identical worlds but because of some intangible thing one's population will grow quicker than the other's. Being on the outside, and doing a large number of worlds, we may not have time to work out the intangibles of each world. Here are some guidelines that I use:

• A worlds whose population code is equal to its MSP is not likely to foster much growth, especially if the multiplier is a high number.

• TEDs will probably be repressive. I tend to give a lower growth rate to worlds with TEDs.

• Balkanized worlds, on the other hand, probably have less overall control of population growth. In fact each government may encourage large families (to help build large armies).

• Worlds with atmospheres that are breathable without any filter masks will tend to have a higher growth, especially ones with moderate hydrographics.

• Agricultural worlds will foster population growth unless that growth threatens to nullify the agricultural rating.

• Worlds with pre-industrial tech levels will probably not have a significant population growth. Lack of proper medication and facilities will contribute to a higher mortality rate.

Stellar Data: Now that you know which worlds have survived, you need to check and see if that system has a reasonable star. Anything above a class M star is good (because we have already eliminated dwarfs as primaries). A check of **TNE** page 193 reveals that a M0 V star has a habitable zone in orbit 0, but a M5 V star does not. I allow worlds with M0 V, M1 V, and M2 V to keep their stars unchanged. I reason that M3 V stars probably have a very marginal habitable zone, and will usually leave the star unchanged. If, however, I feel the main world deserves a warmer star, I will change it. When changing stars, I leave the number and luminosity class intact but change the letter class according to the following table:

D6	Star
1	K
2	K
3	K
4	G
5	G
6	F

For example, for a world which has survived the Collapse but has M8 V star, I roll a 3 and change the star to K8 V.

Make sure you annotate these changes to stellar data in the 1117 data as well.

PART III: NEW ERA DATA

Title: The title of the subsector for the New Era Data is similar to that for 1117 and reads as follows:

XXXXXXX Subsector

(Subsector Y of ZZZZZZ sector)

(New Era data, as of 001-1201)

The xxx's, y, and zzz's are as described in Part I above.

If the subsector has undergone some recovery through Hiver assistance or a pocket empire, the name of the subsector should be changed to reflect the most important world or political entity of that subsector.

Name: Feel free to change the names of a few worlds to reflect the fact that it is a whole new era. The following are some suggestions in this regard:

• Dead worlds should not have a name change.

• Cemetery worlds will probably have a new name.

• Worlds which were formerly captive may change their name to reflect their new, independent status.

• Worlds on which an alien culture has become dominant will probably change the name to one from their language.

• Worlds with only a number will probably take a name.

• A TED might change the world's name to gain some glory.

Hex: There should be no changes here.

UWP: Make whatever changes are needed based on Part II above.

Bases: Eliminate destroyed bases. If dealing with a subsector which serves as a transit area between the Hiver Federation and the Reformation Coalition, there are two new base types:

Hiver Support Base (H): This is a base within relatively a safe zone which has extensive facilities for maintenance and repair of ships transiting between the Hiver Federation and the RC. These bases also serve as the base for the tenders which travel ahead of a convoy to the temporary bases. A Hiver Support Base's map symbol is a filled star of more than five points.

In **Path of Tears**, I would have preferred to use a six-pointed star, but the symbol font only had an eight-pointed star. Life is not perfect, everything takes time, and one must choose what one is willing to fuss over, so I settled for what I could get.

Hiver Temporary Base (T): This is basically a designation for a system in which a convoy transiting between the HF the RC can expect to find a tender. These "bases" have no permanent facilities, but rather offer a place where ships making the transit can get repairs, supplies, fuel, medical treatment, and other such services. These bases are generally located so that a ship making a transit will enter a system with one of these bases just about every other jump. The tenders which operate at these sites are based at support bases. When a convoy stops at a support base, tenders will jump ahead of it and stop along its intended route.

A Hiver Temporary Base's map symbol is a open star of more than five points.

Trade Modifications: With the change in population on many worlds, many of the trade modifiers will change. Notes on these are as follow:

Agricultural (Ag) [Atm 4-9, Hyd 4-8, Pop 5-7]: With a population drop, many worlds fall into the agricultural category.

Barren (Ba) [Pop 0, Gov 0, LL 0]: A good number of worlds in each subsector will now be Barren. When listing a Ba code, do not list Lo or Ni. Those codes are for worlds which have some population. There are those cases where that population is incidental, but there is still some there.

Cemetery Worlds (Cm): These are world whose original population has died, and all current residents are recent arrivals. These will only occur in areas which have seen some form of recovery such as in the Reformation Coalition. Please note that a world which was Barren in 1117 but receives a population does not get this code since it never had a population to die.

High Population (Hi) [Pop 9+]: In most cases, worlds will lose their Hi status. However, some recovering worlds may break the 1 billion mark and become a High Pop world.

Industrial Worlds (In) (Atm 2-, 4, 7, 9, Pop 9+): Again, most worlds will lose their industrial status due to lost population levels. However, if a recovering world's population goes over the 1 billion point, you should check its atmosphere to see if the world qualifies to be industrial.

This is an important bit of persistent errata. Due to a single missing comma, the Trade Classifications tables on **TNE** pages 187 and 236 read "2-4, 7, 9" when they should in fact read "2-, 4, 7, 9." We were aware of this error and thought we corrected it for the second printing, but it's still there. It will require sterner measures.

Low Population (Lo) (Pop 4-): As discussed under Barren above, this only applies to worlds which actually have a population.

Non-Agricultural (Na) (Atm 0-3, Hyd 0-3, Pop 6+): Because of the 3 or less atmosphere qualifier for this code, these are virtually nonexistent in the Wilds. While a recovering government may repopulate some of these worlds, they will generally not have populations of 6+ for a while.

Non-Industrial (Ni) (Pop 6-): As discussed under Barren above, only worlds which actually have a population qualify for this code.

Rich (Ri) (Atm 6 or 8, Pop 6-8, Gov 4-9): Strip all classification of Rich from worlds using Wilds governments. Rich worlds are supposed to be nice places to visit, but some of the Wilds governments will make visiting rather unpleasant. Worlds in recovering areas (RC, pocket empires, etc.) use standard **Traveller** government codes, and therefore can have the Rich classification if they meet all other requirements.

This is somewhat of an abstraction, as even Wilds governments can cover a wide range of actual conditions. But the idea is that there just aren't that many lovely tourist spots in the Wilds. Even if a local government is forward-thinking, you've still got vampire fleets, raiders, slavers, etc., that keep things from ever getting really nice. That's why they call it the Wilds.

Owned Worlds (O:xxxx): With the loss of interstellar travel, this code is no longer applicable in the Wilds.

Strip this code from all Wilds worlds possessing it.

Droyne (D:X) or Chirper (C:X) Worlds: How these populations fared during the Collapse is entirely an arbitrary decision.

• On worlds with a 50-60% population, these aliens may have gone on to dominate the world. Droyne are more likely to have done this than Chirpers.

• On worlds with a low percentage population, they are likely to have died out.

• On worlds which have repressive

governments, the alien population may have been deliberately reduced or eliminated.

- On balkanized worlds, these races are likely to have their own government, and may remain at the same relative levels or thrive.

It is also possible that Droyne populations may have degenerated into Chirper populations, either on their own or as the result of outside influence. See **Path of Tears** pages 118-119 for an example of this possibility.

In any case, you will need to consider whether these populations have increased or decreased with respect to the world's overall population and make appropriate entries or deletions.

Subsector/Sector Capitals: Strip these from all worlds. If you have a pocket empire, it will have a capital (Cp).

Imperial Research Stations: Strip these from all worlds. Even if research continues there, it is no longer an Imperial facility.

TPPG: Some general notes:
- For all balkanized worlds, place a "B" in the Travel Zone column. Since the 1201 data will usually be for referees only this will provide more information about a particular world. After all, you went to the trouble of determining which worlds were balkanized, it should be noted somewhere.

This is because there is no longer the single "neat" code for balkanization as in the non-Wilds government codes. Because of the increased likelihood of world balkanization in the post-Collapse environment, it was important to expand the possible "flavors" of balkanization, which is what is done here. The government type shown in the UWP string is the "dominant" government type, while the "B" in the TPPG section shows that this is not a world-spanning government.

The meaning of "dominant government" is up to the referee. It can mean, as it was typically used in **Path of Tears**, *to indicate the most common type of government among the competing balkanized powers, or it can indicate the single most powerful government which is attempting to control other uncooperative powers.*

In all honesty, the government code in the UWP is a pretty stupid and procrustean attempt to force a rich continuum of subtle social realities into a few rather arbitrary categories (and is a rickety living fossil from the original highly abstract **Traveller** *system). But Travel-*

ler tradition being what it is, we are stuck with them. After all, what is the United States? A representative democracy? A self-perpetuating oligarchy? A civil service or impersonal bureaucracy? There are Americans who will argue for each characterization.

How did the dim-witted pigeon-holers and bean-counters of the Second Survey allow for all of these subtleties when assigning a single digit to summarize a world's political conventions? "Beats the hell out of me, Roy." Government codes are there to assist referees in visualizing how they will present the world to their players, and may be interpreted in a wide variety of ways. Any attempt to assign immutable characteristics to these codes are doomed to failure.

- Barren worlds should have a population multiplier of "0."
- In the Wilds, there are no "A" or "R" codes, as there is no longer any organization to assign them.
- Number of planetoid belts and gas giants should not change because of the Collapse.

But you never know.

Allegiance: Some general notes:
- For all worlds with a Wilds government, place the notation "Wi" as the allegiance code. This tells the referee which government table to use when interpreting the UWP government code.
- Not all worlds in the Wilds need have a Wilds government type. At the referee's/collapser's discretion, the world may have a normal (non-Wilds) government type. This typically indicates a world which maintains interstellar contact of some type, at least with passing Free Traders. Worlds that are otherwise not aligned but which have non-Wilds government types use the allegiance code "Na" for nonaligned. This tells the referee which government table to use when interpreting the UWP government code.
- Barren worlds will have a "—" designation in this column.
- Worlds which are Droyne-dominated can be designated with a Dr in this column.
- Another useful code is one of the client state codes, Cs, CH, CR, etc. Cs indicates a generic client state that does not fall into one of the following categories.

CH is a Hiver client state: Those "frontier" areas between the Hiver Federation and the Reformation Coalition (see map on page 79 of **TNE**) are not pocket empires. They are areas which

the Hivers have helped recover (not to the same extent as the RC) to serve as stepping stones between the Hiver Federation and the RC. The Hiver Support Bases are within these areas.

CR would be a client state of the Reformation Coalition.

Stellar Data: This should have been corrected by this time. If not, make sure all corrections are also made for the 1117 data.

Note: I use the following general note for 1201 derived from **TNE**:

Notes

Under the Trade Classifications column, a "D:" or "C:" entry indicates a planet populated at least in part by Droyne or Chirpers (effectively degenerated Droyne). The number following the colon indicates how many tenths of that world's total population consist of these races.

TPPG indicates Travel Zone, Population Multiplier, Planetoid Belts, and Gas Giants. Because there is no longer a Travellers' Aid Society or other such watchdog group, there are no travel zones in the Wilds. However, a "B" in the Travel Zone column indicates that the world is Balkanized and the government shown is the predominant government on the world.

Allegiance Codes: Na: Nonaligned, no off-planet allegiance (these worlds use the government types listed on page 188 of the **TNE** rulebook); Wi: Wilds, no off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact. (These worlds use the Wilds government type from page 191, **TNE** rulebook (In the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," the world's listed tech level is that of the world as a whole; the tech level of the TED and his or her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level.); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.

- If the subsector has cemetery worlds, you will explain the designation here.
- If you are using H or T bases, you will explain the designation here, under Base Codes.
- If there are any interstellar organization, explain the appropriate allegiance code here.

Blurb: The standard blurb, listed below, is similar to the one for 1117:

XXXXXXXXX Subsector: XXXXXXX subsector has a New Era population of XXX million, a decline of over X.XX billion from its pre-Collapse population. Its highest population is XXX million, at XXXXXXX, and its highest tech level is

X, at XXXXXXXXXX. XXXXX worlds have actually experienced a population increase over their pre-Collapse levels: XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, and XXXXXXX.

If the subsector has a new name, put the phrase "(changed from YYYY)" between the words "subsector" and "has." YYYY would be the previous name.

- After determining the New Era population as described before, subtract it from the pre-Collapse population to get the population decline. Fill the information in at the appropriate places.

- I use only a single digit for TL here, because in many cases, the maximum TL will be 8 or less. If it is above 9, use the same xx (y) notation as discussed under the 1117 blurb.

- If the highest TL exists on more than one world, list all applicable worlds.

- List all worlds whose populations have increased above their pre-Collapse levels.

PART IV: GENERAL HINTS

1. Do all your work on paper, then go to the word processor.

This is a subtle, though excruciatingly important point for the technologically precocious. Once some stupid number has been changed on an electronic file, there is the devil to pay if you want to find only the changes, and you want that information more often than you might think.

The old "stubby pencil" world has it all over the electrons if you want to rapidly scan for only changes.

Since your page will quickly be covered with numbers, you should develop your own set of notations so that you can quickly tell which number means what. For example, I circle the MSP and put a down arrow next to it if the world's population exceeds it. I put a minus sign next to the TL loss. The balkanization number I put in a triangle.

When adjusting populations for recovery, I mark worlds which have exceeded their pre-Collapse population with an up arrow, so when I need that information, I don't have to examine each world.

2. After you have collapsed the subsector on paper, you will know all of the stellar modifications that need to be made. Make all corrections to the 1117 data then use your word processor to make a copy of the 1117 data to use as raw 1201 data. It is easier to modify the data for 1201 than type it all.

3. If you are doing the work for publication by GDW, you should discuss the existence of any pocket empires with Dave Nilsen.

Yeah, I'll have to go along with that. In general terms, what I said earlier about exercising restraint with "local exceptions" applies particularly to loading up a sector with pocket empires. When looking for an example, be aware that The HubWorlds published in TNE are an unusually powerful and well-developed pocket empire, and are not typical of the category.

4. If you can obtain one, a sector map will help with the overall big picture of the sector and the individual subsector's relations to it. Maps of individual subsectors might be useful, when color coded with important information, especially when setting up pocket empires.

5. This may seem like a long process, but with a little practice, a subsector can be collapsed in about two or three hours.

Less if you're really panicked.

PART V: NOTES ON CREATING HIVER CLIENT STATES

Since this had not been done before Geo did it, and since he is still the only one, I have pretty much given him free reign on this.

1. Since worlds with populations remaining will form the core of any such areas, I take a look at the region and determine which worlds are Barren.

2. I will then create a subsector map showing the region with its various worlds. I may have to determine where some of the adjacent worlds lie in order to get a feel for interstellar traffic through the region. The traffic flow, together with the populated worlds, and the map on page 79 of TNE will help shape the area.

3. In these areas, the highest TL should be 11(B) or less, the highest starport will be a "B" or less. Generally, the most important world in the state will be the only world to have these values.

4. To allow for some technological recovery, I tended to fudge toward the lower levels of technology loss allowed by the range of die rolls given for each TL.

5. When collapsing the starports, I used the following modified scale to allow for Hiver-sponsored recovery:

If the die roll was less than the TL loss, the starport is not automatically X, but rather reduced by 3 levels.

6. If a world was central enough, or would probably have a high volume of traffic, I increased the starport accordingly, within the limits stated above.

7. In these regions, recovery will be made to most, if not all, of the Barren

worlds. This recovery will generally be with the end of providing starports (recovery of relics and/or mining important minerals would be other considerations. However, these are not as easy to see or quantify as interstellar traffic). Accordingly, these will become cemetery worlds (Cm). I assign starports according to what I feel the traffic to that particular world will be like:

Traffic Level	Starport	UWP Pop Code
Minimal	E	1 (Tens)
Moderate	D	2 (Hundreds)
Heavy	C	3 (Thousands)

Roll 1D10 for population multiplier.

This method may give a world a better starport and TL than it originally had, but recovery is recovery.

8. When determining governments, I rerolled any result of 6. Although cemetery worlds technically belong to a supporting world, I wanted to avoid confusion with the Wilds government type 6 (TED).

This is actually not a problem, because as long as a world does not use the allegiance type "Wi," there is no way for its government type to be a TED. But as long as the allegiance code is HC, the world is obviously a Hiver client, so is in a sense an "owned" world in any case.

9. For a TL on these cemetery worlds, I used the following guidelines, based on minimum technology for life support requirements:

Environment	Minimum TL
Desert World	4
Very Thin or Very Thin Tainted Atm	5
Vac, Trace or Exotic Atm	7
Insidious Atm	8

Do not take these numbers as official TNE minimum TLs for survival on these worlds in all situations.

They are merely intended to do the job for the purposes of the Hiver client states.

10. Hiver Support Bases will tend to be on habitable worlds at the edges of the region.

11. You might also find some of these ideas useful when creating pocket empires.

I hope these guidelines and hints are useful in your collapsing work.

I think they have been, and I hope you readers do as well. Ω

Gen
Ent
Lib
Com
Gov
Nav
Mil

Security
Clearance

Yes   No

Security Card

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RC NAVY HEADQUARTERS, AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 2/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **COSMIC FIRE, DAALIISA, DROYNE, CYNTA LAWTER, VIRUS**

Cynta "Sinner" Lawter, the youngest line captain in the Reformation Coalition Navy, today resigned her commission amid growing controversy surrounding the Daaliisa raid, code named Cosmic Fire. Lawter has come under increasing criticism for her handling of recent operations by RCS *Aube* into the Promise subsector.

Charges by centrist Assembly representatives that Lawter flagrantly disregarded the limits of the Primary Area of Operation and exceeded her authority in planning and executing raids had been dismissed by senior federalist members of the Assembly. The recent disclosure of the violent and covert nature of the raid on the Droyne of Daaliisa, however, has caused federalist support for Lawter to crumble amid concern that the raid will alienate the Droyne both on Daaliisa and elsewhere. Delicate diplomatic negotiations with Droyne enclaves are reportedly in progress on several worlds.

Lawter has refused to comment publicly on the controversial raid, except to say, "This is not about the Droyne; it is about Virus, and it's not going to just go away."

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/ORIFLAMME
DOBROYE DOWNPORT, ORIFLAMME (1235/ORIFLAMME, B846857-9), 5/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **ORIFLAMME, MAGGART, COALITION POLITICS, RESISTANCE, TERRORISM**

Amid continued threats to his personal safety, Coalition Secretary General Lon Maggart arrived this afternoon on an official visit to this leading world of the Coalition centrist movement. He was met at the Dobroye starport by a delegation from the ruling Council of Technarchs, led by the current lord technarch, Lord Reichard Wasserlich-Karlsruhe. This visit had been planned over a year ago, to allow the Council of Technarchs to discuss items of Oriflammen concern with the RC leadership at "the highest level."

The Secretary General is scheduled to remain on Oriflamme for a week, and is expected to discuss such issues as Coalition internal development, technology transfer, military command structures, assimilation of new member worlds and foreign policy. It is known that industrial technarchs are dissatisfied with Coalition procurement policy, charging that the system rewards high-technology worlds with lucrative contracts while penalizing lower-technology worlds that need the industrial investment in order to advance their manufacturing base. There is also a growing opinion among Oriflammen leaders which favors granting full Coalition membership to Spencer, or the finding of some other means to punish Teldora for supporting the anti-Oriflamme insurgents on Spencer.

The Secretary General will also use this visit to make direct contact with the Oriflammen people. He is scheduled to make public appearances in several Oriflammen cities where he will deliver his "message of unity," according to a spokesperson from the Secretary General's office.

Concerns for Secretary General Maggart's safety during this visit were first aroused nine weeks ago when a series of still anonymous threats were made against Maggart's life. Circumstantial evidence has linked these threats to hard-line centrists and the Oriflammen resistance, in addition to a handful of fringe groups, but no firm information has been uncovered, and no arrests have been made. Maggart has publicly proclaimed that he personally will be taking no additional security precautions during the visit, but he will be accompanied by the Secretarial Guard, a squad of RC Marines drawn from the all-Oriflammen "Spearhead" Brigade, RCMC.

The Secretary General's visit to Oriflamme marks the inaugural use of the new jump-5 link between Aubaine and Oriflamme. This link, consisting of two 300-ton starships, will allow a one-jump transit between the Coalition's two most populous worlds, trimming at least a week from the former route via Spires.

Maggart is accompanied on this visit by his wife, Ann, and his youngest daughter, Kirsten, a xeno-biologist assigned to the RC Services Administration.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RCSA PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 7/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **TATAI MACLEAN, EMO PATTERSON, RCES, RCN, RCSA, VAMPIRE FLEET, VIRUS**

Emo Patterson of the Reformation Coalition Service Administration's Public Affairs Office today labeled as "alarmist" the predictions of a massive Vampire fleet invasion of Coalition space.

The prediction, recently made public by Tatai MacLean, argued that many recent unexplained ship disappearances were due to vampire activity. MacLean suggested that "both the tempo and proximity of advanced Viral activity is growing at an accelerating rate."

Patterson, speaking for the government, branded the charge "alarmist and irresponsible." Arguing that there is no evidence to confirm MacLean's theories, Patterson added that "the overwhelming majority of our Virus experts, and we've got some pretty sharp people working on this, reject MacLean's theory out of hand." Patterson went on to suggest that MacLean is emotionally unstable due to her earlier experiences with Virus systems and that that has adversely affected her judgment.
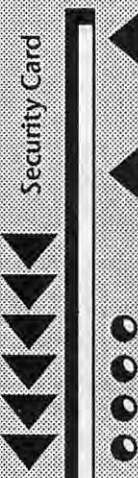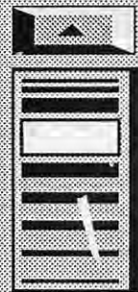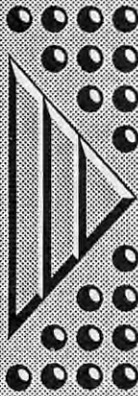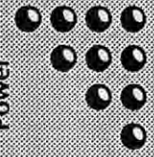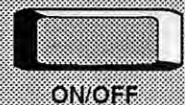
Tatai MacLean was raised from birth on a vampire starship controlled by what experts term a God-strain Virus. Following her escape, she came to the Dawn League in 1199 and served for nearly two years as a Virus consultant to the RC Navy.

She recently left that service, reportedly in a dispute over the statistical instruments used to measure Virus activity. Since then, she has been associated with one of the strategic planning working groups employed by RCES.

RCES officials were unavailable for comment on the dispute.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/ORIFLAMME
DEVIL'S THRONE, ORIFLAMME (1235/ORIFLAMME, B846857-9), 8/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **ORIFLAMME, MAGGART, COALITION POLITICS, TERRORISM, RCMC, ORIFLAMME MARINE CORPS**

Bare-chested Secretary General Lon Maggart has completed his second day of goodwill tours on Oriflamme, following two full days of closed-door meetings with senior Oriflammen technarchs in Dobroye. Although experiencing a chilly start yesterday, these tours are fast becoming a public relations spectacular. Each stop on the tour appears to be more wildly enthusiastic than the one before, thanks to the Coalition leader's disarmingly vulnerable demeanor.

The first of yesterday's appearances, in and around the capital of Dobroye, were subdued events. This was due in part to the public's association of the Aubani Secretary General with its major Coalition rival, but was mostly the result of the heavy security evident at each of these events. Wide security zones and phalanxes of local police, soldiers or Marines served to distance the Secretary General from his audience. Clearly dissatisfied with these arrangements and the effects they were causing, Maggart departed from his prepared remarks while attending a children's league sporting event in a Dobroye suburb.

"You can't tell from looking around here that I am your leader, can you, or that you are the people I have promised to serve. It doesn't look like we belong together at all." With this, the Coalition Assembly leader stepped from his podium and pushed his way through the security cordon into the crowd, shaking hands and speaking with adults and children. When he returned to the podium, he began unbuttoning his ceremonial burgundy tunic, explaining, "A boy in the crowd just asked me why everyone here is supposed to be afraid of me, and that made me think. And I decided that maybe it's because so many people tell me that I'm supposed to be afraid of you." Removing his tunic, Maggart exposed a bullet-proof ballistic garment, which he then removed, leaving himself exposed from the waist up. "Well, I guess that's pretty stupid, because there's no point in my being here if that's the only thing we have in common." Then the remarkably trim and muscular 47-year-old official threw the protective garment into the crowd to the sound of wild cheering and put his tunic back on.

In the remainder of his speeches yesterday, and all of his appearances today, Maggart laced his calls for unity and Coalition common cause with references to his actions of the previous day, often in response to calls from or signs in the crowds gathered to greet him. Following his arrival at one of the construction bays of the Bourgund Shipyards, struck by a terrorist bomb just weeks ago, the assembled workers remained on their feet, cheering, drowning out the attempts to introduce the Secretary General. Finally, Maggart stepped to the podium and drawled, "Well, I guess by now you'll be wondering what the old man looks like," then opened his tunic to show the crowd that he wore no armor.

Maggart capped off this fourth day of his visit to Oriflamme by observing a live firepower demonstration by the Oriflamme Marine Corps and the "Spearhead" Brigade, RCMC, at the Devil's Throne Training Range. Maggart, who is protected exclusively by Oriflammen Marines in the form of his Secretarial Guard, watched while the 4th "Dagger" Battalion, RCMC, staged a meteoric assault to seize a landing zone, defeated a simulated attack by grav tanks from the 1st Oriflamme Marine Division, and held the perimeter until reinforcing Intrepid grav tanks could be landed from orbit. Behind the cover of the fusion-spitting tanks, the Marines then simulated a breakout from the lodgment, to the approving applause of their Coalition commander-in-chief. While flames still lapped at the edges of fusion-blasted craters, Maggart and his party moved out onto the field to congratulate the young Marines and thank them for their performance.

Members of the Secretary General's official party refuse to comment officially on his daring behavior of the past two days, and all are visibly tense during his appearances. One remarked, "You could say he's crazy, or that he knows what he's doing. I guess we'll know for sure in a few more days."

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RCES HQ AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 21/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **COVENANT OF SUFREN, DLS *LADY ELISE*, MISSING SHIP, PROMISE, STARFARING ORGANIZATIONS**

The normally unflappable citizenry of Brusman were electrified by the twin announcement of the recovery of the survivors of the Dawn League ship *Lady Elise* and the opening of relations with the Covenant of Sufren, a previously unknown starfaring civilization.

The announcement followed the successful return of a rescue mission dispatched to the planet Promise in the Promise subsector. Although returning personnel were sequestered for debriefing, unofficial reports described a nightmare world inhabited by Virus-infected advanced technology robots.

The Covenant of Sufren is apparently a small group of inhabited worlds to coreward of the Coalition, but with a governmental structure and social outlook similar to our own. Senior assembly representatives have expressed cautious optimism concerning the possibility of cooperation between the two governments.

DLS *Lady Elise* was one of the first Dawn League warships outfitted to discover the fate of the original 12 diplomatic vessels. The vessel disappeared without a trace in 1200, and was long since thought to have been a victim of Vampire activity. Initial reports seem to confirm that theory.

EAST EUROPE Sourcebook ™

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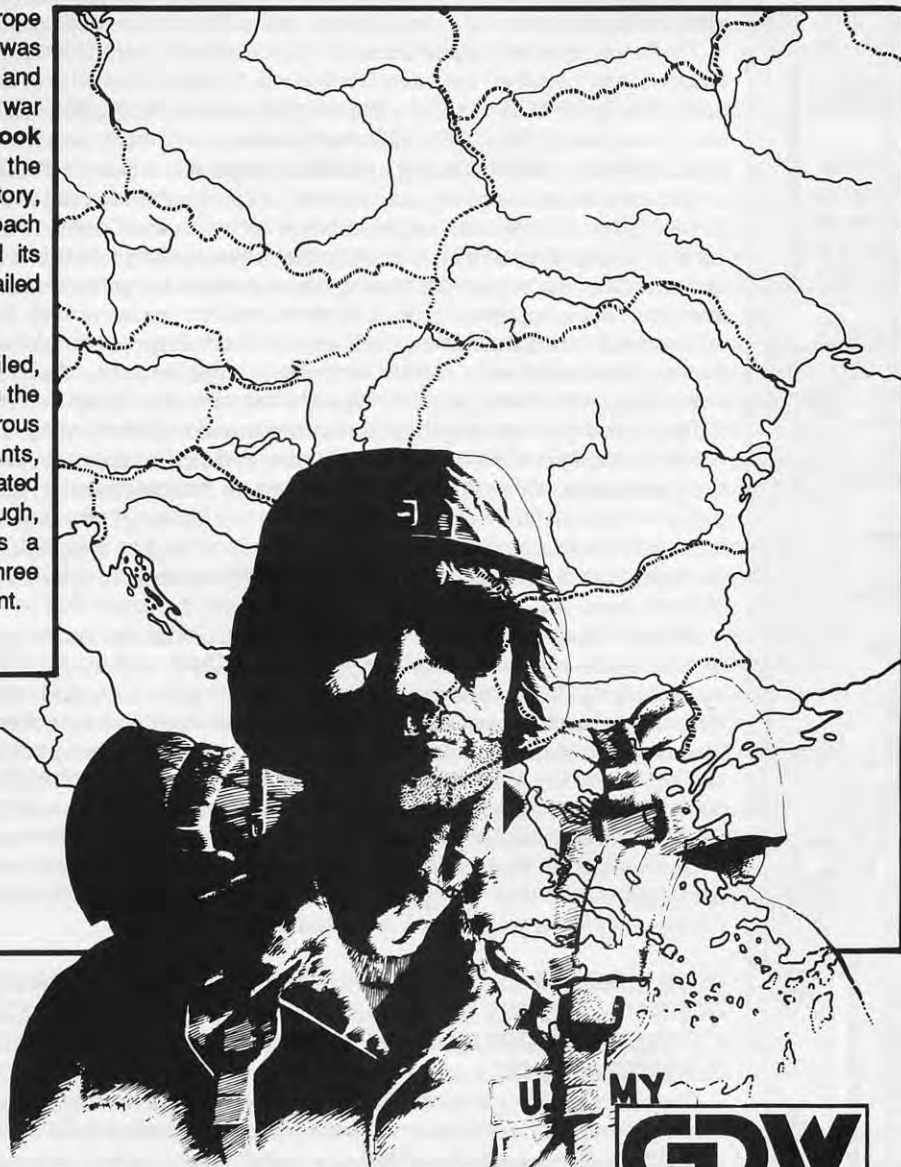
TWILIGHT: 2000
GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP
GDW

The Bride of Baron Samedi

By Kathleen Williams & Joe Williams

We were lounging around Limbo, debating what Gilligan's first name is, when she stumbled into the waiting room.

She looked strange to us. She didn't have any wounds, but then neither does Nicky, and he was torn limb from limb by an escaped gorilla. It wasn't until I helped her to a chair that I figured out what was wrong with her. She was still warm. A note pinned to her blue dress read, "This medium was discovered wandering about Limbo. Please see that she gets home safely." It was signed by our mentor.

This Lost Souls adventure is designed for a group of spirits and one female medium, whose last name is Torres. The medium is the central character, around whom the story is based. The referee may make the medium an NPC, though this will reduce the player's personal involvement in the adventure.

The medium PC is bewildered and disorientated. She can remember nothing about her trip to Limbo or anything about her life except her name, her supernatural powers, and the fact that she if she stays here any longer, she'll be late to meet someone.

The medium assumes she used her Astral Projection power to escape her body, but whenever she tries to return to her flesh, an icy coldness blocks her. She must find her body and remove whatever is blocking her, or else remain a lost soul.

Before returning to earth, the PCs must make ghostly vows. The obvious choice is: "I will not return until the medium rejoins her body." After the vows are taken, a tunnel of light forms to whisk the PCs back to earth.

TAR PIT

It is twilight when the PCs arrive in a park in the middle of a city in southern California. A wire fence surrounds a large tar pit. On a bench in front of the fence slumps a man in a trench coat, a hat pulled low over his face.

Before the seated figure is an old man wearing colorful, tattered clothing topped by a floppy hat. He has a huge lower jaw, and grins constantly. This is Daddy Bones.

Daddy Bones smiles at the medium as though he can *see* her. If approached, the old man glares at the medium and shouts, "I don't like your dress!" Then Blatt! he vomits green ectoplasm at her. The medium must make a Good Dodge roll to avoid being hit. The vomit is scalding, and does (Defense vs. Passable) damage per turn for every column under Good the player rolled on her Dodge.

Daddy Bones takes a necklace from his breast pocket, waves it at the medium, and says "Is this what you're looking for?" Before the PCs can react, he hurls the necklace over the fence and into the tar pit. On the next turn, he shouts, "Affa Miredo!" and then laughing, he disappears. At his shout, two skeletal saber-toothed tigers rise from the pit and attack the PCs.

Saber-Toothed Tigers

Type: Neutral creature under evil influence, incorporeal.

Defense: Good. Missile weapons do only x1 damage to their skeletal forms.

Appearance: Skeletal tigers with sandy-brown coats and big fangs.

Motivation: To guard the tar pit.

Combat: Each turn, the tigers attack with their claws for (Defense vs. Passable) x 3 damage and their bite for (Defense vs. Poor) x 4 damage. The tigers will not venture more than 20 feet from the pit.

CORPSE ON THE BENCH

The man on the bench is dead. A Good Medical roll shows that he died of a heart attack. His wallet identifies him as Brock Simpson, a police detective. The breast pocket of his coat holds a notepad. Reading it, the PCs learn that Simpson was working on the Torres case. About three months ago, Hernando Torres came to him and told him he believed his family was being systematically poisoned. The superstitious folk in the barrio said the deaths were the result of a curse, but Hernando didn't believe it. A month later, Hernando died. An autopsy did not show any trace of poison, and the death was attributed to natural causes.

The final entry in his notebook reads, "3 p.m.: Hernando's sister called, says she knows how to stop the curse. More Santeria crap. Will meet her anyway, 6 p.m. at tar pit."

NECKLACE

It is imperative that the PCs retrieve the necklace that is sinking in

the tar pit. Since Daddy Bones is no longer touching the necklace, it has resumed material form, making it even more difficult for the PCs to pick up. It will sink completely in four turns.

An incorporeal PC who enters the tar must make a Passable Aquatics roll to avoid plunging to the bottom.

The long silver chain holds a blue enameled ball with the figure of a snake etched around it. The ball twists open. Inside are small pictures of the medium and another woman who looks very much like her. The medium recognizes her as Tina, her sister. Both women wear red uniforms with "Rainbeau & Ramon Uniforms." embroidered on their pockets. Inside the ball is a small quantity of fingernail clippings (they belong to Jerome Rainbeau).

The address of Rainbeau & Ramon Uniforms is listed in any phone book.

SWEAT SHOP

Rainbeau & Ramon Uniforms is located in a brick building in an ethnically diverse neighborhood, predominately Spanish and African-American. Looking around, the PCs will see that many of the shops carry the name Rainbeau: Rainbeau Deli, Rainbeau Dry Cleaning, Rainbeau Records and Tapes.

At the top of a narrow, enclosed stairway is a locked steel door with a peephole. On the other side of the door, a young Hispanic man sits on a stool, smoking a cigarette. The punk is armed with a switchblade and an attitude, but is otherwise defenseless against lost souls. He guards the shop, making sure the workers do not leave until the end of their shift.

The sweat shop is filled with young women sitting in front of sewing machines stitching the words, "Nadine," "Sally" and "Rochelle" on the breast pockets of waitress uniforms. Racks of uniforms line the walls, and large bolts of colorful material—green, yellow, blue and red—are scattered throughout the building. The air is filled with bits of cloth and the smell of machine oil. The only windows are at the edge of the ceiling and are covered with wire mesh. At the far end of the room is a door with the sign "Office" attached to it.

Only one sewing machine is not occupied. Next to the empty station, the PCs spot Tina working. Though frightened by contact from the after-

life, Tina will tell what she knows. "The men in red robes took my sister. Go see Tizano the italero. He will read los caracoles of the Table of Ifa and tell you her fate. I know only that I am doomed. I will ask the saints and orishas to have pity on me so that my death will not be so terrible as hers." She will also tell them Tizano lives in the Botanica on Little Market Street, not far south of the uniform factory.

As the PCs try to question Tina further, Daddy Bones passes through the office door, blood dripping from his mouth. "It's you again!" he cries as he wipes the gore from his chin. "Ramon has paid for letting your soul escape. But I've no time to play with you. Can you play with fire?"

Taking a deep breath, Daddy Bones blows across the room, knocking the cigarette out of the mouth of the punk guarding the door. The lit cigarette flutters across the room until it lands in a pile of greasy rags. With a whoosh the rags burst into flames. Daddy Bones vanishes just as the shop girls jump from their seats, screaming and racing for the exit.

FIRE

The women swarm for the door, completely overpowering the guard. Unfortunately, the bolt mechanism is stuck (due to the machinations of Daddy Bones), and they cannot open the steel door. Many of them fall to the ground and are trampled as the room fills with smoke. Tina is overcome by smoke inhalation and must be carried to safety. The characters must use their powers to prevent the deaths of the women.

OFFICE

Lost souls are immune to natural fire, so the PCs may wish to examine the office even as the building goes up in flames. It contains a small cage covered by a red cloth, a desk, chair, large trunk and coat rack. The coat rack holds a baggy, white suit streaked with blood. There is a desk calendar on the table turned to today, where the notation, "Wedding of Baron Samedi. Hounfour." is written. By looking through the calendar, the players will note that the word Hounfour appears frequently.

On top of the cage is a card in the same handwriting as the calendar. It reads, "To the Bride and Groom." A scratching sound comes from the

cage. If the players lift the cloth, they will find two white chickens.

Inside the locked trunk is the body of Mr. Ramon. His throat has been ripped apart. Around his neck hangs a sign scrawled in blood which reads, "Best Man."

BOTANICA

Following Tina's directions, the PCs go to a small shop flanked by two bright blue pillars. The window is dark, but the word "Botanica" seems to glow brightly. The shop is crammed full of items. Some of them are traditional Catholic items—statues, crucifixes, rosaries—while others are African in origin, such as rattles, herbs, dried powders, drums and sea shells. Everything is brightly colored. A red parrot sits on a perch in a corner. There is a door directly behind the counter.

When anyone physical or incorporeal enters the room, the parrot squawks, "Those who enter, are those that pay; pay your toll, or rue the day." If the lost souls try to go behind the counter, the red parrot will instantly block the door, repeating "Those who enter, are those that pay; pay your toll, or rue the day." If the PCs assault the parrot or try to bypass it, it will turn into a handsome man wearing a long red cape. This is a manifestation of Eleggua, god of entryways, doors and roads. Though he is not a nasty fellow, he will require each person to give him something (even an ectoplasmic item) before letting them pass.

Eleggua

Type: Neutral higher being.
Consistency: Dual.
Defense: Superior.
Skills: Superior Agility, Great Strength.
Appearance: A handsome man with dark hair and flashing eyes. His nose is rather beak-like. He is naked except for a red loincloth, a magnificent cape of red feathers and a small pouch. He carries two large machetes.
Personality: Dignified and stolid.
Motivation: Eleggua has been bound to guard the Botanica and alert Tizano to visitors. He will let anyone pass who will give him a trinket or gift of a personal nature, but otherwise he will fight them.
Combat & Powers: Eleggua is capable of turning into a red parrot. He can fly as a man as well, though

the Botanica is a little hard to maneuver in. He will attack twice per turn with his machetes for (Defense vs. Good) x4 damage. Like a bird, if his head is hooded, he will immediately grow docile and revert to his bird shape.

Gear: Eleggua carries a "master key" in his pouch. If a PC obtains it, he may use it to open any three locks, whether material or ectoplasmic, before it disappears forever. If Eleggua is defeated, the key will remain behind.

TIZANO THE ITALERO

The door behind the counter leads to the top of a flight of stairs. From the ceiling hang little dolls made of black cloth. Crosses and hearts are painted on every step in blue and white paint. A faint light can be seen at the bottom, along with the hum of voices on a television set.

The basement is the living quarters of Tizano, an old Spanish gypsy. In the middle of the room is a table covered with a woven mat. A number of seashells are scattered on top of the mat. Tizano sits on his cot, watching the small black and white television.

Tizano

Type: Good person, material.

Appearance: A wizened man with a long white beard and tan skin. His brown eyes are quite lively. He is lame in his left foot and walks with an ebony cane.

Personality: Tizano sells a variety of occult goods to the Santeria and Voudou population. He is known as an italero—a reader of the Tablet of Ifa. In other words, he is a fortune-teller.

Powers: Within his room, Tizano is immune to all supernatural powers. He can sense the presence of the lost souls, but he will not be able to contact them since he is not a medium. He will be happy to communicate what he knows should the PCs make their needs known.

TIZANO'S STORY

Some years ago, there were two religious cults gaining favor in the neighborhood. Both of them had the same roots in African culture, but one of them became Santeria and the other the cult of Voudou. The leader of the Santeria cult was Mama Torres,

the medium's grandmother. The Voudou cult was led by a handsome black man named Jerome Rainbeau who had just gotten out of jail for mail fraud. He was very charismatic, drawing many followers to him, some of them from Mama Torres' Church of the Little Angels. He grew wealthy from the donations of his people, buying up property and businesses until he became one of the most important men in the area.

Mama Torres warned her people against Rainbeau and his evil ways. She called him a mayombero—a malignant being specializing in revenge and destruction. It wasn't long before the Torres family began to die one by one. Mama was the first to go, and her son Hernando soon followed.

This morning, the medium came to Tizano for advice. He had her toss the caracoles (sea shells) and read her fortune. He learned Rainbeau had cast a bilongo (an evil spell) on her family and that within a year they would all be dead. The only chance the woman had was to place an ebbo (a counter-spell) on Rainbeau, but to do so she would need clippings of his hair or fingernails. By burning the clippings, she would interrupt his powers long enough to defeat him. The medium felt she could talk Juan the barber into doing her the favor of giving her some clippings.

Tizano does not know the location of Rainbeau's Hounfour (a temple). But he does know it is probably guarded by many powerful loa (spirits). Tizano will warn the PCs that evil spirits do not like blue, the color of purity, and the smell of burning brown sugar and garlic are abhorrent to them. Lastly, he advises them to never eat anything offered to them by an evil one.

Tizano will refuse to go with the PCs. He is old, and fighting Rainbeau would kill him.

HOUNFOUR

After the PCs leave Tizano, the medium will notice a strange protrusion growing from her stomach. It looks like a piece of semi-material rope which extends about a foot from her body. A Passable Occult roll will reveal that it is a silver cord which sometimes manifests when a astral medium draws near her material body.

The cord points southeast, and after a few minutes of traveling in that

direction, the PCs arrive at the front of a house surrounded by an iron fence which is immune to supernatural powers.

Inside the compound, the PCs find a one-story building with an open courtyard. Women are carrying all sorts of food from a kitchen to a large table. A number of other people are milling about, all dressed in red. A few goats and sheep are tethered at one end of the compound.

At the far end of the courtyard is a magnificent fountain standing in a large pool. Before it is a stone altar stained with blood. Two burning braziers are at either end.

If the PCs check, they will see that the medium's silver cord points to the fountain. The medium's body is hidden inside the shower of water. The pressure of the water is so fast that any lost soul trying to enter it must make a Superior Aquatics roll or else be swept into the pool where he will churn helplessly for two turns for every column by which he failed his roll. The character takes (Defense vs. Great) x2 damage from the ordeal. The controls to shut off the fountain can be found in the kitchen. A character needs a Passable Mechanical roll to figure out how to overate the valve.

The medium cannot return to her body so long as it is shielded by the water. Once the fountain is turned off, she can freely rejoin her mortal shell.

"So you've come to the feast!" booms a familiar voice. "Well, there's nothing like a good wedding for good food. Come, sample the whiskey and eat some banana cake. You've never had anything tastier!" Daddy Bones beckons them to the ectoplasmic feast which is intermingled with the real thing. The PCs will find themselves compelled to eat for (Will vs. Poor) x2 turns. Those who fail their Will roll voraciously cram food into their mouths. Anyone who eats of the food will become ill and suffer −1 column on all rolls for (Stamina vs. Good) hours.

WEDDING

A handsome man dressed in red robes steps to the altar before the fountain. He holds a sword in one hand and a staff in the other. The medium will instantly recognize him as Rainbeau.

"We are gathered here to witness the joining of the greatest loa, Baron

Samedi!" Rainbeau says. "Accompany me in calling him to our presence, so he may claim his bride!" The musicians begin to play, and riotous dancing begins. With a wave of his sword, Rainbeau motions to one of his cronies to turn off the fountain. The crowd gasps as the unconscious body of the medium is revealed. She is dressed in a white chemise and is bound to the central pipe of the fountain.

A loud crack of thunder startles the crowd. The tile floor cracks apart, and Baron Samedi steps up to take his bride to the underworld. The voudou practitioners flee, leaving only Rainbeau, Daddy Bones and Baron Samedi behind.

Brown sugar and garlic can be found in the kitchen. If these items are thrown onto the braziers, it will weaken all evil spirits in the area, including Baron Samedi and Daddy Bones, giving the players +1 column on all rolls to resist their powers.

Daddy Bones

Type: Evil creature, dual.
Defense: Superior.
Skills: Great Intelligence, Great Cunning, Superior Strength, Good Agility.
Appearance: Ragged man with a large jaw and big teeth. He wears colorful clothes.
Personality: Cunning and sadistic.
Motivation: To serve Baron Samedi.
Combat: Daddy Bones' touch drains (Defense vs. Great) x2 WTL.
Powers: Daddy Bones may teleport back to the underworld at any time, although he cannot return again. He can also vomit ectoplasm. The target must make a Good Dodge roll to avoid being hit. The vomit does (Defense vs. Passable) damage per turn for every column under Good the player rolled on her Dodge.

Daddy Bones does not like the color blue, since it is the color of spirituality and purity. He will not be able to use his powers if he is swathed in blue.

Jerome Rainbeau

Type: Evil person, material.
Defense: Good.
Skills: Good Agility, Good Strength.
Appearance: A handsome black man wearing red robes. He carries an iron sword in one hand and a staff in the other.
Personality: A sociopath who will stop at nothing to achieve his ends.
Motivation: Rainbeau wants to gain favor from Baron Samedi by sacrificing the medium's body to him.
Combat & Powers: For human foes, Rainbeau carries a small .22 in his pocket which does (Defense vs. Passable) x2 damage. His iron sword does (Defense vs. Passable) x4 damage to the material or incorporeal beings.
Notes: The PCs may have the locket containing Rainbeau's fingernail clippings. If they are burned, Rainbeau loses control over Daddy Bones and Baron Samedi. The loas will turn on him, carrying him to the underworld and bringing a quick ending to the adventure.

Baron Samedi

Type: Evil demon, dual.
Defense: Superior.
Appearance: An old man wearing a top hat, dress coat and shaded glasses. He smokes a cigar and carries a cane.
Personality: Although Baron Samedi is the lord of death, he is a rather jolly, if crude, fellow. He enjoys whiskey and a good joke.
Motivation: To take the medium's body to the underworld where he plans to consummate their horrific union.
Combat & Powers: The Baron strikes with his cane for (Defense vs. Good) x5 damage. By blowing cigar smoke, he can put a target into a death-like coma for (Stamina vs. Passable) x2 turns.

THE ADVENTURE ENDS

Once the medium returns to her body, she remembers everything that happened. She recalls getting Rainbeau's fingernail clippings from Juan the barber. She called Detective Simpson to seek his help in fighting Rainbeau once she had broken his powers. She was on her way to meet Simpson when she was kidnapped by Ramon. She used her astral projection power to escape his clutches, but because of the trauma of her capture, she suffered amnesia.

The referee should give the PCs 3 Karma for saving the women in the burning sweat shop. They also gain 1 Karma for destroying Rainbeau, 2 Karma for banishing Daddy Bones, and 3 Karma for destroying Baron Samedi. The referee should award additional Karma as appropriate for completing ghostly vows. Ω

Glossary

Santeria: This religion is based on ancient African rites and Catholicism. It arrived in the Caribbean aboard slave ships. Since the slaves were not allowed to practice their religion, some adopted the worship of saints as a cover for their own gods. Santeria comes from the Spanish word santo, meaning saint. Followers of the faith are called santeros and santeras. The gods (or Orishas) are embodiments of the force of nature.

Table of Ifa: This is a method of fortune-telling. Santeros who specialize in Table readings are called italero. Reading the Table is called diloggun. Eighteen sea shells (los caracoles) make up the Table, but italero only use sixteen. The unbroken sides of the shell are filed until serrated edges appear. The shells look like mouths filled with teeth. These are the "mouthpieces" of the orishas.

During a consultation (or registro), the italero prays to the orishas, rubs the shells together and throws them on a straw mat called an estera. The shells are read according to how many of them fall with their "mouths" showing. The italero then interprets the reading.

Voudou: Also known as voudou, voudoun, vodoun or voodoo. Like Santeria, Voudou is a combination of African religion and Catholicism which arose from slaves shipped to the Caribbean. Many loas (spirits) equate to the Santeria orishas and the Catholic Saints.

Hounfour: Voudou practitioners meet in a temple called a Hounfour to sacrifice animals to the loas and to bid them to join them. These ceremonies are characterized by drumming, dancing and chanting. Possession is a common event, and loas can be recognized by their behaviors.

is impenetrable." "The world is too interconnected. War is now impossible." "I have armor. Therefore you cannot hurt me." "Oh yeah? I have a new gun, so your armor is useless." "Oh yeah? I have thicker armor, so your new gun is useless." "Oh yeah? I have..."

All these are variations on the bankrupt theme, "If I can't see it/can't understand it, it can't happen."

My second response was that disbelief in a sufficiently interesting virus did not signify a victory of intellect or technical knowledge—it signified a failure of imagination. Okay, so what do we imagine? After some noodling, and one brilliant insight by a **Traveller** player, we came up with this: **Traveller** has always shied away from intelligent/self-aware/sentient/truly alive machines and robots by pushing them one tech level beyond whatever

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"There is a simple law at work here: There can be no exploration, no discovery, no sense of wonder, without mystery, i.e., gaps in perfect knowledge."

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it is we have now. So what's the breakthrough? What do machine life forms look like? How do they act? What's their ecology? Who knows, but wouldn't it be more interesting to have them than to continue to refuse to deal with them because we can't understand them? And by the way, we had this adventure called **Signal GK**....

(As a side-note, some **Traveller** players remain unconvinced of the authenticity of Virus. This strikes me as a tragic squandering of intellectual energy: One need not dig that deep in **Traveller** to find something one imagines to be impossible. I personally remain unconvinced of the authenticity of jump drives, contragravity, stutterwarp, psionic teleportation, Zhodani, Droyne, Grandfather, lasers with useful offensive power at starship combat ranges and inertial compensators, and yet I sleep like a baby. Go figure.)

Okay, so we have a device. How do we present it? One of **MegaTraveller**'s failures was that it was centered around a Rebellion that it did not know how to talk about. In order to leave space for everybody's personal campaigns, it refused to define too much about the Rebellion. But how could you run a campaign about the Rebellion if nobody told you how it was going? Who was going to win? Did anybody know? Would anybody *ever* know? Referees didn't want their campaigns to strand players in some faction doomed to fail or become evil, but no one would tell them which to choose.

The lesson of **MegaTraveller** and the Rebellion is that if you want a watershed event to change the campaign, the game is about the new world after the change, not about the change itself. Make the change

and move on. And whatever you do, don't look back. Don't leave the Rebellion as an open wound. Let the wound close, and leave it closed. The only faction that survived the Collapse was really a nonfaction, the Domain of Deneb. All the others are dust and will not return. The Rebellion is over; the factions are gone.

Let it be done.

And what do we call it? **GigaTraveller**? Since our intent was to start with the moral equivalent of a clean slate, in the morning of a new day, the title was easy. **Traveller** would enter a **New Era** (not a "Next Generation"), both in terms of new rules mechanics and a new campaign background.

Okay, so we've got a New Era. How do we show it? How do we bring players into it? How do we address the fact that this New Era is breaking out all over the place, in the former Imperium, among the Aslan, Vargr, K'kree, Zhodani, etc.? We want to revisit all these interesting places, but we can't do it all at once, not without becoming over-extended and not doing any single issue with enough quality. We need a system that allows us to prioritize and sequence these things in a helpful way.

We chose a story-telling approach to achieve this goal. Story-telling gives us a tool to try to find the fine line between detailing too little, not giving referees enough of a feel for what their campaigns should look like, and detailing too much, not leaving enough open space for players and referees to do their own thing. A story-telling approach means that we deliver background material that is immediately used in adventures that allow the players to participate in the unfolding events of the New Era.

However, this does place a limit on how much immediate pleasure we can provide to **Traveller** collectors, but this is something that we are willing to accept, and here is why. Explaining things to the level that satisfies the hard-core collector, who reads **Traveller** as a perfectly explained history from an objective and omniscient point of view, means explaining things too much, which means taking the fun out of them. Would anyone play **Call of Cthulhu** if everyone knew that Cthulhu was just a cosmic grocery store clerk from a race of squid heads sleeping off a long drunk? Some things are fun because we are trying to find out a truth, which requires that we don't already know it in too much detail.

Original **Traveller** revealed too much about the Ancients and thereby killed them as an interesting (i.e., mysterious) concept. This then required a belated (and abortive) introduction of the "Primordials" to be a new interesting mystery race, until such time as they would inevitably be over-detailed and killed. (Show of hands: Who here got fed up with Marvel Comics when they started to continuously introduce new beings who were an order of magnitude more powerful than anyone you had ever seen

before? First there were Galactus and The Watcher, and then that guy in *Secret Wars* who made them look like small potatos/oes, and then some other guy made the *Secret Wars* guy look like chopped liver, and on and on, but still the Fantastic Four were able to pull some rabbit out of their collective hat and beat guys umpteen orders of magnitude more powerful than they are. But did you notice that no matter how exponentially more powerful these clowns are than humans, they all still have the souls of children and need to learn eternal verities by watching the wee humans like ants on a sidewalk? Color me bored. Excuse me for frothing. I now return you to your program, already in progress.)

The reason for this progression is because original **Traveller** and **MegaTraveller** presented source material for the omniscient referee. This material was therefore absolutely true (well, usually). This is great for collectors, because they want to know about all the cool stuff they can. This is also good for referees, because they want to know all they can about the universe so they can present it to their players in all its glory. The problem is that when players read this material and learn the truth (and they will), the mysterious becomes mundane, and adventure becomes matter-of-fact. There is a simple law at work here: There can be no exploration, no discovery, no sense of wonder, without mystery, i.e., gaps in perfect knowledge.

TNE deliberately departs from the perfect information approach, to leave room for mystery. To an extent, all **TNE** material treats the reader—collector, player and referee alike—as an inhabitant of the campaign background, *not* a god who stands above that campaign with perfect knowledge of it. Although using different means than have been used in the past, this follows the great tradition of **Traveller**: that things are not always what they appear to be. Anyone who has ever talked to Marc Miller knows that one of his greatest delights was the way **Traveller** had the depth to deliver surprising twists. For example, the Zhodani were originally evil mind-readers but then turned out to be all right guys, and in fact it was the Imperials who were cheats and liars. The Aslan turned out to be a minor race. The Solomani, who once were a bunch of racist yahoos who couldn't even rule their own homeworld, turned out to possess the largest faction in the Rebellion.

Where **TNE** departs from original **Traveller** and **MegaTraveller** is that it leaves the ambiguity in at the front end, and for a reason. And here is where we return at last to your six points of dissatisfaction. (Betcha you had given up hope....)

Hivers and Ithklur contains no sector maps of the Hive Federation, no sector data, no world information on homeworlds or other important worlds. The book is not supposed to encourage players to go into Hiver space. Instead, it is intended to encourage players to interact with and roleplay Hivers and Ithklur

where the **TNE** campaign is already at: the Reformation Coalition. Hive Federation sector and UWP information will be presented as it is needed in the New Era storyline. Watch for the upcoming **TNE** Epic **Into the Belly of the Beast**. This three-part campaign will take players from the Reformation Coalition into the heart (or the belly, take your pick) of the Hive Federation. So hold onto your *San*klaass* caps (more on this below)—it'll be a bumpy ride.

Hivers and Ithklur likewise does not contain a bunch of gratuitous Hiver or Ithklur spaceships or vehicles. The reason is that although no one likes to admit it, the main difference between ships built by different races for similar purposes is the way they are drawn. You can bet that a TL15 human starship works pretty much the same way as a TL15 Ithklur starship. After all, the physical laws are the same. And because we have already presented significant Hiver starships and Ithklur equipment in the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide**, it would be a waste of space to include a lot of that in **Hivers and Ithklur**. The point behind **H&I** is to provide information to roleplay with these fellows, so anything that gets in the way of character generation, rules modifications, motivations, psychology, world view, NPCs, relevant history, etc., is nonmission oriented and is by definition expendable.

I'm glad that you like the Hiver section. This is an interesting example of how I try to restructure and reinterpret old **Traveller** material to inject the sort of ambiguity and inscrutability that I believe it needs. Large portions of that section consist of previously published material, but I don't think anyone will be able to look at it the same way again, because they will be wondering, "What does it really mean?"

I'm sorry you don't like the Ithklur chapter, but I can't say your response took me by surprise. Why else would I put a line like "if you don't like this book" in the credits? There are certain things that you just know will stir things up, and this is one of them. Unfortunately, with so many projects at GDW, I have not been able to develop the **H&I** story line as rapidly as I'd like, so it is hard for players to know what to make of what is there, especially the humor that you complained about.

I am reminded of the following quote, not because I think it applies to you, but just because I am reminded of it, and because I like to say it.

"Now, nobody likes a good laugh more than I do...except perhaps my wife and some of her friends...oh yes, and Captain Johnston. Come to think of it, most people like a good laugh more than I do. But that's beside the point."

The colonel is exactly right—it *is* beside the point when humor and truth converge and become the same thing.

Humor is a matter of taste. It is the product of experience: personal, subjective experience.

On the other hand, truth is not subjective in the same way humor is. For meaningful, day-to-day purposes, truth is truth; it is a dictatorship and is not subject to polls. (We are not going to get into an epistemological debate here. If you think you don't exist, that's your problem.)

With this in mind, I will present the following "bad jokes."

•Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman (the Islamic cleric who is the alleged mastermind behind the World Trade Center bombing) wears a Santa Claus hat.

•Rebellious Japanese youths get together in public parks to demonstrate their individuality by performing synchronized, simultaneous, identically choreographed Elvis impersonations.

•Somalian gunmen roam the streets of Mogadishu wearing Madonna T-shirts.

•Ketchup is a vegetable.

•A US president receives a major IRA leader as an honored state visitor.

•Republican presidents attempting to use US military force to respond to international incidents are repeatedly bludgeoned with the War Powers Act by a Democrat-dominated Congress. Republican presidential supporters decry these acts as partisan, isolationist, butt-headed behavior. Then a Democrat president attempting to use US military force to respond to international incidents is repeatedly bludgeoned with the War Powers Act by congressional Republicans. Democrat presidential supporters decry these acts as partisan, isolationist, butt-headed behavior.

I believe that most people would agree with me that these are all bad jokes. However, they are also all true. Hmmm.

Is *San*klaass* supposed to be Santa Claus? One could assume that, but one might not be correct, and I am not trying to be difficult. *People hear what they are capable of hearing, and what they are predisposed to hear.* They jump to conclusions because when they hear something they don't understand, they try to fit it into things that they do know. Let me give you an example.

We have all heard of people whose ancestry is "Pennsylvania Dutch." Clearly these people immigrated to Pennsylvania, but they are not Dutch at all. So why do we call them Dutch? Because when they moved in, the local Pennsylvanians asked them what nationality they were, and they replied, "Deutsch." The locals either did not understand the German word for German or were unable to communicate it to others, and the misconception of the Deutsch being Dutch was passed into our national identity crisis.

Would you have been so irritated if instead of sounding like Santa Claus the name had sounded like Bill Clinton, or John Kennedy? What level of goofball coincidence is acceptable, and what level becomes irritating?

I believe your irritation comes from the fact that the only significance of *San*klaass* sounding like Santa Claus (which was deliberate, I admit it) was that

I wanted to make some silly joke that had no relevance to the rest of the **Traveller** continuity. If this were the case, you would be right to be irritated, as it is well beyond a bad joke—it is sophomoric and irrelevant. But it is not irrelevant; it is *true* (i.e., true within the fictitious **Traveller** continuity). Now from my perspective, that changes everything.

What is the significance of that truth? Is it simply one of those Deutsch/Dutch coincidences? Did the humans mishear or misinterpret the name the Ithklur told them? Or are the Ithklur surprised that humans have a great folk hero with *exactly the same name* as their greatest folk hero? Are they surprised? Pissed? Flattered? Or are they scared that this is just one more damn piece of Hiver meddling? And is it perhaps just one more damn piece of Hiver meddling? And given these questions, can we look at the wearing of the *San*klaass* hat in the same way? I know what my answer would be.

The story that I began telling in **Hiver and Ithklur** is the story of a spiritual and even religious quest for freedom. Not Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, not freedom in the narrow American sense of no one telling you what to do, but *Freedom itself*—freedom to *be*, to *believe*, to *see what is real, and know it for what it is*. Without that freedom, there is nothing else. There is no love, there is no future, and there is no past. One might be a wind-up, clockwork automaton and not even know it. That is an existence worse than slavery, and the only antidote for it is the radical freedom when one breaks through the barriers to see life itself for the first time.

H&I is the starting point for that story, and by necessity it had to be unusual. But I hope not so unusual that you won't at least take a look at where it will go from there. The story and the ideas I have in mind sure seem interesting to me, and I hope other people will have the same response. I am very excited about it, and that usually counts for something, because when you are excited about something, you do your best work. But then again, you never know—I might be a complete knucklehead and not even have the talent to tell a story that everyone else already knows is not worth the telling. But I hope not. And I have either the faith or the foolishness to try it out.

I hope all this helps you feel a little bit better about your question mark after "a loyal customer." If it doesn't, or even if it does, please write with any further thoughts you have. I'd like to hear them. If worst comes to worst, at least you know who to blame.

With the kind permission of "Geo" Gelinas, who invented the phrase, I will close,
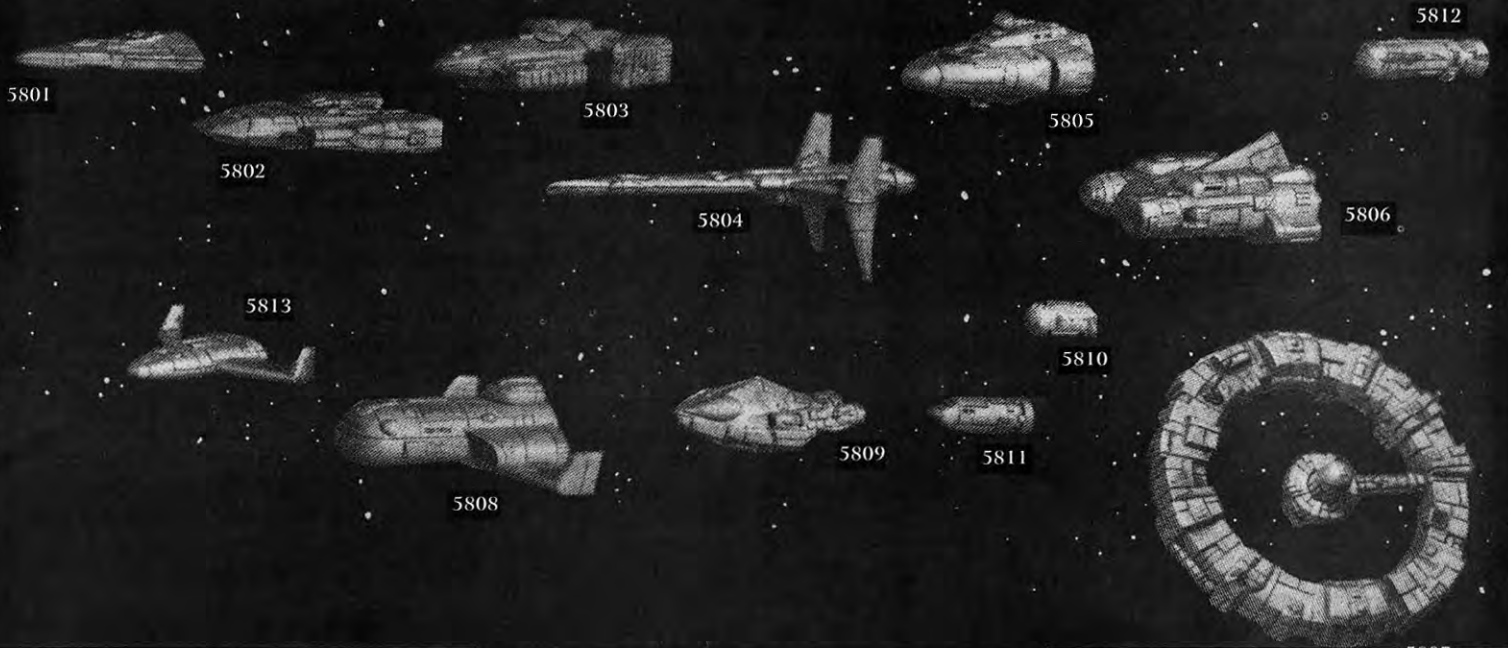Yours for Traveller,*
Dave Nilsen

*Use of the phrase "Yours for **Traveller**" implies no attempt to infringe on Mark "Geo" Gelinas' right to use it as his proud and distinctive sign-off. All rights reserved. *Mea culpa. E pluribus unum. Deus ex machina. Soli deo Gloria.* Good night, and good luck. Ω

THE BEAST UNDER THE BED

By Michael C. LaBossiere
Art by Bradley K. McDevitt

"It's a time for worry, a time for dread. That scratching's not your imagination; it's not in your head. It's the beast under the bed."
Movie jingle, 1997

Centuries ago, a proto-dimension inhabited by a peaceful, advanced race was overwhelmed when evil creatures surged from adjoining dimensions through gateways. The inhabitants resisted for some time, but they eventually fell before the onslaught. The leader of the attackers, a Dark Lord, vented its anger and hatred upon the surviving beings by transforming them into vile creatures. Some of these creatures were given the power to create gateways to other dimensions, and after some time, these creatures, known now as Shadow Snatchers, discovered earth.

Prior to the start of the adventure, a small group of Shadow Snatchers found its way into earth's dimension and began hunting for prey. Since these creatures are fairly weak, they choose to go after sleeping children. They will have taken a dozen victims from a small town before the PCs are brought in to investigate.

It is intended that the disappearance of the children be an event that is out of the ordinary for the town. As such, while the town may be set anywhere, it should be far from Demon Ground and should be a peaceful, quiet town (one of the few left in Dark Time America). The town should have a population of about 6000-8000 people and will have only a small police force and not much in the way of exotic supplies and equipment.

GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED

While children have gone missing at an alarming and frightening rate in America since the late 20th century, the disappearance of 12 youngsters from a peaceful and previously safe small town, apparently from their own bedrooms, will be noted by the press. The PCs may well come across the story in a national newspaper (way in the back, of course) while looking for signs of Dark Minion activity. In any event, one of the PCs will be contacted by a friend from school whose daughter has vanished. The friend is a woman the age of the PC whose husband was killed last year when he was caught in a riot in New York. She will offer the PCs plane or bus fare to the town.

Once the PCs arrive, the woman, Jill Clayton, will tell them that four days ago her daughter, Cynthia, began complaining that she heard noises from under her bed and that she was frightened. Naturally, Jill attributed the noise to Cynthia's imagination, and when Cynthia continued to complain and refused to sleep in her room, Jill punished her. The next night, Jill will say between sobs, Cynthia simply vanished. If the PCs suggest that she might have run away, Jill will show them that all of Cynthia's clothes and shoes are present, and so is her favorite doll.

INVESTIGATION

If the PCs decide to check on the other disappearances, they will learn that in each case the children had no reason to run away, that the children all claimed there was something under their beds, and that all the children who vanished left behind their toys and clothes (except what they were wearing). The disappearances occurred one after the other, and they were one to four days apart. If an

empathetic character gets close to one of the beds, they will feel a faint empathetic presence if they achieve a stage two success (use the PC's empathy score—there is no willpower adjustment). The presence is vague, and the character will not be sure what it is. The presence will be stronger from the beds of children who have disappeared more recently, and Cynthia's bed will radiate a very strong presence. The presences will gradually fade over the course of time and will be gone a month after the date the child vanished from the particular bed. Other than the empathetic trace, there is nothing to be found in the rooms that is out of the ordinary.

If the PCs decide to find out if there is a child in town complaining about hearing things under his or her bed, they will learn that John Rodriguez, son of Mary and Will Rodriguez, has told his parents that something is under his bed. Mary will tell the PCs that her son has never lied to them, and the PCs will find John to be a serious young boy (9 years old) who is very interested in science. He will describe to the PCs that he hears a faint humming noise first and that it is followed by a faint blue light that comes from under his bed. After this, he says he can hear a faint whispering noise, but he can never make out what is being said. He says that when the noise starts, he can't move or scream. If the PCs suggest that they wait in John's room, the parents will agree but will insist that John stay with them in their room.

THE BEAST STRIKES

Once night falls, John will go to his parent's room, and the PCs will wait in his room. Mary has to get up early to drive to her teaching job at the university, so the family will go to sleep early. The night will go by without event for the PCs. When the time that Mary was supposed to get up comes and goes, the PCs will probably want to check on the family. The PCs will find the parents fast asleep and will have a hard time waking them. John will be no where in sight, and the parents will be distraught and panicked when they realize he is gone. During the night, the Shadow Snatchers came and took John from the room. Using their empathetic powers, they kept his parents from waking up and were able to take him with relative ease. If an empathetic PC checks the bed and gets a basic success using his empathetic score, he will detect a very strong empathetic presence. A stage two success will reveal that a gateway is present which could be passed through and that it will remain open for the next 20 hours (see the description of the Shadow Snatchers below for the details). The gate is located "in" the floor, under the bed. It is visible as a bluish, hairline circle. If the PCs choose to pass through the gate (and can do so) they will end up in the proto-dimension of the Shadow Snatchers. The person guiding the PCs through the gate will know how much time is left before it closes (24 hours from its creation—give the PCs at least 16 hours of time).

If the PCs choose not to go through the gate, the Shadow Snatchers will continue to take children until they have taken 24 in all or until they are stopped by the PCs or somebody else. If the PCs do not pass through the gate John vanished through, they will have more opportunities as the Shadow Snatchers continue to take children.

INTO THE WASTELAND

When the PCs pass through the gateway, they will end up in bleak proto-dimension. Unlike many proto-dimensions, the physical features of this realm are sensible through normal human senses. Stretching out, in all directions from the PCs' point of entry, is a vast desert of thick, gray ash. Protruding from the ash are bits of whitened bone, hunks of rubble and twisted pieces of metal. The sky above is gray, with a faint reddish tinge, and the air is thick and foul, with the scent of fires long burnt out and bodies long decayed. The area radiates a feeling of utter desolation and hopelessness. Behind the PCs lies the faint blue outline of the gate, and ahead of them lies a worn trail through the ash which leads to the foreboding and dismal ruins of some shattered structure.

Gate: The gate area contains the currently active gate as well as signs of 12 other areas of activity (marks in the ash). In this proto-dimension, distances are about one tenth of what they are on earth, so while the gates open up far apart on earth, their entrances in this dimension are close. For example, the gate in one house may be a hundred feet from another gate on earth, but the gates in the proto-dimension would only be 10 feet apart. There are several human skeletons scattered about in the ash. Shortly after the PCs arrive, the skeletons' bones will join, forming a horrid amalgamation which will attack the PCs until it is destroyed or the PCs are killed (or flee back through the gate). The Skeletal Bundle was placed there to keep other Shadow Snatchers from the gateways; the Shadow Snatchers do not expect any humans to come through the gate.

Trail: This trail has been made by the Shadow Snatchers going to and from the gateways they created. If the PCs check the trail, they will see clear signs that bodies have been dragged along it, and they will also find a few bits of clothing (from the children) along the way.

Ruins: The ruins appear to be of a large, steel and concrete building of advanced manufacture, which has apparently been blasted apart by some terrible force. Though the broken walls are blackened and melted in places, some of them still bear markings, which seem to be writing. Scattered about in the ruins are shattered and blackened bones, bits and pieces of melted and smashed equipment, and other debris. The ruins are a place favored by Skaraks, and the PCs should be assailed by one or more at an opportune time. They hide amidst the rubble, waiting for things to kill and devour. Since the main staple of the Skarak diet is other Skaraks and occasional scraps from the Shadow Snatchers, they will welcome some fresh meat (the PCs). The trail ends at the entrance to the underground, which is a partially covered shaft.

RUINS UNDERGROUND MAP

Entrance to the underground is gained via what appears to be the remains of an elevator shaft. Cables are fused to the sides of the shaft top, which will allow the PCs to climb down (an Average test of Agility) the 20-foot shaft. The underground was obviously once a well-built structure, but it now looks as if it had been through an earthquake. The walls are shattered in many places, and soil has spilled in through widening cracks in other areas. Despite the devastation, in some places, the concrete and steel walls are nearly intact, and bear markings and the remains of various pieces of equipment. The underground is extremely dark, and will feel very cold and evil to the PCs, and they will hear faint whispering noises at all times.

Guard: The Shadow Snatchers keep a trained Skarak chained here. Its chain allows it to get to the entrance, but no further. If it senses the PCs, it will howl horribly and leap to the attack. There is a 30% chance that it will be asleep and will not notice the PCs unless they make a lot of noise or shine a light on it.

"Living" Area: This is were the Shadow Snatchers dwell when they are not out doing evil. There will be 11 Shadow Snatchers present when the PCs arrive. Unless they have been warned by the Skarak, they will be asleep until the PCs do something to alert them (noise or any light will wake them).

SKELETAL BUNDLE		
Strength: 12	Education: 1	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: 12	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam: 5/4D6
Agility: 4	Empathy: 1	Hits: 12/24
Intelligence: 1	Initiative: 4	#Appear: 1
See below for more on Skeletal Bundles.		

Prison: This room is fairly intact and still contains some burnt furniture as well as scattered human bones. The missing children are chained to pieces of the metal furniture, which prevents them from escaping. The chains can be cut or unlocked with the keys kept by the leader of the Shadow Snatchers. Most of the children are catatonic, but John will still be alert, as will Cynthia (though they are both terrified), and they will help the PCs with the other children. Most of the children will have to be carried out, which may pose the PCs with a challenge.

Leader: The leader of the Shadow Snatchers dwells here. The room contains furniture that is fairly intact, as well as a variety of broken weapons, pieces of body armor and a collection of damaged plastic coated maps which show the area as it was hundreds of years ago. The leader will be asleep, unless the PCs woke up the guard or the Shadow Snatchers in the living area.

Vault: Access to the vault is via a heavy, metal door. The door bears a variety of precisely arranged markings (which are unreadable by the PCs) which have been badly scratched by the Shadow Snatchers. Set into the door is a silver metal plate. If a PC with an Empathy rating over 2 touches the plate, the PC will feel a faint tingle

The Gate

Trail

Ruins

Underground Ruins

Prison

Leader

Entrance

"Living" Area

Guard

Vault

and will "hear" words in an alien language in his mind. The locking mechanism is an empathetic device which will scan the PC's mind. The creators of the vault built it in the hopes that a non-Dark Minion race would someday find it and would be able to use the information contained within it. The mechanism will only open to non Dark Minions (it can detect the taint of Darkness inherent to Dark Minions). The door will then swing open and a bright, white light will spill out from the vault.

The walls of the vault are lined with storage boxes which contain artwork, artifacts and an extensive collection of records in a variety of mediums (plastic-paged books, what appear to be optical disks and so forth). There are also machines in the vault that can display the information (once they are powered). The items are all relics from the culture which was wiped out by the invading Dark Minions. When the beings realized they were doomed, they stored their cultural artifacts, history and information about the invaders in vaults in secure buildings throughout their world. The artifacts are various items of art as well as technological items, including four laser weapons.

The records detail the history of the race and how the invaders found and destroyed their world. The records would be of great use to Minion Hunters (once they are translated, a process that will take some time) since they contain information about various Dark Minions as well as scientific data on proto-dimensions, empathetic abilities and gates. Of course, getting the material out, along with the children, in the short time the PCs have may be a bit of a challenge.

ACTION/FINISH

Once the PCs get into the underground, they are bound to wake up the Shadow Snatchers. The Shadow Snatchers will, of course, do their best to kill the PCs. If the PCs free the children and get out, any surviving Shadow Snatchers will pursue them and will persist until all the PCs or Shadow Snatchers are dead. They will even pursue the PCs through the gate. If the PCs are able to get away before the Shadow Snatchers can pursue them, they Shadow Snatchers will use their empathetic abilities to locate the PCs, and will send Skaraks after them until they are stopped or the PCs are killed. If the PCs wipe the Shadow Snatchers out, they will be free to go, and the town will be safe from the menace of the Shadow Snatchers. Of course, there are still many more Shadow Snatchers left, and others may plague the PCs at some point in the future, or the PCs may seek to return to the proto-dimension in search of more information.

Of course, if the PCs are unable to return through the gateway, they will be trapped in the proto-dimension until they are rescued, killed (or worse), or find a way out. There are many other ruins in the dimension, and the PCs may be able to find a working Dimension Walk device to bring them home (or perhaps to someplace worse!).

LASER WEAPON

The laser weapon developed by the proto-dimensional inhabitants to fight the Dark Minion invaders is a oversized pistol weapon which has a removable battery pack that serves as its power supply. The design of the weapon indicates that the beings who manufactured it had hands very similar to humans, through their fingers were longer and slimmer. However, humans can use the weapons with ease. The power packs for the weapon are extremely powerful batteries which far surpass human technology at this time. These batteries can be recharged in two hours if a special recharger is built (a Difficult task in Electronics) to match their power requirements. Unlike current human laser weapons, these weapons fire single, high-energy pulses.

Ammo: —
Wt: 2 kg (pistol 1 kg, battery 1 kg)
Mag: A battery is good for 26 shots per charge
Price: NA (—/—)
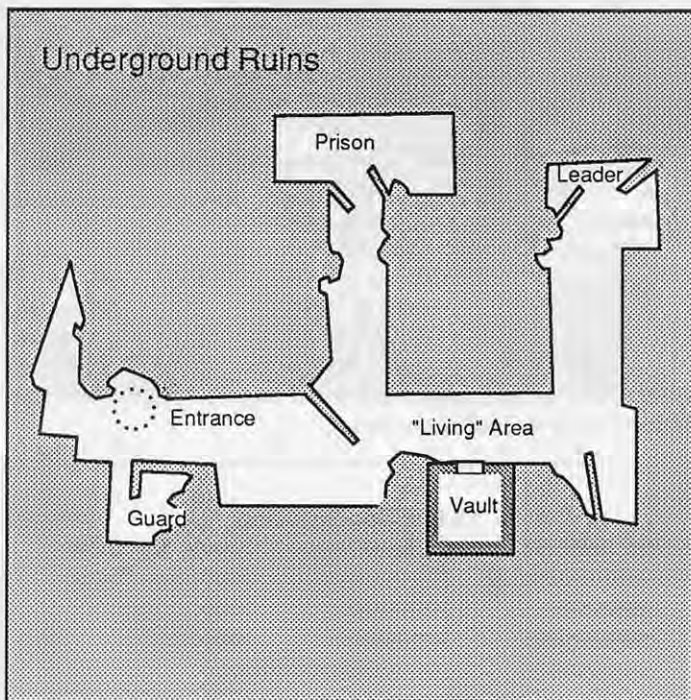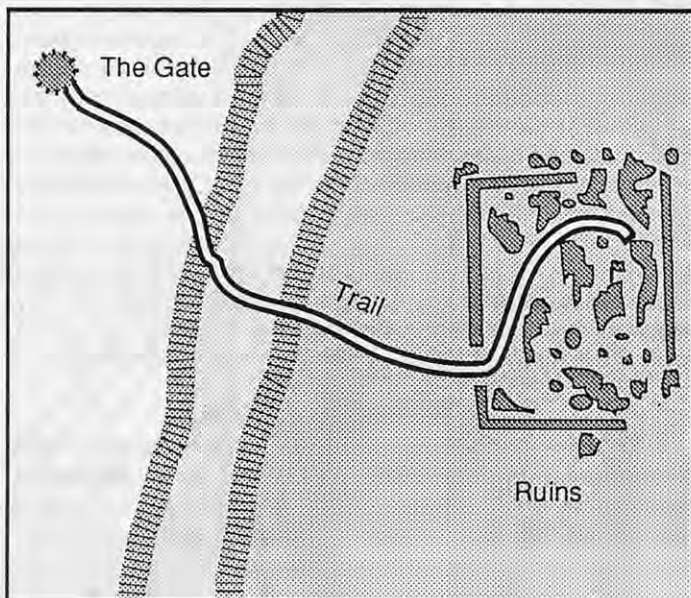
Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Rng
Laser weapon	2	5	3	2	45

SHADOW SNATCHER

Strength: 3	Education: 1	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: 4	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam: 3/2
Agility: 5	Empathy: 3	Hits: 4/8
Intelligence: 2	Initiative: 3	#Appear: 3D6

Special: Darkling Empathy, Project Emotion, Project Thought, Human Empathy (all at a level equal to empathy rating). Vulnerability to light.

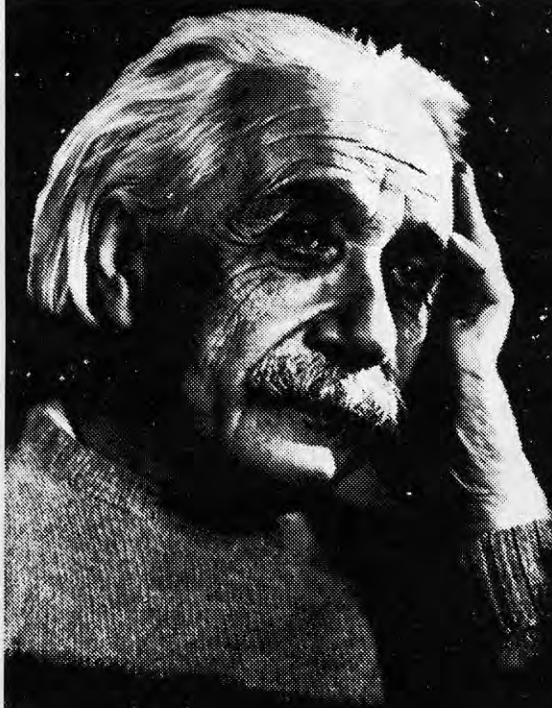Human legends from all cultures have stories of beings that come in the dark of night to steal children and take them away to a horrid land from whence they never return.

Not all of these legends are based on the activities of Shadow Snatchers (see, for example, the Boogie Man in **Dark Races** Volume I), but many of the legends are. These horrid beings feed upon the fear and suffering of other beings, as well as their flesh. Since these being are physically inferior to adult humans, they prefer to prey upon human children.

These beings are not terribly intelligent, but possess an evil cunning which makes them quite dangerous. Due to the malign warping of their original beings, these creatures are evil and exist only to feed upon the fear and flesh of others, and their vague memories of the previous wholesome existence only makes them worse in their malignity.

Physical Description: Shadow Snatchers are jet black, emaciated humanoids with long fingers and toes. Their eyes glow a faint bluish color, and their mouths are filled with small, needle-sharp teeth. They are rather tall, standing at slightly under two meters, but are very light (they weigh under 50 kilograms). Their bodies are hairless and are devoid of any characteristics of gender.

Light Sensitivity: Shadow Snatchers are extremely sensitive to radiation and especially light. Exposure to direct sunlight or other extremely bright light sources inflicts 2D6 points of burn damage per phase, and laser weapons inflict four times their listed damage. Thermite and white phosphorous explosions inflict damage as they do to Bloodkin Vampires. Normal artificial lighting conditions do not harm them, though they find it painful. As such, these creatures will never willingly enter areas of bright light.

Getting a Victim: Once a Shadow Snatcher Leader has found a victim and created a gate, the Shadow Snatchers will pass through the gate and use their empathetic abilities to keep the child asleep or keep him from crying out or moving (they use Project Emotion and Project Thought to do this). They then attempt to establish a link with the child so they can bring the child through the gate. Each night that the Shadow Snatchers attempt to establish a link, the referee should roll 1D6–(the victim's Willpower+ Empathy) and add it to the previous night's roll. When the total reaches 6, the link is established, and the Shadow Snatchers take the child through the gateway. Shadow Snatchers will give up if they do not get a positive result after two nights. Once the victim has been taken into the Shadow Snatcher world, he will be kept captive and his fear fed upon by the Shadow Snatchers. Eventually, most victims will become comatose or catatonic (though fear-induced insanity) and will no longer be of use to the Shadow Snatchers except as meat.

Combat: Shadow Snatchers are fairly weak in combat and prefer to rely on their empathic abilities to avoid having to fight. If forced into combat, they will fight (poorly) with their claws and fangs.

SHADOW SNATCHER LEADER

Strength: 4	Education: 1	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: 6	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam: 7/1D6
Agility: 8	Empathy: 8	Hits: 8/16
Intelligence: 6	Initiative: 4	#Appear: 1

Special: Empathic Abilities: Gate Creation Ability, Animation Ability, Darkling Empathy, Human Empathy, Project Emotion. Vulnerable to light.

Shadow Snatcher Leaders are more powerful and intelligent versions of Shadow Snatchers and appear as larger, heavier-built Shadow Snatchers. These beings were leaders and individuals with powerful empathic abilities prior to the Dark Minion intrusion. They were transformed by the Dark Lord into twisted monstrosities. Each group of three to 18 Shadow Snatchers will have one leader. These creatures retain a large portion of their original intellects and memories, which makes them even more dangerous than their lesser brethren. While they are completely insane by human standards, they are very cunning and intelligent.

Abilities: In transforming beings into Shadow Snatcher Leaders, the Dark Lord imbued them with special empathic abilities that would enable them to work their evil. Shadow Snatcher Leaders have the ability to "see" through the dimensions and sense the empathic auras of other beings. They use this ability to locate their victims in other dimensions before creating a gateway to gain access to them. This ability works as follows: The leader rolls a human or Darkling empathy skill check (whichever is appropriate) against each being in the sensing area. A basic success roll reveals to the leader that a sentient being is present; a stage two success or higher tells it whether the being's empathy is greater or weaker than its own empathy and allows it to recognize a being it has sensed before with a stage two success. Leaders will typically wait until they get a stage two success with their chosen victim before creating a gate to them, so they can find their chosen victim each night.

The second ability the leaders have is their capacity to generate gates. The gates they create are circles, up to two meters across. These gates produce an empathic residue for a month after they are created and can be detected by empathic individuals with a basic success roll using their empathy rating. The gates also remain active for 24 hours after they were created. These open gates can be easily recognized and used (with no roll required) by any being with Dimension Walk ability (or device). Empathic individuals can use such gates and guide others through them by getting a power level of 1, using the following formula: Power level=Empath's Empathy Rating+1D6–1 for every four hours the gate has been open.

The third ability of a leader is to animate Skeletal Bundles. The procedure for doing so is described on page 48 under "Skeletal Bundles."

SKARAK

Strength: 16	Move: 3/9/18/35
Constitution: 15	Skill/Dam: 7/3D6
Agility: 7	Hits: 16/32
Initiative: 5	#Appear: 1
Attack%: 95%	

Skaraks are horrid beings who were once friendly, semi-sentient cat-like beings whom the inhabitants of the proto-dimension kept as pets. Knowing of the love for the inhabitants of the dimension for their pets, the Dark Lord transformed these creatures into horrid, twisted monstrosities and let them slaughter hundreds of the inhabitants before it transformed the survivors into Shadow Snatchers.

These beings are slightly smaller than terrestrial tigers and appear to be horribly emaciated black cats with long, thin limbs. Their eyes glow a dim, malign blue, and their teeth and claws are obsidian black. Hairless and sexless like the Shadow Snatchers, they are malign beings who derive pleasure as sustenance from the suffering of others. Their twisted minds still retain a dim sense of the loyalty and love they once possessed, and occasionally a tribe of Shadow Snatchers will have one or more as guards (they communicate via the Shadow Snatchers' Darkling Empathy). They are ravenous carnivores and will eat any living thing, even each other.

SKELETAL BUNDLE

Strength: *	Education: 1	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: *	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam: 5/*
Agility: 4	Empathy: 1	Hits: *
Intelligence: 1	Initiative: 4	#Appear: 1

*The scores are based on the empathy used in creating the bundle.

A Skeletal Bundle consists of a variety of bones that have been bound together and animated by a special animator spirit. These creatures are a horrible, shifting mass of bones. They move on the bony limbs that protrude from the mass and attack by slashing with jagged edged bones and bludgeoning with thick and heavy bones. Despite their apparent disorder, they can move as fast as a human. These beings are malicious and hate all living things, except the leader who created it and the leader's followers.

Creation and Attributes: Skeletal Bundles are created through the killing of other living things by Shadow Snatcher Leaders. The leader first has its followers gather up the victims whose bones will be animated, then the selected victims are tied into the mass. The Shadow Snatcher leader then slays the victims in a horrible and painful manner and uses the fear and suffering generated to create the animator spirit. This spirit will infuse itself into the bones and it will have the *marked attribute at rating equal to half the Empathy scores of the victims (all human victims count as having an Empathy of at least 1, even if their Empathies is actually 0) and will inflict 1D6 in combat for every 3 full points of Strength it has. It will have hits equal to one-half the sum of the Empathy ratings of the victims/the sum of the empathy rating of the victims. A Skeletal bundle must have at least 3 in each *-marked attribute in order to be viable (thus, the creation of a Skeletal Bundle requires victims whose Empathy total is 6 or higher). The creation of a Skeletal Bundle is one of the main rituals of a Shadow Snatcher tribe. Ω

Articles may be no more than 4000 words in length unless previously approved by the managing editor. All articles are subject to editing. Unsolicited manuscripts and art become the property of GDW and *cannot be returned* unless accompanied by a large SASE. GDW is not responsible for articles lost in the mail. *Never* send your only copy of an article, diagram or illustration.

Status: You will normally be notified within 90 days of your article's acceptance, rejection or need for a rewrite. If you have not heard from us within 90 days, you may inquire in writing. Accepted articles are placed in a stockpile to be used as needed. Authors are asked not to submit changes to an article once the article has been accepted, except under the most extreme circumstances. Challenge may without penalty release its claim to previously accepted articles.

Payment: Challenge will no longer offer payment for articles published, effective with issue 77. Articles accepted after issue 77 will be published in a first American publication rights basis. This means that after publication, all rights revert to you (the author) instead of staying with GDW. (Obviously, any material in the article which was originally GDW's material, such as rules, charts, characters, etc., remains GDW's.)

You will *not* be notified of which issue your article will appear in, but will receive a complimentary copy about *90 days after the issue is released.*

Format: All manuscripts *must be typed, double-spaced,* on standard-sized white or off-white paper. Staple each article separately. The first page must contain the *author's name, address* and *social security number,* as well as the *title of the article,* the *game it refers to,* the *publisher of that game* and a *word count.* Each page must be numbered and contain the author's name.

Articles use three levels of headings (refer to past issues for examples). The first level is the article title. Next, any divisions within the article need *section headings,* which are all caps on their own line (like Subject Matter, below). Any further divisions within a section need *subsection headings,* which are upper and lower case, followed by a colon and text (like Format, above).

References: Always include clear, precise sketches of maps, diagrams or pieces of equipment for artist reference. If you send photocopies for artist reference, always indicate the original source or publication. If your article includes tables, send a printout of each table the way it should appear. Always send a copy of your technical design spreadsheets, if applicable (especially for Traveller). Also, please include a bibliography of your sources, especially with historical or geographical submissions. Mark both technical design sheets and bibliographies "for reference only."

Computers: *Submissions on disk are encouraged and will expedite the publication process.* Send disks in a suitable mailer, *along with a printed copy.* Disks will *not* be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer. Always keep all printer commands, page numbering and so on out of the text. We are able to take submissions only from Apple Macintosh, IBM PC and compatibles. Apple Macintosh files may be saved only as ASCII text, or as MacWrite or MS Word files. IBM PC and compatible files must be MS-DOS and must be saved as ASCII text.

Modem: Modem/computer bulletin board/electronic submissions are not accepted at this time.

FAX: FAX submissions must be sent after 6 p.m. CST. FAX submissions of more than 20 pages must have prior approval. Disk/hardcopy submissions are preferred (see Computers, above).

SUBJECT MATTER

We will consider articles on any science-fiction roleplaying game by any publisher, including Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000, Traveller, Dark Conspiracy, Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Shadowrun, Star Trek, Star Wars, BattleTech, High Colonies, Call of Cthulhu, Paranoia, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., Vampire, Werewolf and others. We will not provide coverage for any products produced by or licensed to Palladium Books, at the request of Palladium Books.

Adventure scenarios are preferred. Sourcebook-type articles should be combined with adventure ideas whenever possible. *Game variants* should be playtested in advance by you and be applicable to a broad range of gaming situations. *Referee's notes* should give hints to the referee on how to increase interest in the game, make his life easier or spark his imagination. In general, articles should be consistent with previously published information.

Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000: Articles must be usable with Twilight: 2000 version 2.2 or Merc: 2000. Ideas include an adventure situation with a geographical setting, short equipment descriptions, generic personalities or locations for use in a variety of situations, and examinations of modern military life or military equipment.

Traveller: All Traveller articles must be usable in the Traveller: The New Era universe. Include tasks and game statistics where appropriate. Ideas include an adventure with relevant background data, bestiary or short equipment description. Articles may follow either the "adventure nugget" or traditional Challenge format.

Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Others: Short adventures (2000-3000 words), plus a page or so of maps. See Twilight Encounters (a GDW supplement) for samples of the preferred format.

Reviews: Product reviews are not limited to the gaming systems normally covered in Challenge. Evaluations of science-fiction films (limited to recent releases *on video,* due to timeliness), novels and other products are also accepted. All reviews must include the approximate date of release, plus the publisher, price, credits and components, if applicable. See previous reviews for format. Reviews should be 500-1000 words in length. Challenge will not publish a review by anyone listed in the credits of the product reviewed.

Fiction: Challenge is not seeking fiction at this time. Fiction submissions will not be read.

Art: Artists may send copies of their art portfolio to the Challenge art director. Never send an original or your only copy.

Good luck. If you have any questions, send them along with a SASE to:
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BLACK MARKET

by:

Justin Schmid

The black market dates back to the earliest forms of government. Most civilizations began with trade and the merchant class. When cities were set up and governments placed restrictions on the merchants, an underground trade was fated to begin—the black markets, where anything banned or restricted by the government could be found. It is a well-known fact that many cities, during times of crisis, survived in part due to black market trade. Not that there is anything humanitarian in the black market—profit is always the prime concern—but black market presence is indeed vital to the health of a city.

In the modern age, black markets have evolved in certain ways and devolved in others. There are four major forms of black markets in 2020: Street Dealers, Suite Dealers, shops and the Net. All of them share the same amount of greed, and all deal in stolen, illegal, restricted or difficult-to-obtain goods.

STREET DEALERS

Street Dealers are loners, though they are often connected to many other fixers. They just do their deals alone, and don't like people to know who they deal with. After all, the Street Dealer is often the middle-man, and if his contacts knew who to really deal with, they would go straight to them. This would be bad for business.

Street Dealers are essentially low-level Fixers, who sell some goods or service for a price. They generally do not have access to the more illicit stuff and are not exactly the most reliable of dealers, but they are usually can get what you want. Most citizens on the shady side of the law know a Street Dealer or two, usually the type specializing in something related to their own interests.

Typical Street Dealer: The typical Street Dealer is a Fixer with Streetdeal levels between 1 and 5. While they are greedy and usually overconfident in their abilities, they will know which merchandise is beyond their reach. Most hope to make it big-time some day, and either retire or become a Suite Dealer. Every once in a while, there is a Street Dealer between levels 6 and 10, but they are generally crime bosses, in charge of some major mob connection. Therefore, access to them is limited, and even dealing with one results in you owing the organization a favor or two. Therefore, most people prefer to deal with the lower-level dealers.

Roll 1D100 or choose the Street Sealer's specialty on the Street Dealer Specialty Table. Street Dealers may change specialty, if ever, no more than once every few years due to the necessity of making new connections to work in a new specialty. Note that all Street Dealers must have a specialty.

Purchasing: When characters want to buy something from a Street Dealer, they generally go directly to the dealer. Assuming the dealer has what the characters are after, the deal is struck, and the characters meet later with the dealer to exchange goods for cash or whatever.

SUITE DEALERS

On the surface, Suite Dealers resemble corporates more than their street-level counterparts. However, they serve the same function as Street Dealers, only trading in much higher-class merchandise, such as military gear and top-secret corporate information. They are the big players in the black market, working sometimes for entire corporations, sometimes against them. But they swear allegiance to no one; they are their own people, working toward building their own wealth.

While Street Dealers have scummy contacts in the underworld, the Suite Dealer's contacts are among the elite of society, but just as dirty in their dealings. This is how they get access to otherwise restricted information and equipment. They don't deal in the petty affairs of the street like Street Dealers would and will generally not enter a deal that will net them less than 10,000eb.

Many of their dealings involve otherwise legal affairs, such as real estate, stocks and bonds, etc. Their illegal dealings tend to be on the side, as a supplementary income, as opposed to the Street Dealers, whose dealings are their main income. Thus, they have that much more to gamble with, and as such are also more cautious, only entering into deals in which they stand to gain a lot with minimal risk.

Typical Suite Dealer: The standard Suite Dealer is either a Fixer with Streetdeal levels between 7 and 10, or a Corporate with Resource levels between 6 and 10. Some start with lower levels, but typically need a good number of connections and money before entering the fast-paced world of the Suite Dealer.

Roll 1D100 or choose the Suite Dealer's specialty on the Suite Dealer Specialty Table. This specialty can only change once every few years.

Purchasing: Buying anything through a Suite Dealer will probably involve a number of go-betweens, and once the price and conditions of the deal have been struck, more go-betweens will deliver the goods and collect payment. Suite Dealers will arrange the deal and then disappear.

SHOPS

Shops are the true black markets. They are collections of merchants fencing stolen or illegal merchandise for a profit. There are rarely many street dealers, and almost never any suite dealers at these operations. But they are special because of the diversity of merchandise that can be found.

Those dealing in smuggled and illegal goods will often know a local black market shop, where they can get electronics, furniture, practically anything mundane for much cheaper. The goods are all stolen and/or illegal, but that's no big deal if you want a cellular phone for only 100eb. Shops seldom deal in anything that's not commonly available in the legal markets, but they sometimes have illegal goods or services.

Typical Shop: There are all sorts of people in a given shop, depending on how large it is. Fixers of lower levels will be present, with a hierarchy of power depending upon their skill levels. A low-level Corporate might be present to handle the bureaucratic affairs, while a number of Solos will be there for security. Techies or Medtechies will repair damaged merchandise, while Nomads deliver the goods and 'Runners arrange deals over the Net. It takes all kinds.

Roll 1D100 or choose the shop's specialty on the Shop Specialty Table. Shops often change speciality as new dealers come and go.

Purchasing: There are often phone numbers at which shops can be reached. The PCs can request the desired merchandise, and if the shop has it in stock, it will arrange a price, then send a team of Nomads to deliver it to the PCs' residence or another specified location. The Nomads will make the exchange, but will not re-negotiate the price. If the buyer refuses to pay the agreed-upon price, the Nomads simply leave with the merchandise. Note that almost anything bought from a shop will be stolen, which the GM should remember in case the PCs get caught by the police.

NET

Last, but not least, is the Net trade— the netrunner's own personal black market, though many nonrunners use it

Price Modification

Roll	Easy	Difficult	Nearly Impossible
1	−50%	−25%	−10%
2	−40%	−10%	Normal
3	−30%	−5%	+10%
4	−20%	Normal	+25%
5	−10%	+10%	+50%
6	−5%	+25%	+100%
7	Normal	+50%	+200%
8	+5%	+100%	+400%
9	+10%	+200%	+800%
10	+25%	+300%	+1500%

as well. There are international BBSs which are solely created for the purpose of trade. Everything is done using pseudonyms, but the cops still manage to catch a few people through them. Practically anything can be found on Net black markets, but it takes a lot of looking, and shipping the merchandise could be a major nightmare.

Typical Net: The typical Net black market will require the characters to sign in using an alias. They are then allowed to peruse the lists of merchandise for sale. Security is fairly lax, except on the ones dealing with highly illegal goods or services. Those boards only welcome new users by invitation, require absolute secrecy and often change their mainframe location weekly.

Roll 1D100 or choose the Net market's specialty on the Net Specialty Table. Net black markets may not change specialty, and must have at least one.

Purchasing: When merchandise is purchased over the Net, both parties send their parts of the deal simultaneously. Thus, if a sale is taking place, one party sends the item, and the other sends the money, with both relying on the honor system. If one party reneges—too bad. But generally this means the dishonest party will be slandered heavily on the Net and will likely never be entered into a deal with again.

MERCHANDISE

There are many types of merchandise available on the black market, as described below:

Cybermodems: Includes all types of cybermodems and equipment related to cybermodems, except programs and military decks.

Cybernetics: Includes all cybernetics, except those which are illegal or military issue.

Cybernetics, Illegal: Includes any illegal or military cybernetics.

Drugs: Includes any commonly available drugs.

Drugs, Specialty: Includes any specially designed or rare drugs. Also includes normal poisons and gases, but not military neurotoxins.

Electronics: Includes any normal electronics equipment, generally anything which could be readily available in an electronics store.

Electronics, High-Tech: Includes those electronics not normally available to the general public, such as code decryptors, movement sensors, etc.

Explosives: Includes plastic explosives, mines and grenades.

Forgeries: Includes forgeries of documents, identification cards, etc. This doesn't mean the forgery is a success; it just provides access to someone who does such forgeries.

Heavy Weaponry: Includes all weapons listed under Heavy Weapons and Exotics that have an Availability rating of P or better.

Information, Black: Includes top secret government or corporate information. People generally kill and die to protect this information.

Information, Gray: Information which is protected. This would include data from a corporation, the medical file of someone from a government mainframe, etc.

Information, White: Information

Street Dealer Specialty

Roll	Specialty	Roll	Specialty
01-02	Cybermodems	52-55	Information, gray
03-10	Cybernetics	56-60	Information, white
11-15	Cybernetics, illegal	61-65	Miscellaneous gear
16-30	Drugs	66	Personnel, experts
31-35	Drugs, specialty	67-70	Personnel, novices
36-41	Electronics	71-75	Programs, white
42-45	Electronics, high-tech	76-80	Small arms, illegal
46	Explosives	81-90	Small arms, legal
47-50	Forgeries	91-95	Vehicles
51	Information, black	96-00	Two specialties, roll twice

Suite Dealer Specialty

Roll	Specialty	Roll	Specialty
01-05	Cybernetics, illegal	36-40	Military gear
06-10	Drugs, specialty	41-50	Personnel, experts
11-14	Explosives	51-58	Programs, black
15-20	Forgeries	59-65	Small arms, illegal
21-24	Heavy weaponry	66-70	Vehicles, military
25-30	Information, black	71-75	Two specialties, roll twice
31-35	Information, gray	76-00	No specialty

Shop Specialty

Roll	Specialty	Roll	Specialty
01-02	Cybermodems	56-62	Personnel, novices
03-12	Cybernetics	63-70	Programs, white
13	Cybernetics, illegal	71	Small arms, illegal
14-25	Drugs	72-87	Small arms, legal
26-40	Electronics	88-93	Vehicles
41-45	Electronics, high-tech	94-95	Two specialties, roll twice
46-55	Miscellaneous gear	96-00	No specialty

Net Specialty

Roll	Specialty	Roll	Specialty
01-15	Cybermodems	56-60	Miscellaneous gear
16-30	Electronics	67-70	Programs, black
31-35	Electronics, high-tech	71-80	Programs, white
36-40	Forgeries	81-85	Small Arms, illegal
41-45	Information, gray	86-90	Small Arms, legal
46-55	Information, white	91-00	Two specialties, roll twice

which is obscure but not concealed or otherwise protected by some major agency. This would include such things as the real name of someone, birth records, etc.

Military Gear: Includes any equipment which is only available to the military, such as neurotoxins, any weapon with an R Availability rating.

Miscellaneous Gear: Any nonelectronic gear which is publicly available.

Personnel, Experts: An expert in some field, such as a commando or expert in nuclear physics.

Personnel, Novices: Includes any personnel needed who are not experts in their field, such as grunts, street hackers, etc.

Programs, Black: Includes the powerful, illegal programs.

Programs, White: Includes any nonblack programs.

Small Arms, Illegal: Any automatic pistol, submachine gun, rifle, shotgun, etc.

Small Arms, Legal: Includes any nonautomatic pistol, rifle, shotgun. Also includes melee weapons that are not commonly available.

Vehicles: Includes any commonly available vehicle.

Vehicles, Military: Includes any military or otherwise very uncommon vehicle, such as an AV-4 or police cruiser.

DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING MERCHANDISE

Roll against the individual or group's Streetdeal or Resources to determine if they can obtain the desired merchandise. Those without these skills must use Streetwise with a -2 penalty. Give +5 to checks for items which the dealer specializes in. A "—" means the dealer either cannot or will not obtain those items. For example, a Suite Dealer will typically not deal in substandard merchandise. However, if a good enough deal presents itself, the difficulty for that type of merchandise is 10, or for shops and nets, 8.

Shops and Net markets deal with things differently. They have a base chance on D10 (must roll under) of having a particular item in that category at any one time. This chance is increased by +3 if that shop or Net specializes in that type of merchandise. Note that for certain items, certain types of black markets are best.

PRICES

Assuming the dealer, shop or Net actually has the merchandise the character is after, a price must be negotiated. Roll 1D10 on the Price Modifica-

tion Table. Use the following guidelines for the difficulty of obtaining the desired merchandise. Modify also according to market demands, current social climate, etc.

Easy: Modified Difficulty 10 or 15. Or if shop or net, modified chance of having it 7 or higher.

Difficulty: Modified Difficulty 20 or 25. Or if shop or net, modified chance of having it between 3 and 6.

Nearly Impossible: Modified Difficulty 30 or higher. Or if shop or net, modified chance of having it 2 or lower.

HAGGLING

Once a price has been set, haggling can begin. This can either be roleplayed or rolled for. The characters make Streetdeal, Persuasion or Streetwise checks, and the amount the checks are made by are compared. The one with the higher total adjusts the price up or down by 5% depending on whether they are the seller or buyer. This continues until one party gets tired of haggling or a tie is reached. For NPCs, this will be after 1D10 turns (some just hate to haggle).

A Critical Failure in haggling causes the haggling to end at the last stated price, and the buyer can either take it or leave it.

A Critical Success causes adjusting the price up or down by 10% in favor of the one with the Critical Success, but this is the end of haggling, and the deal is either taken or left. Ω

*Don't miss "The Sting," an exciting black market adventure, in **Challenge** 78.*

Black Market Difficulty

Merchandise	Street	Suite	Shop	Net
Cybermodems	15	—	2	8
Cybernetics	15	—	5	—
Cybernetics, illegal	20	15	—	—
Drugs	10	—	5	—
Drugs, specialty	20	20	—	—
Electronics	10	—	7	8
Electronics, high-tech	20	—	4	3
Explosives	20	15	—	—
Forgeries	20	15	—	4
Heavy weaponry	—	20	—	—
Information, black	30	25	—	—
Information, gray	20	15	—	3
Information, white	15	—	—	7
Military gear	—	30	—	—
Miscellaneous gear	10	—	5	5
Personnel, experts	20	15	—	—
Personnel, novices	15	—	3	—
Programs, black	—	25	—	2
Programs, white	20	—	4	9
Small Arms, illegal	20	10	3	1
Small Arms, legal	15	—	5	2
Vehicles	15	—	5	—
Vehicles, military	—	30	—	—

Evil of the Centuries

A Call of Cthulhu adventure by J.B. Hill

In a scenario involving a mummy, players generally assume they are to be chased by a bandage-swathed monster. If only life—and death—were that simple.

This adventure follows "Horror of the Centuries" (**Challenge 76**) and "Curse of the Centuries" (**Challenge 65**), both by J.B. Hill. The adventure may be set in any period.

The PCs (or another group) have recently returned from Libya, where they found the lost tomb of Nephra-Ka, an evil priest from the chaotic fourth dynasty of Egypt. While in the tomb, one of the explorers fell into a deep coma and later suffered from total amnesia, remaining knowledgeable about ancient Egytian history but totally unable to relate to modern life. Whether the victim of the strange affliction came back to this city and if the mummy of Nephra-Ka were brought back to the museum are both irrelevant.

Art by James Mravec

The PCs are involved with a museum which specializes in Egyptology. The museum must contain a large collection of Egyptian relics and mummies. It may be either Cairo museum—an ugly square brick building, or a London museum—the British museum on Great Russell Street, Westminster would be ideal. The museum should be large and dark, and have corridors, back rooms, storage areas, cellars and dark threatening places in large number. It should also have a large library for research.

The original victim of the mind transfer remains in a deep coma. He is an empty body with no mind and has no prospect of recovery.

THE STORY

Rumors have started to spread—especially among the night security staff, that one of the mummies has come to life and is searching the museum at night looking for something. No one has of course seen it but strange footsteps have been heard. The museum now has a cold threatening feeling, and strange musky smells of death have been noted. The museum authorities have laughed at these ridiculous stories—they are the product of over-imaginative guards with too much time on their hands. (In the 1920s and 1930s, they suggest the guards should stop reading trashy pulp magazines with stupid stories by that man Lovecraft and others. They are obviously putting foolish ideas in the men' minds.)

It is a pity that the young secretary Susan White did not pay more attention to the stories when she stayed late to finish cataloguing the Nephra-Ka exhibits. She was found dead later that night by the security guards Arthur and Bob. They had been alerted by "strange demonic laughter" and her screams when they found her in a corridor. Both feet had been severed above the ankle. She obviously dragged herself some distance down the corridor until she died of shock and loss of blood—SAN loss 1D4 if the investigators find her. Both guards were arrested and kept in custody but both denied the killing—they only described the horrible laughter. Her feet were never found.

The following night the other two guards, Charles and David, were obviously very nervous, and both kept loaded firearms with them. Alas, it did not help. When the police arrived the next morning, Charlie was shivering with fear behind a glass case in the

Egypt room. David was also found—or at least quite a lot of him was. His limbs had been severed with what appeared to be single bites of extreme strength. Most of his body was eaten. It looked like a shark attack on dry land—in the locked museum. SAN loss 1D6 if investigators find him. The guards had fired many bullets between them to no apparent effect. At least Arthur and Bob were released from custody. Charlie is now in the asylum. Now no one will enter the museum at night.

MUSEUM STAFF

The guards have all been loyal employees for many years. The strange disturbances have only started since the Nephra-Ka expedition returned from Libya. The footsteps, dark feeling, smell, attacks and inhuman laughter all appear to be separate, individual and distinct manifestations. The glass case Charlie was crouched behind contains various Egyptian objects. These include a set of ceremonial daggers used in a strange ritual called "the real death." No mummies were stored in this immediate area. The mummies here had all been examined, and none have bullet holes in them.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Both bodies exhibit severe injuries. The girl's amputations could be single bites from a large animal. The injuries to the dead guard certainly were. None of the severed flesh has been recovered, but examination of the torso shows the teeth configuration to have been:

Incisors	3-3
	3-3
Canines	1-1
	1-1
Premolars	4-4
	4-4
Molars	1-1
	1-1
	=34 teeth

The human bones were severed cleanly with immense strength. On the guard, all the limbs were torn from the torso and the long bones snapped, the marrow sucked from them.

CHARLIE'S STORY

"It was horrible—horrible. Me and Dave, we was brewing up a cup of tea, and Dave—he says he heard a sound outside. He draws his gun and goes to the door. Suddenly, it goes

very dark, and there's this smell like an old graveyard opened up. Dave, he goes out. I hear him fire—bang, bang, bang, bang. Then he screams horrible. In the door appears the devil itself. With a dog's head, but stood upright at first like a man with a dog's head. He comes in. Then he goes down on all fours and he's changing into a dog. A huge misshapen dog—all up at the shoulders and down at the back. A hunchback dog with black and gray stripes. It comes at me, and I run and run, and it comes after laughing—laughing like a devil—all inhuman. I'm in a room, there's no other doors—I know I'm gonna die. I crouch behind this glass case thing. Then suddenly it goes away—vanishes. But it'll come back for me. Laughing. Laughing. Help me, please help me." At this point, nurses have to subdue the man, who has sunk back into insanity.

NATURAL HISTORY RESEARCH

The tooth pattern appears to be that of the striped hyena (hyena striata) which is found all over Northern Africa, Asia, India and Persia. It is considered by the Arabs to be an unclean and cowardly animal. It is particularly found around graveyards and ancient burial grounds, where it exhibits ghoulish practices. Its teeth and jaws are extremely strong, being able to sever the leg of a cow with ease. It has been known to torture its victims—biting off their feet to prevent escape and then watching as they die. Its laughing sound is famous, but extremely eerie and frightening when first heard. It is also attributed with a high, albeit evil and cowardly, intelligence.

STRIPED HYENA
LESSER INDEPENDENT RACE

STR 16, CON 15, SIZ 12, INT 8, POW 10, DEX 8, HP 15, MOVE 10.

Bite 30%, Damage 1D10 + 1D4, can crash through heavy bone armor.

1 point for Track by smell 50%, Locate grave 80%.

SAN loss caused by laugh O/1D4.

EGYPTIAN SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

In the West, some believe in several different types of spirits or ghosts. But the ancient Egyptians believed each person had several distinct spiritual aspects, and upon death, they separated and could have distinct individual existences. These are as follows:

1. Khat, the physical body, which is

mummified.

2. Ba, the mind or intelligence.

3. Ka, the soul or emotional aspect.

4. Sekhem, the store of magical power.

5. Sah, an astral body or doppleganger.

6. Khaubit, the shadow or aura.

7. The Ren, a true name which gives power over the others.

After death, it is believed that each of these—especially the Ba and Ka—have separate existences while still remaining one persona.

In a ritual called "the true death," several enchanted daggers are used to destroy each spiritual aspect. A silver dagger with a jackal head destroys the Ka; a bronze dagger with an ibis head destroys the Ba; a copper dagger with scarab beetle destroys the Khaubit; an iron dagger with ram's horns destroys the Sah; a gold dagger with a hawk's head destroys a Sekhem. Each can be destroyed separately after the death of the Khat.

From more obscure occult times on Egyptian beliefs including the "Necronomicon" and "Cults des Ghouls":

1. By ceremony known as "The Curse of the Centuries," the Ba could be imprisoned in a mummified body. Often it was a punishment, but sometimes powerful priests would undergo the ceremony willingly.

2. By using a mild transfer spell, the Ba can be transferred into the body of another person, or into another "empty" mummy.

3. The Ka often hides in and travels with the Khaubit after death to materialize as it wishes.

4. The Ka often takes on an animal appearance according to the nature of the individual—this is also known in Chinese, Indian and American Indian beliefs. In ancient Egypt, this could often be a hyena if the person was sufficiently evil.

5. If the Khaubit is destroyed while the Ka is separate in a materialization form, the Ka must remain a physical and material entity and can be destroyed. The Arabic (and Cthulhu) ghoul with its dog's head is a half transformation. The ghoul is trapped in this hyena form in a material physical body—hence ghouls come upon the Earth. A powerful wizard can complete the transformation of his Ka into a full material hyena. In Arabic countries, hyenas are known to be semispiritual ghoul creatures—unclean and cursed.

6. Lycanthropy is a physical manifestation of the Ka.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

The players must obviously track down the various and separated aspects of Nephra-Ka's spirit. It is very dangerous. Modern weapons have no effect at all—guns are useless. Ancient-style weapons, like knives and spears, do half damage but do not destroy— at nil hit points the spirit dissolves away if it has a physical manifestation, only to reappear at full strength after 20 hours. Each spirit must be destroyed with the correct dagger. Fortunately, the museum has a set.

The Ka is the most dangerous. The Ba can move from mummy to mummy at will, but a stab with the correct dagger through the head will destroy it in combat.

The Ba needs to be at rest and meditate for one full round to transfer to another mummy. To transfer to a living human, it must overcome his POW for as many rounds as he has magic points (i.e., it must drain his Sekham). The Ka can become material or dissolve into a nonmaterial state at will, but if the Khaubit is destroyed before it becomes physical, or while it is physical, it is trapped in the physical state. This often happens accidentally upon death, thus creating many ghouls. The aura fades after death unless it is kept alive by a powerful magician.

THE SPIRITS OF NEPHRA-KA

Ba: Nephra-Ka's mind can transfer from mummy to mummy at will provided he is at rest and not attempting to undertake any other action. He has decided against occupying a living person again for the time being but is still capable of doing so. At night he seeks his true name written on a roll of papyrus amongst the exhibits. It will take him 1D20 nights to find it. He also seeks the mummy of his handmaiden. Alas, he never will as long as it lies in a strongroom behind the bridge of the SS *Titanic* at the bottom of the Atlantic. His Ba has no hit point of its own but assumes those of the mummy or person presently occupied. The mummies fight as ordinary mummies under the rules. It is his Ba which is capable of casting spells. He may know whatever spell the keeper wishes.

Ka: Nephra-Ka's Ka can take not only the material form of a ghoul— really a semiwere-hyena—but can

then transform into a full hyena. It must go through the change in this order. It cannot materialize as a hyena although it can dematerialize from one. It will normally dwell within the "aura," but this is not essential. However, if the aura is destroyed prior to or while materialized, it will be trapped in material form. It will still be capable of transforming from ghoul to hyena and back.

It will fight and has the normal hit points for a ghoul or hyena.

Sekhem: This has no separate form. Nephra-Ka has a POW of 38 and 24 magic points comprising his Sekhem.

Sah: It is assumed in this adventure that Nephra-Ka's normal "ghost"— his astral body or doppleganger— was destroyed in magical battle with the Black Pharaoh Khefu several centuries ago. However, if the keeper wishes, his normal ghost may also appear—use the normal ghost rules. After death, the Egyptians believed the Ba occupied the Sah.

Khaubit: His aura appears as a large black shadow accompanied by an evil smell and a distinct sense of coldness and blackness. It has 20 hit points as a shadow but is only destroyed by being stabbed with the correct dagger. It moves at a rate of 40. A successful roll against a half Spot Hidden is required to see it at night. SAN loss is 0/1D4.

Ren: His true name is hidden on a papyrus scroll. Since the investigators can have no idea what it looks like, they have no chance of finding it before the Ba does.

If the Ba can find the Ren, Nephra-Ka can become virtually immortal, bringing all his spiritual parts together and taking over another human body, transforming it both visually and totally into a new self. Only being stabbed with all the daggers within one move will destroy him then.

REWARDS

The investigators receive normal Sanity rewards for destroying a mummy and a ghoul. They can receive 1D4 for destroying the aura. Anyone receiving a bite from a ghoul were-hyena will be relieved that they show no adverse effects at the next full moon. This feeling is only short-lived, as they become a ghoul at the next new moon—the night the ghoul priests worship their charmed god. Ω

The adventure begins with the player characters travelling on Earth by ship. Their destination is unimportant; all that matters is that the voyage takes them across an ocean. For now, it will be assumed that they are taking a ship across the Atlantic.

At about the midpoint of the voyage, a terrible storm strikes. The fierce winds and waves pound the ship mercilessly. The fury of the tempest is too much for the vessel to take. She begins taking on water and starts to go down. The captain gives the order to man the lifeboats.

The passengers rush for the lifeboats. Though the PCs will undoubtedly follow the rule of ladies and children first, others among the passengers are less chivalrous. A group of ruffians from second class will try to seize one boat for themselves and must be prevented by force. All around are scenes of terrible confusion and panic. Children are crying, men fighting, and above it all is the roar of the wind.

Tragically, there are not enough boats for everyone. Women and obviously elderly or infirm male PCs will be able to get seats in the lifeboats, but healthy men must take their chances in the water. As the ship starts to go down, there is plenty of loose wreckage and flotsam in the water for characters to grab hold of.

All night, the PCs are tossed in the foaming waves. But as dawn approaches, the weather begins to calm. In the dim morning light, the characters can see an island in the distance, and the currents appear to be pushing the castaways toward the island. Characters skilled at Navigation will be puzzled, for the charts show no island anywhere near the ship's course.

Wet, exhausted and chilled to the bone, the PCs reach the shore of the island and collapse on the beach. They see no sign of life. None of the other boats can be seen. (Fortunately, the other boats were all rescued during the night by a passing steamer, and only a few lives were lost.)

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

After the characters have had a chance to rest and recover their strength, they will want to look around. The beach on which they are lying rises to meet a dense thicket of trees and shrubbery, which appears to cover the entire island. As they are considering what to do, a strange sound is heard from behind the trees. It grows louder as a mysterious machine comes into view.

The apparatus appears to be a small carriage mounted on four jointed legs, the whole thing powered by a steam engine noisily puffing away. When its occupant spies the castaways, he gives a shout of surprise, dismounts and rushes over.

The man is Yoshi Tanaka. Though he is Japanese, he speaks perfect English. Tanaka will help any injured characters or NPCs into his steam walker, then lead the castaways to a concealed road through the jungle. If anyone asks where they are going, he will answer simply, "Technopolis."

CITY OF SCIENCE

After a mile, the jungle ends, revealing a large central valley laid out in neat fields. In the center is a city of pristine white buildings. The adventurers may notice as they pass the fields that each plant is covered by a glass bell, with several tubes and pipes leading to main lines running between the rows. In one field of tomatoes, a group of people are carefully replacing the glass covers on the plants with larger ones. Tanaka explains that the glass covers protect the crops from the elements, and allow each plant to be individually heated and watered.

At the edge of the city, the player characters and Tanaka will be met by a crowd of people of all nationalities. Everyone is dressed alike, in jumpsuits of some heavy gray fabric. The leader of the community is Dr. Clayton Forester, the chief manager. He quickly directs various citizens to take charge of the castaways. Each refugee will be housed in the home of a citizen of Technopolis.

Dr. Forester welcomes the refugees. "Welcome to the city of the future! Technopolis! Where we have used science to create a land of peace and prosperity for all!"

WONDERS OF TECHNOPOLIS

Dr. Forester is unmarried, so he can host two or three player characters in his own home. Other characters can stay with the Barranza family next door. Unmarried ladies will be housed with the Jackson sisters, a pair of spinsters. Everyone will be given a chance to rest, a change of clothes and a hot meal. Then Dr. Forester will lead the visitors on a tour of Technopolis.

The city is filled with super-scientific wonders, as summarized below. All are very Victorian and slightly loopy. New inventions have their Knowledge Area, required knowledge level and Reliability modifier listed in parentheses. Referees are encouraged to add devices of their own creation. All should be slightly impractical.

Transportation: Many of the pedestrians on the sidewalks of Technopolis wear clockwork-powered roller skates, so that they can travel at a walking pace without any effort (Transportation 5, -1). All the streets have narrow-gauge railroad tracks running down the middle, and the Technopolitans travel about within the city aboard small locomotives. The air is filled with the sound of bells and whistles. Each house has its own railroad siding.

For rapid travel to distant sites on the island, such as the submarine harbor or the defensive emplacements, there are pneumatic tubes which blast the passenger along using compressed air (there are three sizes of tube—for small, medium and large passengers). Tube passengers travel unprotected and often arrive mussed by the air.

Travel on rough terrain is accomplished with steam walkers, like the one Tanaka was riding when he first encountered the castaways (25, 2).

Home Life: Each house is surmounted by a device like a giant umbrella. This collapsible canopy protects

City of Tomorrow

A Space: 1889 adventure by James L. Cambias
Art by Tom Roberts

the dwelling from rain and sun. The beds in each house are fitted with sheets woven from asbestos, so they can be cleaned and sterilized in a flaming furnace. Bathtubs come equipped with a steam-driven scrubbing-machine, which briskly cleans the occupant using stiff brushes and strong soap (Precision Machinery 4, –1). The houses are heated by steam heat, provided from the central steam plant. All the homes must be heated to the same temperature, so there are daily votes on the heat level. Many citizens supplement the steam heat by wearing clothes containing battery-operated electric heating fibers (Electricity 6, 2). Light is provided to all

the homes by powerful searchlights mounted atop the power plant. According to Dr. Forester, this simulates the light of the Sun, and is more healthy than lamplight. The blinding searchlights are controlled from their target homes by a telegraph device.

Food and Drink: For ease in storage, all foodstuffs on the island are kept in a dehydrated state, reduced to a fine powder (Biochemistry 6, –2). Huge bins of dehydrated foods are kept in the central kitchen. At any time, the Technopolitans can request meals from the kitchen via telegraph. The dehydrated food is reconstituted, heated and fired to the customer through a powerful

pneumatic tube. The result is that all meals in Technopolis consist of variously flavored pale brown mush.

Communication: The Technopolitans have almost completely abandoned writing with pens and pencils. Instead, each home is equipped with a compact typesetting machine and printing-press. Dr. Forester explains that this allows copies to be kept of everything one writes. Books are printed on huge rolls of paper so that they can be set up on a mechanical page-reel, which rolls the sheets past the reader at a constant rate (Precision Machinery 1, -2). Daily news for the island is displayed on a huge screen atop the power plant, using a magic lantern device. Each house is fitted with a telegraph device for communication with the other homes. Everyone in Technopolis is highly skilled at sending Morse code.
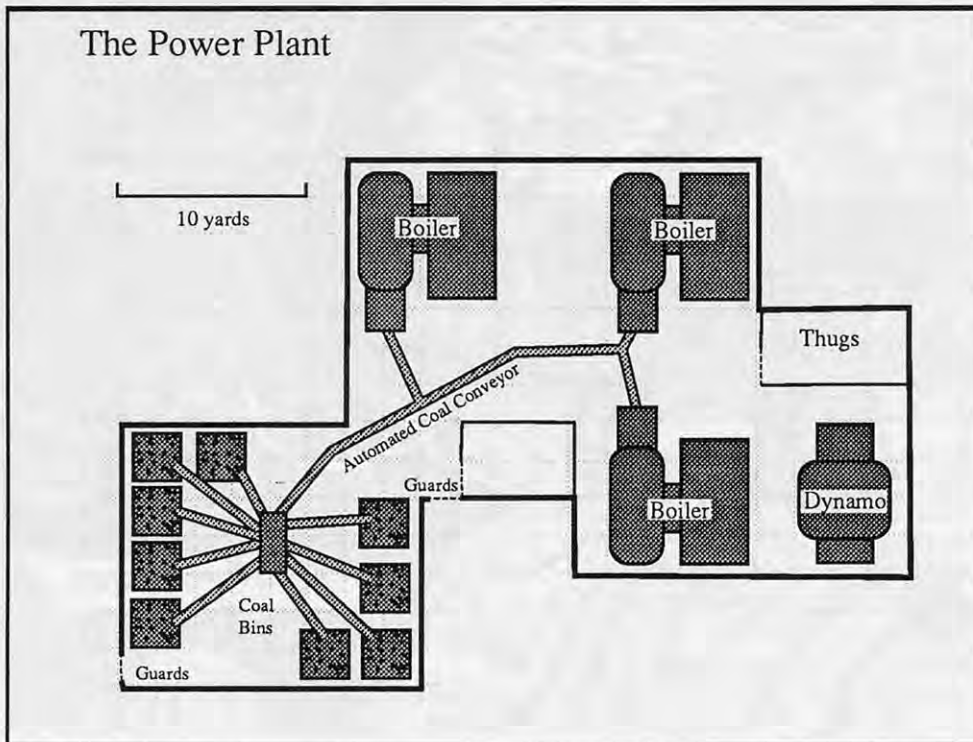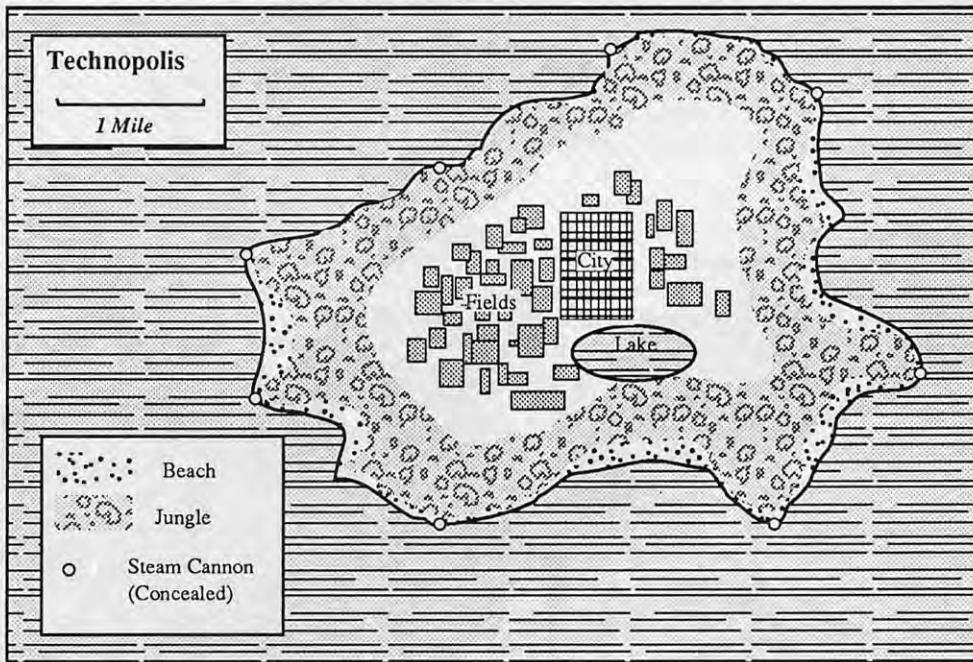
Society and Politics: Dr. Forester explains that there is no crime on the island because everyone has access to wonderful scientific luxuries. There are not even any weapons. The entire city of Technopolis is protected by batteries of powerful steam-cannons, equivalent to 10-inch naval guns, but with a much higher rate of fire (Power Production 20, 4; rate of fire equals Reliability).

The basic unit of currency in Technopolis is the Pound—not the British pound, but the Pound of steam-pressure. A Technopolitan pound-note represents one hour of steam at 1 PSI, and is worth about a penny. Consequently, all prices in Technopolis will initially seem outrageous, as they are based on the amount of power used to manufacture the items.

The chief industry of Technopolis is invention. Most of the residents are inventors, and they share half the royalties from their inventions with the community. This means that the citizens are forever testing out bizarre devices, often in the middle of the night.

Technopolis is governed by a committee of managers, each of whom is responsible for one part of running the community. There is a power manager, a farms manager, a housing manager, and so on. Clayton Forester is the chief manager. All the managers are elected, but there are no campaigns or parties. Each candidate in an election merely sends his résumé and a policy statement to all the voters, and the people make their decision based on that information.

At present, society in Technopolis is very much like that of America or Europe. A few of the more radical citizens have proposed experiments with "so-

Technopolis
1 Mile

Beach
Jungle
Steam Cannon (Concealed)

City
Fields
Lake

The Power Plant

10 yards

Boiler
Boiler
Boiler
Dynamo
Thugs
Automated Coal Conveyor
Guards
Coal Bins
Guards

cial inventions" such as Anarchism, Socialism, Free Love or allowing women to vote. So far, none of these have been implemented.

ENTER THE SERPENT

The player characters are not the only survivors of the shipwreck on the island. One boat was commandeered by "Roaring" Frank Nelson and his gang of ruffians. They washed up elsewhere on the shore of the island and were not discovered by the inhabitants. While the PCs are being shown the sights, Roaring Frank and his men will be spying on the city and making sinister plans.

The night after the characters have had their tour of the city, Roaring Frank and his men will strike. Stealthily slipping through the streets of Technopolis, they will reach the central power plant and barricade themselves inside. Control of the steam plant gives them total control of the city; nothing works without power. Even the mighty steam-cannons are silent.

Using the magic-lantern device, Roaring Frank issues his demands: He is to be made king of the city, and everyone will do as he says from now on. If the people agree, he will restore power. Otherwise, not a wisp of steam will come from the plant. Without steam, there is no light, no heat, no water and no food for the city. The citizens will not be able to resist more than a few days.

Roaring Frank's real plan is to make Technopolis a haven for criminals. It is not on any maps, and with the advanced weapons designed by the citizens, Technopolis can be made impregnable against attack. Wanted men from all over the world will flock to this refuge, safe from the law and equipped with all modern conveniences to boot. Nelson plans to keep most of the current citizens in Technopolis, to serve himself and his criminal friends. The City of Tomorrow will become the City of Criminals.

BATTLE FOR TECHNOPOLIS

The citizens of Technopolis are completely at a loss. With no weapons, they are helpless to resist Roaring Frank. They have not even so much as a carving-knife. In addition, very few of the Technopolitans are skilled at fighting. Most are inventors and scientists—men of peace.

It seems that the player characters may be the last hope of Technopolis. If they have any personal weapons, they can fight Roaring Frank and his men. Perhaps half a dozen Technopolitans will also volunteer to fight, arming themselves with croquet mallets, letter-openers and tree branches. Nobody has any knowledge of tactics, so the PCs must devise a plan of attack.

Roaring Frank and his men have barricaded themselves inside the power plant. (See the diagram.) It is a huge, windowless brick building at the center of Technopolis. The plant has numerous skylights and two large steel doors. The doors are shut, but have no locks.

Inside the plant, there are a dozen thugs, all of them armed with knives. One man at each entrance is armed with a heavy revolver. At any time, half of the villains will be on guard duty, while the remainder rest. The thugs are all Veteran NPCs, with high physical attributes. They are all terrified of Roaring Frank and will not give up until he does.

CONCLUSION

Once Technopolis has been saved from the threat of Roaring Frank's gang, the player characters will be heroes. The citizens will tend any injuries and send the PCs back to civilization aboard the city's submarine. And they will be entrusted with the greatest secret of Technopolis—the coordinates of the island. Should they ever return, they will be welcomed. But they must promise never to reveal the secret of Technopolis to the outside world.

DR. CLAYTON FORESTER (Green NPC)

Dr. Forester was one of the founders of Technopolis and is its most enthusiastic proponent. As chief manager, he is responsible for making long-range plans for the community and coordinating the work of the other managers. He is merely the chief administrator and by no means is the "ruler" of the city.

Forester is very optimistic about science and progress. He dreams that someday the whole world will be as happy and advanced as Technopolis. Dr. Forester is himself a talented inventor, with many devices to his credit. His Steam-Cannon keep Technopolis safe from outside attack. Dr. Forester still has one Intellect die to use creating new inventions.

Motives: Knowledge, Ambitious, Friendly.

Appearance: Dr. Forester is a short, slim, long-faced man with a shock of gray hair and a heavy mustache. He wears thick spectacles and is never armed.

Attribute		Skills
Str:	1	
Agl:	4	Stealth 3, Mechanics 2 (machinist)
End:	2	Wilderness Travel 1 (mapping)
Int:	6	Observation 6, Science 6 (physics), Engineering 4 (naval architecture)
Chr:	3	Eloquence 2, Linguistics 2 (German, Japanese)
Soc:	5	Riding 4 (horse), Leadership 2

Research Areas: Power Production 22, Biochemistry 15, Metallurgy 14, Combustion 13, Precision Machinery 11, Transportation 7, Ether 5

Inventions: Steam cannon, Reliability 3; dehydrated food, Reliability 5; steam turbine, Reliability 4.

"ROARING" FRANK NELSON (Veteran NPC)

From the slums of Whitechapel in London to the South Pacific, Roaring Frank Nelson is known and despised wherever he goes. He has never earned an honest cent in his life, preferring to gamble, swindle, smuggle, steal, cheat or forge his way through the world. Roaring Frank openly bullies anyone weaker than himself and treacherously plots against those he cannot terrorize. The fact that he is cunning as well as strong makes him very dangerous.

Motives: Liar, Greedy, Boastful.

Appearance: Roaring Frank Nelson is a huge man, with a massive chest and thick, tattooed arms. His voice is deep and thunderous, and he seldom speaks in anything but a shout. His little eyes are sharp and treacherous. Roaring Frank always carries a heavy revolver and keeps a Derringer hidden in his sleeve.

Attribute		Skills
Str:	6	Fisticuffs 5, Throwing 3, Close Combat 4 (edged)
Agl:	4	Stealth 3, Mechanics 1 (steam), Marksmanship 2 (pistol), Crime 3 (forgery)
End:	4	Wilderness Travel 3 (mountaineering), Swimming 2
Int:	5	Observation 5, Gunnery 1 (BLC)
Chr:	2	Eloquence 1, Linguistics 2 (Malay, Samoan), Bargaining 1
Soc:	1	Piloting 1 (sailing craft) Ω

New York City Subways, 2054

A Shadowrun article by Mark P. Gutis   Art by David Wilcox

It's dark, noisy, foul smelling, dangerous—all that and more. But it's a part of the city that you'd better know about. You need to get around New York and you don't have a pass to drive? Welcome to the subways, chummer.

uring the 20th century, New York City had the largest mass transit subway system in the world. At its height, it encompassed 231 route miles and over 400 stations throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. On any given work day, the subway system carried four million passengers. The three divisions were the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) (which had shorter and narrower cars than the other two), the Independent (IND) and the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit (BMT), which were unified in 1940 as the New York Subway System.

When the earthquake hit New York City in 2005, significant damage was done to the subway system. The majority of the underground system collapsed in places, with less damage occurring south of Central Park (59th Street). Two of the tunnels connecting Manhattan and Brooklyn survived the quake and continue in use. The other tunnels and the connections via the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges were all destroyed and not rebuilt.

One of the first decisions made in reconstructing the system was to abandon the IRT division. The IRT was the oldest, suffered the most damage, and used cars that were incompatible with the other two divisions. (The only remnant of the IRT is the Grand Central-Times Square Shuttle.)

By 2027, when Manhattan forced the other four boroughs to separate in the celebrated case, Manhattan v. The State of New York, all planned reconstruction had been completed. During the litigation, part of the evidence established that the Metropolitan (now Manhattan) Transportation Authority had placed a priority on reconstructing the Manhattan portion of the subways in anticipation of the split between Manhattan and the other boroughs. Thus, Manhattan had a limited, functional subway system, essentially independent of the outlying boroughs.

SUBWAY SYSTEM TODAY

The system now consists of five lines. (see the Subway System table) The *A Train*, running from 207th Street, Washington Heights, is, essentially, the old 8th Avenue line, terminating at Fuchi City (formerly the World Trade Center) and is the only line that runs north of 57th Street. The *B Train* begins at the 57th Street terminal, runs down 6th Avenue, terminating at Grand and Chrystie streets in The Pit. The *C Train*

starts at Times Square, runs down Broadway and terminates at the Whitehall Street customs checkpoint at South Ferry in Battery City. Brooklyn-bound passengers must then transfer to a Long Island Rapid Transit District (LIRTD) train. The *D Train* is the remnant of Nassau Street line. All that remains is the section in Manhattan from Delancey and Essex streets in The Pit to the Fulton and Nassau Street terminal in Battery City. The *E Train* is the old 14th Street line. It starts at Eighth Avenue and 14th Street, runs under 14th Street to the customs checkpoint at the 14th Street and Columbia Street station (which is the only newly constructed station). Brooklyn-bound passengers can then transfer to a LIRTD train. Finally, the *Grand Central-Times Square Shuttle* was re-excavated after the earthquake. The MTA decided to retain the smaller IRT tracks and cars for this short run.

There is not a lot that can be said for riding the subways if you can avoid them. Although the above-ground rapid transit system is maglev, the subways run in much the same way as they did before the earthquake. A third rail supplies power to electrically driven motors. Although electrical, the subways are still noisy and smelly. A one-way fare, though, is only 1.5¥ and is still a bargain.

The cars conform to what had become the standard for the old IND and BMT Divisions. The cars are 75 feet (26 meters) long, 19 feet (3 meters) wide and about 12 feet (3.6 meters) high. Bench-type seats line each side of the car, and there are four sets of sideways-opening double-doors on each side of the car. Door opening and closing is computer controlled, but the conductor has a manual override. Each train is operated by a motorman from a cab in the first car. Signals are computer-controlled and integrated, via the third rail, and accidents are rare.

In terms of security and safety, much depends on the particular area where a station is located. The stations in Midtown, Times Square, Neon City and Downtown are fairly regularly patrolled by MTA Transit Police. Coverage becomes somewhat more sporadic south of Downtown and almost nonexistent on the Lower East Side. The stations at 42nd Street and 8th Avenue (Port Authority Transit Terminal) and 34th Street and 8th Avenue (Penn Station) are, surprisingly, well patrolled. Although these two stations are inside Terminal, the MTA maintains a strong presence in an attempt to keep the less savory

denizens of Terminal away from the wage slaves and other passengers on the trains.

The MTA attempts to have one officer (see the MTA Subway Cop archetype) on each train. "Tries" is the operative word. Despite claims to the contrary, it only manages to cover 55-80% (depending on time of day) of the trains running, system-wide. Even on trains where there is a cop, he has to keep an eye on six to eight cars.

It has recently become trendy to get around Times Square and Neon City via the lines that cross under them. However, like all slumming, it is not without risk.

LIFE IN THE UNDERGROUND

The A Train runs under Central Park West (Eighth Avenue). When the Central Park West district was created, all stations along the park were closed off in an effort to keep the district free of unwanted wage-slaves and worse. There are no longer any stops between 110th Street and 42nd Street.

The problem of security is somewhat more difficult in Central Park East. Although the Lexington Avenue IRT line suffered severely from the earthquake (the entire tunnel system collapsed between 132nd and 74th streets), and was abandoned, several of the stations survived intact. Although the stations were sealed when the line was abandoned, it was impossible to locate every emergency exit. Gradually, a shadow population filtered into the underground. NYPD, Inc. and Knight-Errant face a steady problem from the shadow population of these stations.

Central Park West has a similar, although much less serious, problem with the remains of the Broadway-7th Avenue IRT. That line caved in from what had been Harlem south to about 25th Street, making it useless as a sprawl. There are, however, isolated groups that eke out a bare existence in limited areas where tunnels did not collapse.

The largest subway tunnel community is the Vorks, centering on the Astor Place and Bleecker Street stations of the former Lex IRT. Driven underground by the trendy artsy-types of the Village, the Village orks (hence Vorks) harbor a tremendous resentment. They usually come out only at night and provide a constant source of crime and danger to citizens in the Village and, on rare occasions, SoHo. Security constantly attempts to seal off the station and emergency exits, but it is a guerrilla war that underdwellers continue to win.

The IRT Lex line remained intact

between 34th and 21st streets, a stretch encompassing three stations. Each of these stations is a gang sprawl: the Greenliners (humans at 33rd Street), the Dark Rats (elves at 28th Street), and the Hole-in-the-Ground-Gang (orks and trolls at 23rd Street). Once the gangs realized that their constant turf wars were bleeding them white, they established a tenuous but oft-broken peace. Security prefers that the gangs pick on each other because it distracts them from preying on the top-side population.

The Children of the Dark, a hermetic mage group, purchased the South Ferry Terminus of the old IRT Broadway-7th Avenue line, attracted, some say, by the circular shape of the station. To date, it is the only former station that has been legally transferred to the group occupying it. After establishing their community, they skirmished several times with ghouls occupying the tunnel south of the Rector Street station. The Children chased them north of that station, established a magical barrier and maintain a presence in the station to block further incursions. Every so often, however, ghouls manage to get around the barrier via old underground electrical and phone line access ways.

The majority of the tunnels that ran

MTA Subway Cop

Yeah, I seen it all down here. I hear there used to be a time when there weren't no sprawl sites in the system. The stations were just stations. Citizens got on, and citizens got off—that's all.

Ya wanna ride peaceably, ya won't even know I'm around. Ya wanna make trouble, I'll be all over ya like a dirty on a duck.

The MTA Subway Cop is one of the last remnants of what had been the New York Police Department. He is slightly tougher than the average hired badge. He has to be. His beat is a tough one, far tougher than the above-ground rapid transit system. He is committed to his work because he is well paid. He does, however, have a keen sense of when a situation is beyond his abilities and will, accordingly, beat a hasty retreat unless serious back-up is near at hand.

Attributes
Body: 4
Quickness: 4
Strength: 5
Intelligence: 3
Charisma: 2
Willpower: 3
Essence: 4.5
Magic: —
Reaction: 3
Professional Rating: 3

Skills
Etiquette (Street): 3
Firearms: 3
Interrogation: 2
Unarmed Combat: 3

Special Skill
Police Procedure: 4

Cyberware: Cybereyes with low-light, smartlink.
Equipment: Ares Predator with Smartlink (10 (clip), 2 extra clips), Armor Jacket (5/3), Earplug Radio Helmet, Stun Baton, Trauma Patch (4), Plastic Restraints.

David Wilcox 3/95

through what had been Harlem and is now New Town and East Riverside either collapsed or were filled in with rubble from the buildings that were destroyed by the quake. The stretch of the Broadway-7th Avenue Express that crossed the northwestern corner of Central Park, however, is still intact. Winter Systems and Knight Errant maintain patrols of that stretch using the old 110th Street and Lenox Avenue station as a command post. There are plans to fill in this stretch of tunnel, but to date, no work has been done.

One of the most notorious and dangerous spots is the old East Broadway and Canal Street station in the Lower East Side. The section that ran from the station at Second Avenue and Houston Street to the Delancey Street and Essex Street station partially collapsed, and the remainder was filled in. All attempts to continue filling in the tunnels south of the Delancey Street, however, were met with savage opposition from a gang know the Crips. The MTA attempted a military solution, but several bloody, failed attacks by MTA Police resulted in a mutiny when they were ordered to attempt another assault. None of the private security firms were willing to help. The MTA appealed to the UCAS military for help but were told that it was considered a purely internal police problem, and the army would not intervene. Some consideration was given to opening the collapsed section where it entered the destroyed east river tunnel to flood the section, but the MTA decided that the cost and the necessity of having to work in the proximity of the Lower East Side would have been too high.

The Crips are a large gang of handicapped humans and metahumans. In order to join the gang, a person must have a physical handicap of some nature, not repaired by biotech replacements or enhancements, and must prove that they have killed a nonhandicapped person. The gang is merciless, even by the standards of The Pit. Most gangs give the Crips a wide berth.

Rats are a constant problem for subway dwellers. Although there are many stories of magically active rats, the reawakening of magic seems to have passed by New York rats, and no one has actually documented the existence of magically active rats. That is not to say that the rats are not tough enough. Their size, ranging from the size of a large mouse to larger than cats, allows them to crawl through fairly small openings giving them access to all sections of the system, even when inaccessible to humans and metahumans. Rat-hunting is the unofficial, and often necessary, sport of subway dwellers. Some claim that properly cooked rat is a tasty delicacy.

So welcome to the New York subways, chummer. Remember, you pay your nuyen, you take your chances.

Subway System

A Train (8th Avenue Line)

207th Street and Broadway (northern terminus)
Dyckman Street (200th Street) and Broadway
181th Street and Fort Washington Avenue
175th Street and Fort Washington Avenue
168th Street and Broadway
145th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue
125th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue
110th Street (Cathedral Parkway) and 8th Avenue
42nd Street and 8th Avenue (Port Authority Transit Terminal)
34th Street and 8th Avenue (Penn Station)
23rd Street and 8th Avenue
14th Street and 8th Avenue (transfer to E Train)
West 4th Street and 6th Avenue, Washington Square (transfer to B Train)
Canal Street and 6th Avenue
Chambers Street and Church Street
Vesey Street and Church Street, Fuchi City (southern terminus)

B Train (6th Avenue Line)

57th Street and 6th Avenue (northern terminus)
47-50th streets and 6th Avenue
42nd Street and 6th Avenue
34th Street, Broadway and 6th Avenue, Herald Square (transfer to C Train)
23rd Street and 6th Avenue
14th Street and 6th Avenue (transfer to E Train)
West 4th Street and 6th Avenue, Washington Square (transfer to A Train)
Broadway and Lafayette Street and Houston Street
Grand Street and Chrystie Street (southern Terminus)

C Train (Broadway Line)

42nd Street and Broadway, Times Square (northern terminus)
34th Street, Broadway and 6th Avenue, Herald Square (transfer to B Train)
28th Street and Broadway
14th Street and Broadway (transfer to E Train)
Canal Street and Broadway
City Hall, Broadway
Cortlandt Street and Church Street, Fuchi City
Whitehall Street and Water Street, South Ferry Customs Center (southern terminus, transfer to LIRTD trains)

D Train (Centre Street Line)

Essex Street and Delancey Street (northern terminus)
Canal Street and Centre Street
Chambers Street and Centre Street
Fulton Street and Nassau Street (southern terminus)

E Train (14 Street Line)

14th Street and 8th Avenue (eastern terminus, transfer to A Train)
14th Street and 6th Avenue (transfer to B Train)
14th Street and Broadway (transfer to C Train)
14th Street and 1st Avenue
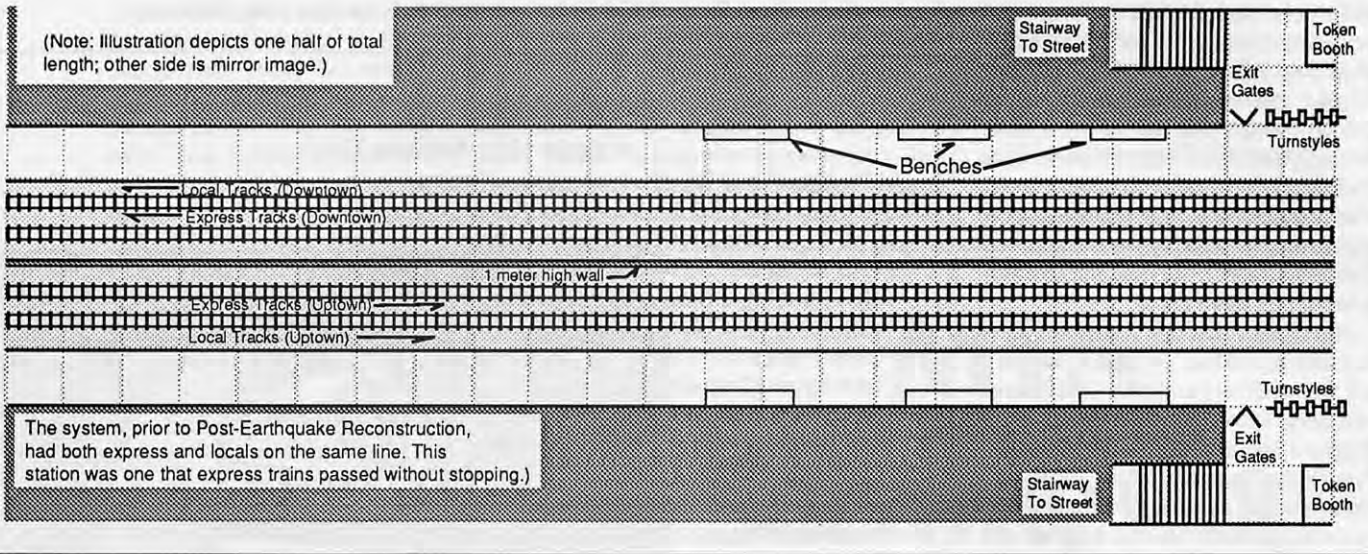14th Street and Columbia Street Customs Center (western terminus, transfer to LIRTD trains)

Grand Central-Times Square Shuttle
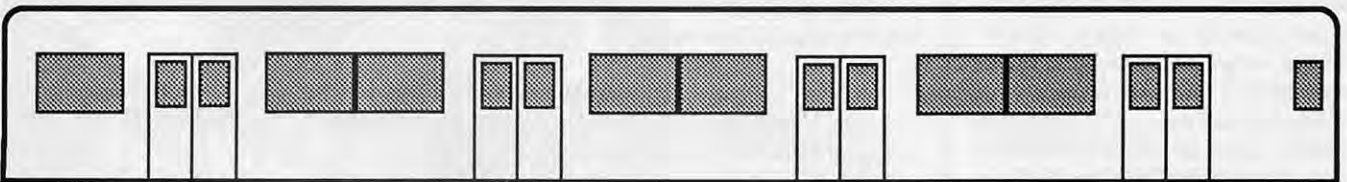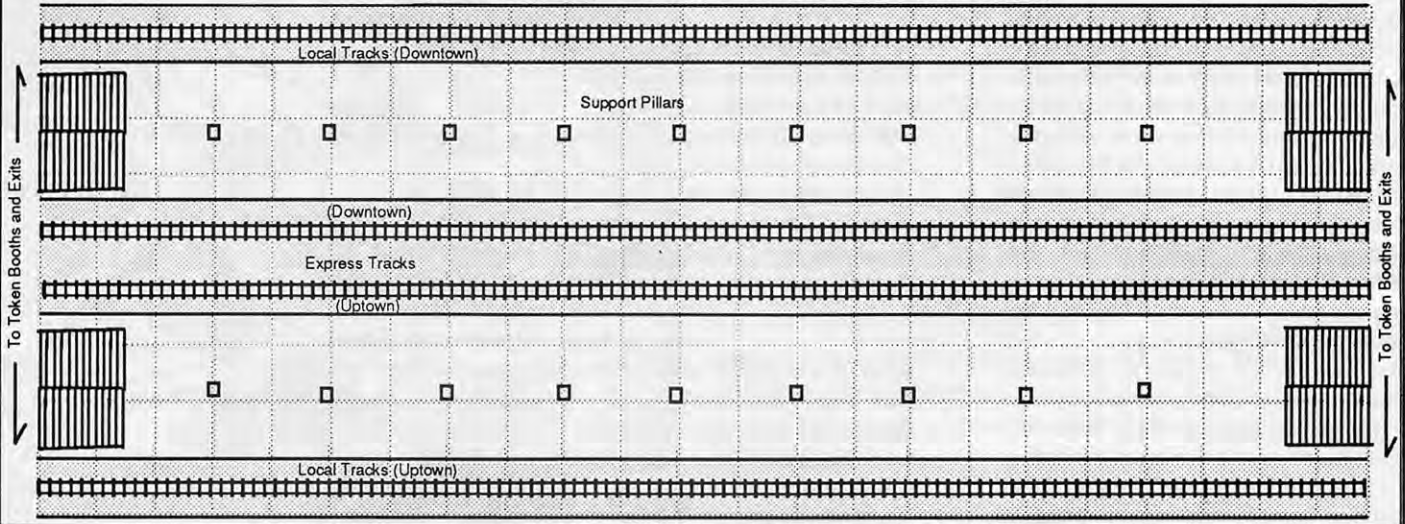
Grand Central Terminal
Times Square (transfer to C Train)

Subway Station Local Stop

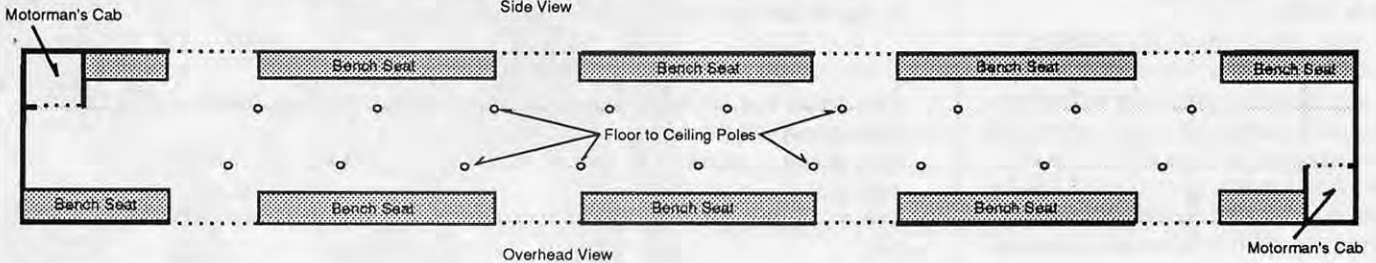(Note: Illustration depicts one half of total length; other side is mirror image.)

Stairway To Street

Token Booth

Exit Gates

Turnstyles

Benches

Local Tracks (Downtown)

Express Tracks (Downtown)

1 meter high wall

Express Tracks (Uptown)

Local Tracks (Uptown)

Turnstyles

Exit Gates

The system, prior to Post-Earthquake Reconstruction, had both express and locals on the same line. This station was one that express trains passed without stopping.)

Stairway To Street

Token Booth

Subway Station Express Stop

(Note: Illustration depicts one half of total length; other side is mirror image.)

Local Tracks (Downtown)

Support Pillars

(Downtown)

Express Tracks

(Uptown)

To Token Booths and Exits

To Token Booths and Exits

Local Tracks (Uptown)

Motorman's Cab

Side View

Bench Seat

Bench Seat

Bench Seat

Bench Seat

Floor to Ceiling Poles

Bench Seat

Bench Seat

Bench Seat

Bench Seat

Overhead View

Motorman's Cab

Typical New York Subway Car

1 yard

The James Gang Rides Again

It's a typical day on the subways. That is to say, it's noisy, it's hot, and the troll sitting next to you smells like something that came out of the garbage dumps on Staten Island. You and your chummers boarded the C Train at Times Square to head down to Cortlandt Street to meet a certain Mr. Johnson near Fuchi City.

The doors slide shut, and the train heads out of the 14th Street station. You're nodding, despite the noise and the pile of flesh next to you, when the train suddenly lurches to a halt. You think you heard the sound of automatic weapons. You're thrown into the troll, who growls something nasty to you.

After a few minutes, the doors slide open, and three orks climb on, dressed, if you can believe it, like cowboy desperados, complete with 10-gallon hats and bandannas over their faces. Two are armed with Ares Predators, and the largest one has a Ruger Super Warhawk. He growls in a ridiculous-sounding approximation of a western drawl, "My name is Jesse James, and dis is a stickup. We ain't particular what ya got. We'll take it all." He throws a bag on the floor and says, "Fill it, and no one gets hurt."

You glance at your chummers and notice that they've all subtly shifted their positions, and you know that they're as ready to draw their weapons as you are to draw yours. Just remember, chummer, there are about 20 other folks in the car, and there are three more orks outside the train.

The subway tunnel is 16 feet wide, leaving three feet of clearance on either side of the car, and a three foot clearance above the car's roof. The visibility conditions are normal inside the subway car, with minimal light in the tunnel. The James Gang plans to destroy a segment of track with plastic explosives as they withdraw down the tunnel to prevent the train from following them. They will then escape from the tunnel via an emergency exit 400 meters south of the ambush site. The MTA will respond by sending five transit policemen, who will arrive at the ambushed train 3D6 minutes after the orks stop it. One officer is a sergeant and is armed with a HK227 with three spare clips. The other four are standard Transit Police.

For the PCs to win, Jesse James must be killed or captured, and the loot must be recovered.

White Knight

You really would have preferred to take the Hudson River maglev train uptown, but considering how you're dressed, the subway seemed more sensible. Besides, it was a much shorter walk to the subway station.

You catch the A Train at Canal Street. It's not crowded, so you're able to cop a squat. There are about 20 people on the train, all nondescript, although the elven woman across from you is cute and fairly well dressed. A datajack gleams at her right temple. You wonder what she's doing on a subway. Across her lap is a corp-standard briefcase, and she definitely looks out of place.

As the doors slide open at 42nd Street, people get off and people get on. Two catch your attention. They both have shaggy hair dyed green. One is tall and gangly, and the other is short and powerfully built. Despite the relative gloom of the subways, they both

wear sunglasses. Their leather jackets are covered with studs, and each has a shamrock tattooed on his left cheek. Just what you need to make your day, a couple of McChillers.

As the doors slide shut and the train lurches out of the station, one of them spots the elven woman and nudges the other. She looks up, and the fright on her face is obvious. The short one sits down next to her and leans close to her, while the tall one stands in front of her, blocking the only avenue of escape.

Suddenly, a knife is in the short one's hand. He grabs her hair and puts the tip of the knife to her jugular vein and whispers something in her ear. The tall one giggles and reaches for the briefcase.

Okay, chummer, it's obvious that the other passengers are as scared as the woman. It's also obvious that there's never a cop around when you need one. So, it's up to you.

You win by preventing the McChillers

Jesse James

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
	9	4	6	1	4	3	6	—	4

Dice Pools:
Combat: 5

Skills:
Armed Combat: 4
Etiquette (Street): 3
Firearms: 5
Stealth: 2
Unarmed Combat: 3

Gear:
Ruger Super Warhawk (30 rounds regular ammo in waistbelt)
Sword carried as a knife
Initiative: 4 + 1D6

James Gang Orks

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
	7	4	6	1	3	2	6	—	3

Dice Pools:
Combat: 4
Skills:
Armed combat: 4
Demolition: 3
Etiquette (Street): 3
Firearms: 5

Stealth: 2
Unarmed Combat: 6

Gear:
(2 in car): Ares Predator (50 rounds regular ammo)
(3 outside train): AK-97 (100 rounds regular ammo)
(All): Sword carried as a knife
2 concussion smoke grenades
Armored vest (4/2)
One outside ork has 0.5 pounds of plastic explosives and detonator
Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Passengers

Use Pedestrian (see the *Contacts* supplement to FASA's *Shadowrun GM Screen*, page 25)
11 Human
4 Elves
2 Dwarfs
2 Orks
1 Troll
Arm any three humans, 2 elves and 1 ork with a hold-out pistol
Arm the troll with a Remington Roomsweeper (one extra magazine, regular ammo) and Firearms: 3
Arm any three humans, 2 elves, 1 dwarf and 1 ork (other than those armed with pistols) with knives, and Unarmed Combat: 4

from killing the woman or taking her briefcase. In order to do so, you must kill or disable them before the train reaches its next stop at Cathedral Parkway in 18 minutes. The visibility conditions are normal inside the subway car, with minimal light in the tunnel.

McChillers

Use the Gang Member archetype (*Shadowrun* 2nd ed., page 57) for the two McChillers. They are both armed with knives. The short one is armed with a Colt American L36 pistol (one spare clip, regular ammo), and the other has a sawed-off Defiance T-250.

Passengers

Use Pedestrian (*Contacts*, page 25)
15 humans
3 orks
2 dwarfs

Elven woman

Use Corporate Secretary (*Shadowrun* 2nd ed., page 205)

Let Me Entertain You

The subway hardly seems like the place to try to get discovered. Besides, it's not like anyone was going to be dropping any heavy-duty credsticks in their pockets for the privilege of listening to them perform. But there they were, on the B Train, playing and singing for all they were worth.

They didn't look like typical rocker wannabees. When was the last time you saw rockers performing in Japanese kabuki make-up and kimonos? But the guy played a pretty mean guitar, and the babe had a great set of vocal chords. She even looked to be fairly cut under the whiteface. Fact is, they were pretty good. You and your chummers were starting to enjoy the show.

That's when the trouble started. At 34th Street, a mean-looking troll got on. Not that all trolls aren't mean-looking, but there was something particularly menacing about this one. When the train and the music both started, he made a men noise, gestured obscenely at the rockers and got up to change cars. When he reached the end door, he discovered that they weren't built with trolls in mind. Besides, this one was big as even as trolls go.

Realizing that he was stuck on this car, at least until the next station, he started yelling at the rockers to shut up. At first they ignored him, but he kept getting louder and nastier. Finally he whipped out a knife that looked like a scimitar. In this guy's hand it almost seemed like a pocket-knife. With a roar, he charged toward the rockers.

Okay, hero, it's show time. You did say you liked their music.

You win by disabling or killing the troll before he can kill either of the rockers. The visibility conditions are normal inside the subway car, with minimal light in the tunnel.

Come Into My Parlor

You wonder, for the millionth time in the last 10 minutes, "What the frag am I doing here?" Yesterday it sounded like such a good idea. Well, maybe not a good idea, but at least one that made some sense.

Was it only a week ago that the news hit that a dragon had appeared in the subways? No one could explain where it came from, but it was indisputable that there was a dragon in the tunnels at the West 4th Street Station. Through access tunnels, it was able to move between the station and tracks of both the A and B trains, so two lines were affected. Something else was clear. Any train that tried to move past the dragon was greeted with a blast of dragonfire hot enough to melt the cars.

The MTA dispatched a squad of its best policemen armed with armor piercing weaponry, along with two Senior Civil Servant Mages. The one survivor, who stumbled into the 14th Street B Train station with serious burns over 60% of his body, was raving incoherently. Despite the best efforts of medicine and magic, he died without imparting any useful information.

The MTA next turned to the private security firms. None of them were willing to risk their men in the subways, especially against a dragon. As before, the UCAS Army refused to assist.

In desperation, the MTA put out a call for shadowrunners willing to take the job on a contract basis for 500,000¥. The response was better than the MTA expected, and it selected three teams. The first two went in but never came back.

So, here you and your chummers are, inching down the tunnels of the B Train south of the 14th Street station. The other teams went down the A Train's tracks because the line turns shortly before the West 4th Street station, providing a slight degree of cover. Like that helped. Maybe they forgot that a dragon can sense astrally. But maybe the dragon expects an attack from the A Train direction. Maybe you'll have some slight surprise on your side. Maybe mundane pigs will fly.

About 500 meters north of the station, you encounter the remains of a

---

Troll

	B	Q	S	C	I	Q	E	M	R
	8	4	7	1	2	1	6	—	2

Dice Pools:
Combat: 4

Gear:
Lined jacket
Sword (Reach 2)
Ares Predator (in shoulder holster under jacket, regular ammo

Skills:
Armed Combat: 5
Etiquette (Street): 3
Firearms: 5
Unarmed Combat: 6
Initiative: 4 = 1D6

Rockers

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
Man	5	4	5	5	3	5	5.8	—	4
Woman	45	4	6	4	6	5.8	-	4	

Skills:
Unarmed combat: 4
Armed combat: 5
Etiquette (Street): 5
Firearms: 2
Initiative: 4 + 1D6
Cyberware:
Datajack

Gear:
(Him) Guitar
Knife
Beretta Model 101T (one spare clip, regular ammo)
(Her) Electroharmonica
Throwing knife
Tase

Passengers

Any number can be selected. Come on, chummer, it's a troll. Who's going to want to help you?

burned out B Train. There's not a lot to see. The cars are mostly melted slag, and there's a faint smell of burned meat. From the south you can hear a low rumble, and it is becoming noticeably warmer. Well, chummers, time to put up or shut up.

The subway tunnels are 18 feet wide. The team may assault the station from one or more directions. There are destroyed trains on both the north- and south-bound tracks. The visibility conditions are minimal light in the tunnel and partial light with light smoke in the station. (Use the Express Stop map) The dragon prefers the B Train station and will be found there on the express tracks. On a 2D6 roll of 2 or 12, the dragon will be sleeping; otherwise, it will be awake. If the dragon is sleeping, it awakens on a Perception check with a target number of 3. A check is made each time one of the runners moves, either mundanely or astrally.

The team wins by killing the dragon even if all team members are killed in the process. In that case, the 500,000¥ will be paid to their heirs, and they will go down as heroes of New York City. There's a comforting thought.

Ghouls Ain't Cool

You and your chummers would really rather not have been on your way to The Pit, but that's where the job was. The easiest and cheapest way to get there, weapons and all, was the B Train down to Grand Street.

Considering the time, the train was crowded. You and your chummers didn't even get seats.

The train was just coming around the curve following the Broadway-Lafayette Street station when the lights dimmed—and the screaming started. It was coming from both ends of the car. You looked toward the end of the car, and you froze when you saw them. Ghouls had somehow gotten aboard. You figure it must have happened when the train slowed for the curve and the lights dimmed.

You know your job is waiting for you, but ghouls are ghouls. And after all, you are well-armed.

The visibility conditions are normal inside the car and the subway car, with minimal light in the tunnel. You win by killing all the ghouls before they kill an equal number of passengers. Regardless of how many ghouls you kill, you lose if you kill any passengers or the ghouls kill any shadowrunner.

Dragon

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R	Attacks
14(6)	7×3	35	3	4	7	8	8	6	11D, +2 Reach

Skills:
Conjuring: 7
Etiquette (Corporate): 4
Magical Theory: 7
Sorcery: 8
Dice Pools:
Combat: 11
Magic: 10
Spells:
Combat:
Hellblast: 7
Manaball: 9
Mana Bolt: 8
Power Bolt: 7
Sleep: 7
Detection:
Clairvoyance: 7
Detect Enemies: 6
Detect Life: 7
Health:
Detox Deadly Toxin: 6
Heal Severe Wounds: 7

Initiative: 6 + 2D6
Powers:
Low-light eyes
Noxious Breath (8s)
Wide Band Hearing
Thermal Sense
Hardened Armor
Flame Projection

Illusion:
Confusion: 5
Invisibility: 7
Stink: 8
Manipulation:
Armor: 6
Poltergeist: 6
Levitate Item: 7
Control Thoughts: 7
Mana Barrier: 7

Shadowrunners

The team must have at least one or, preferably, two magic users. The MTA has made its arsenal available to the team. In addition to their own weapons and armor, the following items may be carried: AK-98 (with grenade launcher) assault rifles, Ingram Valiant light machineguns, generic MMG (all levels of ammunition are available for all weapons), multi launcher (high explosive and antivehicle rockets and missiles are available), all grenades, Plastic Compound XII with radio detonators and timers, partial and full armor suits, armored helmet with radios, ILow-light goggles, thermographic goggles.

Ghouls

Use the Ghoul archetype (*Shadowrun* 2nd ed., page 233).

There should be two ghouls for each shadowrunner present on the train.

Half the ghouls will enter the subway car at each end.

Passengers

Use Pedestrian (*Contacts*, page 25). There should be 10 to 15 passengers for each shadowrunner present on the train.

The passengers present should be 60% human, 20% ork, 15% dwarf and 5% elf.

Randomly arm any five passengers with hold-out pistols, three others with light pistols and 10 others with knives. Ω

Pandora's Box

A Star Wars adventure by Peter Rausch   Art by Tim Holtrop

A burned-out bulk freighter with some large holes in its hull lazily floats across the transparesteel viewport of the character's ship. The old hulk tripped the proximity indicators and brought the characters out of hyperspace. The punctures in the hull are through the bridge and engineering sections. It is difficult to tell if they were accidental or otherwise and how long the ship has been out here. The craft appears to be a relic of the Clone Wars. This type of craft was primarily used by the losing side for their logistical support. Other than the holes, the ship appears to be in fair condition. If the characters decide to scan the ship be-fore boarding it, they will discover that there is an active energy source on the ship. This is a backup system that is powered by an energy converter. The system was installed to prevent the cargo from spoiling or becoming ac-tive—it is also being tapped by the droids on-board for power. Some of the con-tainers in the cargo hold were badly damaged during the collisions, and sev-eral have broken open. One of those containers held a highly experimental virus that was being developed for bio/psychological warfare in the Clone Wars. The generator is being "fed" by the mech droids that are still operating on the ship.

Guard Droids: There are two active and 10 dormant guard droids on the ship. One guard droid stands by the main access to the cargo bay, and the other patrols the ship. They are in con-stant contact with each other via inter-nal com links. The guard by the cargo bay door will not leave an assigned two-meter-square area in front of the door. Thus, any attempts to lead it away from the door into a trap will not work. But the droid is also a sitting duck. When an intruder is detected, the dormant guard droids are awakened one every 30 min-utes, due to the limited amount of power available to revive the droids.

Mech Droids: The mech droids are feeding debris and ruined parts into a battered power converter, the source of the energy reading. They are also trying to rebuild the ship so they can continue

their mission. The problem is that each droid is conducting repairs on only a few systems, and no one is coordinating their repair efforts. Therefore, while one is repairing a system, another is stealing parts from it to repair the systems it is working on. Some comic relief may come by two droids racing down the hall. One is pursuing the other because it has stolen a part from the other's systems. They come screaming around the corner and stop as soon as they see the characters. They will pause for a moment, then turn around and run screaming back down the hall they came from. The droids will try to steal some of the characters' equipment so they can use it to fix whatever they are working on or to feed to the generator.

FEAR ITSELF

Waiting in the holds is a little surprise for the characters. The broken bio-hazard container has been leaking for over 100 years. The virus that it contained is now spread all over the ship. It is in two forms—airborne and in small collections of slime. The airborne version takes a while to become effective, but once it takes hold, it is harder to get rid of. The slime takes effect in about 3D8 minutes after contact. But it is not effective. Since it is a relatively simple virus, most anti-viral compounds will counteract it. Normal bio-scrubbers in a controlled environment like a ship's can clear the air of the airborne version in about four hours. The filtration system on this ship was over-loaded about 75 years ago. The slime can be cleaned up with standard sterilizing cleaners. The virus will also die when exposed to vacuum.

To resist the effects of the virus, characters must make some Strength rolls. For one hour in the atmosphere of the ship, Easy; for two hours in the ship, Difficult; for four hours in the ship, Very Difficult. When the characters come in contact with the slime, they must make a Strength roll then to see if they will be affected. The first dose of slime is a medium roll; each subsequent contact, including each hour of atmospheric exposure, increases the difficulty to resist by one level. Please note that most characters won't think to don protective clothing before entering a ship that has what the sensors will read as a normal atmosphere, as the virus is not concentrated enough to register on most sensors.

After a character comes under the influence of the virus, the body's natural defense systems will eventually overcome it, but it will take time. The first roll can be made one hour after the charac-

ter suffers from the effects. The level of difficulty is reduced one level every four hours, starting with Very Difficult. Any additional doses incurred after the virus takes effect will increase the level of difficulty to overcome it by one.

Effects: The virus attacks the victim's brain, causing hallucinations generated from the more morbid regions of the victim's mind. The illusions are very dangerous because the characters are essentially hypnotized and will fully believe any fantastic creature from their imagination, or past, that they are seeing. Any damage they suffer in combat from the creature will actually cause damage, mainly in the form of blisters, cuts and bruises. But the fight is not hopeless. Deep in the character's subconscious are the weapons to fight the mythical monsters. Squirt guns, whipped cream pies, odd gestures and other nonsense that children use to ward off or dispel the monsters of their imagination will work. If the characters are having too much trouble with the creatures, have one of them remember that as a child they could get rid of the monster by pulling a wet blanket over their heads and say "Taconite, Derillium and Denonite" while hopping on one foot. Feel free to suggest something very outlandish and request that the player act out the scene.

IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH

Aside from the virus, the characters have some very odd mech droids following them and some very stubborn guard droids blocking their path. The characters will of course want to see what is in the hold, thus meeting at least one of the guard droids. If they have not destroyed the other on patrol, it will show up three rounds into combat with the other guard at the cargo bay doors, plus any revived guard droids. Once they get into the cargo hold, they will discover the bio-hazard container and the cause of their strange visions. The side of one of the undamaged containers will give the appropriate warnings of the contents and treatment for the effects. It can be treated as a basic flu-type virus.

THE END?

The characters should be compelled to destroy the ship, or at least the cargo. It would be too dangerous to let any of the material on the ship to fall into Imperial or other less than scrupulous hands. If the characters have an armed ship, they can easily destroy it from a distance with the ship's weapons.

The characters may want to salvage

the ship or some of the remaining cargo and equipment. To do this, they will need to decontaminate the ship. The fastest way to do this is to override the air locks and depressurize the entire ship. This will kill the virus and enable the characters to move freely about the ship in pressure suits, hopefully clear of the virus, watching for air pockets with slime in them. If the mech droids are still around, they will be going about their "normal" theft and repairs, and any remaining guard droids will be looking for intruders to pop.

If you are feeling rather mean toward your players, you may want to have some of the virus make its way through the air lock and into their ship. This will affect anyone left behind, and possibly alone—not to mention if it got out on the next planet or space station that they visit.

For the successful analysis of the situation and the subsequent destruction of the ship or hazardous cargo, the characters should get six points. If they fail to discover the cause of the hallucinations and leave the ship intact, they should not get any points. If they find a way to decontaminate the ship and get the bridge and engineering sections replaced (estimated cost of over Cr150,000) let them have the ship and five character points.

SECURITY DROID

Height: 2m
Move: 10

Dex: 3D	Per: 1D
Blaster: 6D	Search 4D
Dodge: 6D	Str: 3D
Run: 4D	Brawling: 6D
Kno: 1D	Tec: 1D
Mec: 1D	

Equipment: Internal blaster, chest mounted (5D damage). Hands are equipped with electrodes that deliver a shock to a grappled opponent (3D stun). Armor gives an additional 2D to damage resistance.

MAINTENANCE DROID

Height: 1m
Move: 5

Dex: 1D	Per: 2D
Run: 2D	Search: 3D
Kno: 1D	Sneak: 3D
Mec: 1D	Str: 1D
Tec: 4D	

Starship repair: 6D

Equipment: Six legs which can increase height to two meters, but move is decreased to 1. Two heavy gripper arms, lifting at 3D. Three fine manipulators for more delicate work. Arc welder (5m range and 2D to 4D damage). Small fire extinguisher. Ω

GENE-Splices

By Marc Janssen

Art by Jason Waltrip

The large fans still droned in my ears as I stalked down the corridor. They pushed air past me and into the crevasses of my polyalloy armor. Computer-enhanced hearing compensated by decreasing sensitivity. This was supposed to be an easy job. This was supposed to be in and out and no one the wiser. I had already almost died outside with a guard who was a little too alert. They were expecting me.

Suddenly, pieces of the floor, wall and ceiling were being chipped away in a deadly hail of bullets. I could feel them hitting my armor, raising welts; for a second it sounded like hail.

That was the reason for the fan—cyberwolves. They must have picked up my sent, and I couldn't hear them coming.

Three with automatics rushed at me. I could see their eyes—red with blood lust. Fingers held closed on their triggers. Calves and thighs strained in forceful acceleration, shoulders straight and strong, mouths open and shining, sharpened canine teeth. They half yelled and half howled in horrible blood-stained berzerker delight.

The sound of gunfire was deafening inside the hall. My thumb slipped down and clicked the safety off. I planted the shotgun on my hip and started filling the hall full of lead and bodies. Rhythmically ejecting the spent shells from the chamber and squeezing, not bothering to aim, I knew the steel shards would tear skin and break bones on a gene-splice as well as it would any other race.

Put simply, a gene-splice is the genetic bonding of human and animal DNA. The finished product is usually a human with enhanced animal characteristics.

The process is fairly expensive but simple. A DNA combination is obtained and patented, usually by a large corporation, who then put the wheels of mass production into motion. A test tube egg is fertilized with prepared DNA. The fertilized egg is cloned as many times as is safe, usually between 100 and 500 times. Over-cloning produces mutations, and under-cloning does not maximize investments. Early in development, when the gene-splice is still only a handful of cells, certain DNA strands are subjected to random radiation to affect appearance, voice, hair, etc. for differentiation once full grown. The legion of zygotes thus created is moved to vats and hardwired into mainframes for computer-directed learning. The technology, very similar to brain taping, teaches the gene-splice everything it needs to know to begin life: language, social and job skills, basic memories and the like. The rate of growth is increased, like a clone's, to reach maturity in six to eight months. Once mature, the splice is most likely already sold, so it is immediately able to take a job and place in society. Growing gene-splices in large numbers makes sense as the products operate better with others they feel a kinship with; they feel less alienated then single growth gene-splices, and the outcome is greater productivity. The similarities between large numbers of gene-splices also make marketing easier as customers can buy them as if they were buying off the rack. Because of mass production, these units are substantially cheaper than single growth gene-splices. As a whole they range from $100,000 to $800,000. Purchasers come to the gene-splicing plant with a list of criteria the splice must match. If, for instance, there is a need for heavy infantry, the customer knows exactly what he is getting when he first puts his money down.

The laws governing gene-splices change from region to region. They are treated from property to citizens to everything between. Because most gene-splices are built for military uses, purchasers must keep in firm control or their purchases could rebel to force rulers to bestow citizenship on them. Most often, at the time of purchase, the gene-splice enter into an indentured status for a set period of years at very little pay. Then, at the end of the service, the splice is free, a kind of retirement.

Gene-splices, like clones, are sterile. In addition, all gene-splices have the disadvantage of short life span, roughly half that of normal humans. Many gene-splices, because of their body shapes, have some difficulty with human body armor and may need special alterations to fit in. Also, many need armor to be altered for necessity of coolness, as the amount of hair they have may cause more fatigue due to overheating in the armor.

Gene-splices may be fitted with cyberware. In some cases, with added expense, cyberware can be genetically built in to their bodies. Some of these options include gyrobalance, ultrasonic hearing, etc. Add 10% to the base cost of the gene-splice for the first biological cyberware addition, and double the percentage for every addition after that.

As player characters, gene-splices could become a very powerful force because of all their advantages at a relatively low cost. The GM should offset this by bringing the short life span disadvantage into play. One option is making the age of the gene-splice near the end of its useful career; after all, this is when most gene-splices are free anyway.

As nonplayer characters, the options are much broader. In their prime, gene-splices are used as bodyguards by many important and rich individuals. Companies with large amounts of cash may use them to guard special or top-secret facilities. Governments may have units of gene-splices in their armies.
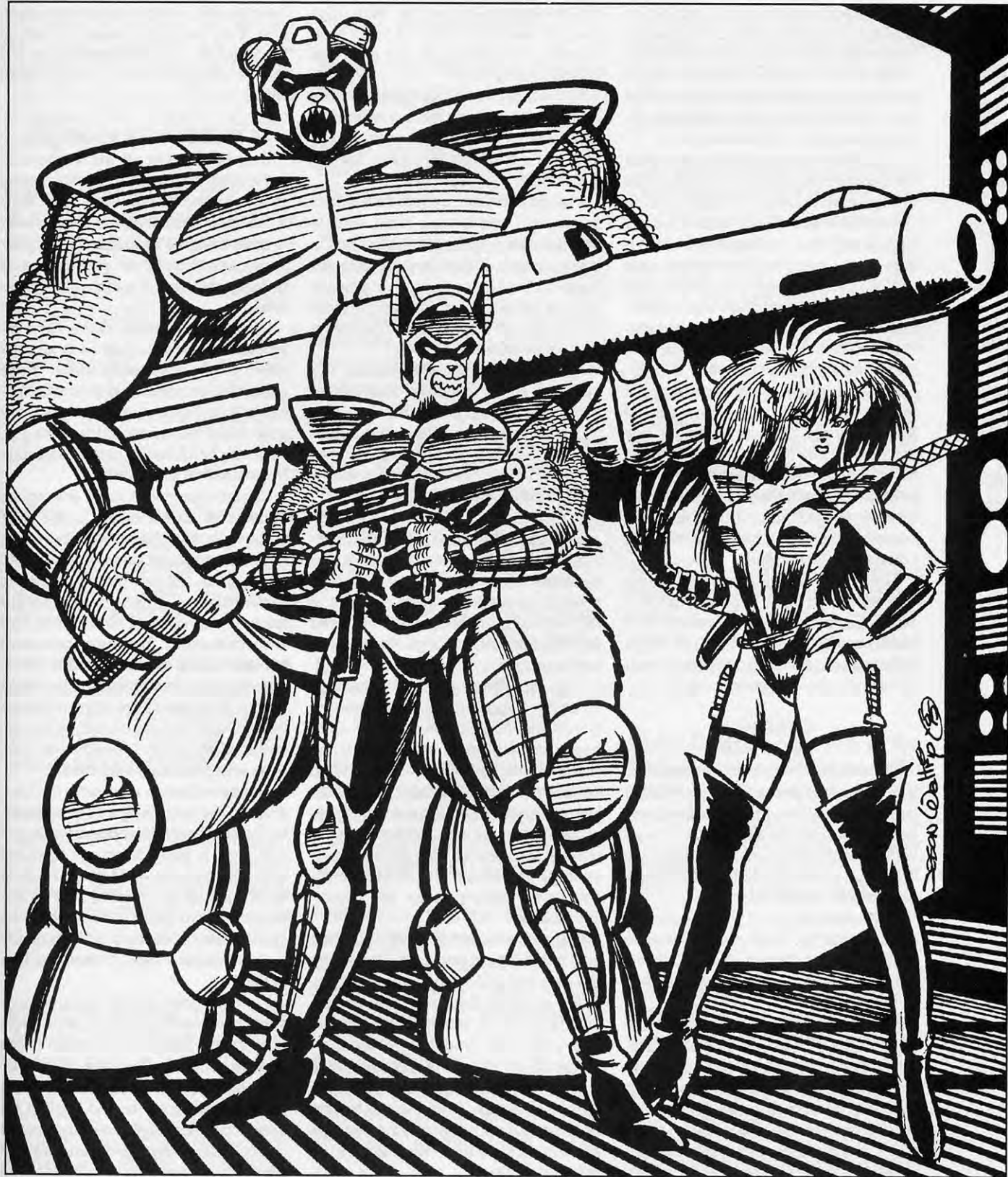
Gene-splice rebellion, though uncommon, is not unheard of. Under the right circumstances, gene-splices will try to throw off the yolk of a particularly cruel master. Because of their military training and equipment, quelling these uprisings have a high price in both dollars and men.

CYBERWOLF (COST 20)

This is the first, and best selling, basic

combat model, made from a combination of human and European wolf DNA. Cyberwolves are stronger and more durable then normal humans. They have the instincts and disposition of a predator, making them extremely deadly in any kind of combat situation.

Cyberwolves are the closest in appearance to humans. Their body dimensions are established along human norms. In the

middle of their face they have a small muzzle with long canine teeth. Their ears are positioned near the top of the head and are able to move independently like a dog in close to a 90 degree arc to the outside of the head. Because of their ears and muzzle, cyberwolves require a special helmet if rigid armor is to be worn. They are covered to a greater or lesser extent with a layer of short black, gray or silver hair.

Cyberwolves have +1 added to Strength and Dexterity. Their canine origins also give them acute Smell and Taste at +5, as well as the Natural Alertness and Bloodthirsty advantage and disadvantage. In addition, cyberwolves get +1 to Tracking skill.

Cyberwolves are suitable for a wide variety of applications, from bodyguards to regular and special military units. In battle, cyberwolves will not throw away their lives because they are merchandise—they consider themselves very willful. Cyberwolves are not foolish enough not to retreat when one is called, but once victory is assured, their bloodthirsty nature drives them wild as they try to massacre every enemy.

Even though cyberwolves are bought and sold, they still have a great deal of self-worth and pride (needed for any warrior), and do not take kindly to being treated like slaves. Because of their fearsome aspect, it is rare for them to be treated as such, and if they are, it is usually a short time before rebellion is planned and executed.

Their pack mentality make them work well with each other in military units. If left to their own, they will form a kind of pack society, with many of the larger cyberwolves taking the part of the leader roles and others following orders.

CYBERCAT (COST 30)

Constructed mostly in response to the cyberwolf, the cybercat is weaker but faster than humans and cyberwolves. Human DNA was treated with a combination of both domestic and larger prairie cats for the most deadly combination available.

The cybercat has −1 to Strength and +3 to Dexterity. Their natural balance and agility give them a +2 to all athletic and hand-to-hand weapon skills and +1 to basic speed.

Like cyberwolves, cybercats are designed for a wide variety of applications, including bodyguards and pleasure units, and in the military, they are most valuable as scouts or snipers. Some employers have been accused of using them as assassins. Cybercats are particularly deadly at close range, where their natural agility gives them the upper hand.

In appearance, cybercats are six to 10 inches shorter than the human average, with a corresponding lighter weight. Their entire bodies are covered in hair, which can be one color or of just about any commonly found feline design. Their heads are basically human, with a hardly noticeable muzzle, flat cat nose, and top-positioned swiveling ears. Cybercats' eyes are more a cat's than human's, including a cat-like pupil and just about any color.

Cybercats tend to not like large bodies of water or enjoy getting wet. They can have a tremendous cruel streak and may take delight in torture. Sadism is a popular disadvantage.

If left on their own, cybercats will form prides with one or two male leaders giving orders and the rest following. If a large number of female cybercats are present, the males will do practically nothing, while the females perform most of the rigorous work, like food gathering and preparation.

A lesser-used modification of the cybercat is the cyberjag (the mix of human and jaguar DNA). It is the same as a basic cybercat, with a +3 to Jumping skill (23 feet for a running broad jump at DX13). Their coloring is exclusively black. Cost is 35 points.

CYBERBEAR (COST 40)

Another less popular option is the cyberbear, the result of genetic mingling of human and grizzly DNA. These high-strength gene-splices are used primarily for carrying large, heavy damage weapons.

The cyberbear gets +2 added to Strength. Fatigue for physical exertion is half the normal level. Adjust extra heavy encumbrance from 30 to 50 times that of normal humans. Their thick skins have two points of damage resistance. Like cyberwolves, their canine heritage gives them acute smell and taste but at only +2. Cyberbears also get the disadvantage of giantism with all of its implications for wearing armor and operating vehicles.

In appearance, cyberbears have short legs and a long bulky torso. Their arms are long and end in big hands. They are totally covered in a thick layer of hair, usually brown or black. If unventilated heavy armor is used, fatigue is generated at three times the normal human levels. They have large ears set at the top of their heads. Their muzzles tend to be large, but not quite full size, perhaps sticking out six or seven inches from the rest of their face.

Cyberbears prefer a solitary lifestyle. If left to their own devices, they will strike out by themselves, and they rarely, if ever, are seen in groups of more than two or three.

Not particularly alert, cyberbears are not the first choice as bodyguards. Instead, cyberbears are most often used for carrying and operating heavy weapons. Few races can lift weapons that need tripods, let alone use them without one. They have been used as manual labor before, but most employers find them a little too expensive for this kind of work.

CYBERBEAVER (COST 20)

Even less common than the cyberbear is the cyberbeaver, the genetic crossing of human and beaver DNA. Less likely to be used in combat, the cyberbeaver is quite at home as support for regular troops, particularly when it comes to building anything or underwater operations.

Cyberbeavers have all the same attributes as humans. Add +4 to all engineering and swimming skills. While swimming and taking any other physical actions (fighting, etc.) fatigue is figured at half that of normal humans (i.e., roll every four turns for underwater combat instead of every two).

Cyberbeavers look least like regular humans of all the cyber races. Their stubby legs give them a −1 move on the land, but does not affect basic speed. Their small flat tail greatly facilitates underwater movement. Because of this tail they can rarely, if ever, fit into rigid lower torso armor. They have thick brown or black hair all over their bodies, which are very thick in comparison to human norms. Their heads are large, with more beaver-like facial features than human, including large round cheekbones, black eyes and oversized front teeth.

The cyberbeaver work ethic is unparalleled. The term "eager beaver" is certainly applicable to most members of this race. If given adequate food and supplies, beavers have been known to work nonstop for 10 to 12 hours. Construction projects undertaken by cyberbeaver crews are of high quality and usually take 75% of the normal time to finish.

If left with nothing to do, cyberbeavers soon become fidgety and must begin playing with things to keep their hands moving. Offices who make them sit for long periods have found themselves running low on paper and high on not very good origami. If chained or locked in a cell with nothing to do, after several weeks, madness sets in (roll against IQ for each week of inactivity, cumulatively −1 for each week over two).

If left on their own, groups of cyberbeavers set to work in a more or less democratic community to build and maintain whatever manner of dwelling suits them best, sometimes regular human houses, sometimes a more common linked unit similar in theory to a beaver lodge. Ω

Eclipse '95, May 26-28, Holiday Inn Expo Center,m Columbia, MO. For more information, contact Cheshire Cat Games and Hobbies, 27 N. 10th St., Columbia, MO 65201.

Gamescaucus II '95, May 26-29 at the Oakland Airport Hilton in Oakland, CA. For more information, contact TriGaming Associates, PO Box 27634, Concord, CA 94527-0634.

Mobi-Con '95, June 9-11 at the Holiday Inn Downtown in Mobile, AL. For more information, contact Mobi-Con '95, PO Box 161257, Mobile, AL 36616.

D-Day, June 22-25 at Game Towne in Carlsbad, CA. For more information, contact D-Day, Game Towne, 2933 Roosevelt, Carlsbad, CA 92008.

Archon 19, June 23-25 at the Gateway Center in Collinsville, IL. For more information, contact Archon 19, PO Box 483, Chesterfield, MO 63006-0483.

Westercon 48, June 30-July 3, 1995, at Red Lion/Jantzen Beach and Columbia River hotels, Portland, OR. For more information, contact Westercon 48, Linda Pilcher, 819 S. E. 16th, Portland, OR 97214.

Archon 19, July 7-9, 1995, in St. Louis, MO. For more information, contact Archon 18, PO Box 50125, Clayton, MO 63105.

Origins '95, July 13-16 in Philadelphia. For more information, contact Origins '95, PO Box 3100, Kent, OH 44240.

Dragoncon/NASFiC '95, July 13-16, 1995, at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers and Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, Ga. For more information, contact NASFiC '95, PO Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696.

Magic: The Gathering Tournament, July 13-16 at the Callaway Gardens Resort in Pine Moungain, GA. For more information, contact NAPG, PO Box 6585, Athens, GA 30604.

Dark Con II, July 28-30 at the Ramada Inn, I-35 and Lindsey exit in Norman, OK. For more information, contact Jonathan Keepers, Dark Con II chairman, 57 Landers Court, El Reno, OK 73076.

TolCon XIII, August 5-6 at the Scott Park campus of the University of Toledo. For more information, contact TolCon XIII, c/o Mind Games, 2115 N. Reynolds, Toledo, OH 43615.

Gamefest XVI, Aug. 9-13 in historic Old Towne in San Diego, CA. For more information, contact Gamefest XVI, 3954 Harney St., San Diego, CA 92110.

GenCon Game Fair, Aug. 10-13 in Milwaukee, WI. For more information, contact GenCon Game Fair, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Intersections/53rd Worldcon, Aug. 24-28 in Glasgow, Scotland. Contact Worldcon '95, c/o Theresa Renner, Box 15430, Washington, D.C. 20003-0430.

Dragonflight '95, Aug. 25-27 at Bellamine Hall, Seattle University. Contact Dragonflight '95, PO Box 417, Seattle, WA 98111-0417.

RailCon '95, Aug. 25-27 at the Sheraton Hotel West in Lakewood, CO. Contact the Train Gamers Association, PO Box 461072, Aurora, CO 80046-1072.

Fox Con '95-Emperor's Birthday Con 15, Sept. 1-3 at the Arlington Park Hilton in Arlington Heights, IL. For more information, contact Randy Giesey Jr., 1775 Ashford Circle, Wheeling, IL 60090-5100.

CATCON I, Sept. 2-3 on the FH Ulm campus, Prittwitzstr. 36 (Catcafe) in Ulm, Germany. For more information, send a SASE to Imp's Ship, Zinglerstr. 51, 89077 Ulm, Germany.

Fields of Honor IV, Sept. 22-24 at the Howard Johnsons Hotel, Merle Hay Road and I-80, Des Moines, IA. For more information, contact Fields of Honor IV, Jeff Gullion, advertising chairman, 6501 Douglas Ave., Urbandale, IA 50322.

Nuke Con V, Sept. 29-30 at the Midlands Reception Center, Omaha, NE. For more information, contact S. Murphy, 13115 Josephine Cir, Omaha, NE 68138.

Quad Con '95, Oct. 6-8 at the Palmer Alumni Auditorium, 1000 Brady St., Davenport, IA. For more information, please send two stamps on a long SASE to Quad Con '95, The Game Emporium, 3213-23rd Ave., Moline, IL 61265.

1996
DunDraCon XIX, Feb. 16-19, 1996 at the San Ramon Marriott Hotel In San Ramon, CA. For more information, contact DunDraCon, 1145 Talbot St., Albany, CA 94706.

Convention announcements cannot be included unless received a minimum of four months in advance of the event. Challenge is not responsible for errors in convention announcements. Write to Challenge Conventions, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.
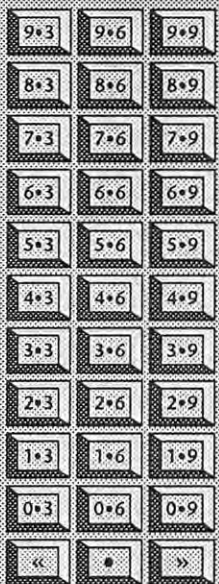
TL14 Intrepid Grav Tank

This tank was the pre-eminent symbol of irresistible armored firepower before the Collapse and was the standard heavy grav tank of the pre-Collapse armed forces of the Last Imperium. It was heavily used, and its numbers heavily depleted, during the Final War. Wrecked Intrepid hulls are common sights throughout the Wilds, but salvageable Intrepids are somewhat rarer.

The Intrepid fully deserves every bit of its unparalleled reputation; it is a fearsome weapon indeed, able to penetrate the equivalent of 1.29 meters of steel in early models (more in later models) out to a range of five kilometers, but armored to withstand that same firepower across its frontal arc. Although the tank is expensive, it is more than a match for most starships (provided they get within its range). Curiously, Reformation Coalition researchers report that its Last Imperium name, Trepida, is associated with scurrying about with alarm or confusion, trembling and timidity, as in "trepidation." While this name would clearly describe those who come into contact with this powerful tank, the name seems inapt to this surely fearless vehicle, so those which have found their way into Coalition service have been renamed "Intrepid."

Most of the tank's price is attributable to its fusion gun, valued at almost 11.5 million credits of the total tank's price of MCr15.7 in the case of the Trepida II. These high-performance weapons are difficult to maintain at the Coalition's tech level, with the result that many of the Intrepids in RC service have been re-armed with other weapons, such as hyper-velocity CPR guns. Although their offensive power is somewhat reduced, there is little in the Wilds that can stand up to even an under-armed Intrepid. Because it was produced throughout the Last Imperium as the standard "high end" main battle tank, the so-called Trepida was produced in a variety of models over the years, as detailed below.

Trepida I/Intrepid/74

This is the first production version of the tank and arguably the best balanced design. Although its gun is less powerful than that in the later Trepida IIs, the 74-megajoule rapid-fire fusion gun has a higher rate of fire than the later 125-Mj weapon, and is supplied with more ammunition, allowing the tank to stand longer in combat, almost seven minutes at its maximum cyclical rate of fire. Furthermore, the coaxial VRF gauss gun allows the tank to economically engage a wider variety of targets than can the Trepida II, armed only with its huge fusion gun. In Reformation Coalition service, the Trepida I is known as the Intrepid/74.

Trepida IIA/Intrepid/125-1

The Trepida IIA is an attempt to fit the maximum possible firepower into the Trepida tank, making it more useful in antitank and direct support roles. The 125-Mj gun was the largest gun that could practically be fitted to the tank without sacrificing too much in rate of fire or ammunition capacity.

Even so, the tank has lost some ROF compared to the earlier model and has had its ammunition supply reduced to only 3.5 minutes at the maximum cyclic rate. More importantly, it has given up its secondary armament, so the tank has no weapon with which to engage low-priority targets other than its expensive and often over-powerful fusion cartridges. The Trepida II is thus very poorly equipped for peace-keeping operations.

The low ammunition capacity of these early Trepida IIs caused the creation of the Trepida IIB type, which traded fuel endurance for additional ammunition. Early model IIs then became known as IIAs, but remained in production on a number of worlds.

In Reformation Coalition service, the Trepida IIA is known as the Intrepid/125-1.

Trepida IIB/Intrepid/125-2

The Trepida IIB is a revision of the upgunned model II design, gaining greater ammunition capacity (over four minutes at the maximum cyclic rate) at the expense of four hours of fuel endurance. This is thought by most users to be a better balanced design than the IIA, as there is no need to have the additional fuel range on a vehicle which will run out of ammunition more rapidly, especially a tank which is ill-suited for peace-keeping patrol duty. The Trepida IIB was therefore produced in much greater numbers than the IIA, but the number of surviving examples of each type remaining in the New Era depend more on local production and attrition patterns.

In Reformation Coalition service, the Trepida IIB is known as the Intrepid/125-2.

Intrepid/120

The Intrepid/120 is a modification made to recovered Trepida Is for service with Reformation Coalition forces. Due to the difficulty of maintaining the TL14 RF fusion gun, most Trepida Is (called Intrepid/74s in Coalition service) are having their main armament removed and replaced with weapons manufactured on Oriflamme, namely the 120mm "Rapira" hypervelocity gun and the 15mm RC (E) machinegun.

This weapon system is actually a hybrid TL9/TL12 system, having TL9 weapons and stabilization fitted with TL12 fire control systems for maximum performance. The primary armament is the fearsome 120mm "Rapira" electrothermal-chemical gun, 75 calibers in length and generating 26.7375 Mj at the muzzle. With advanced KEAP ammunition, the Rapira actually turns in better penetrative performance than the fusion guns of the Trepidas, but at a shorter range and at greater cost per round.

Fitting these weapons allows the tanks to be supported with locally produced parts and ammunition and increases the ammunition capacity of the vehicle (over

WEAPON CHARACTERISTICS
74-Mj 15-Chamber Rapid Fire Fusion Gun

TL	Weapon	ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Pen Val	C-B	Short Range
14	74-Mj RF Fusion Gun	SA5	258	1-1-2-10	258-258-129-26	67-25	1290m

Secondary Weapon

Round		ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Pen Val	Magazine	Short Range
TL10 4×20mm/60 Dart		50	6	1-1-3-5	6-6-2-1	60,000C	300
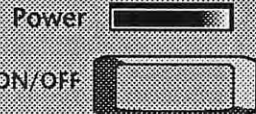
14 minutes at maximum cyclic rate), a quite useful feature.

The Trepida I is required as the basis for the conversion as the Rapira requires a 0.96255 MW input, and only the Trepida Is have power plants with this excess capacity, which was required for their VRF gauss guns. Trepida IIs without this additional 1.35 MW generating capacity would therefore have to give up speed and maneuverability to fire the ETC gun, a trade-off which is not deemed useful. Intrepid/74s are thus unusual in RC service, as most of these are converted to model 120s as time permits.

The characteristics listed below show the original relic equipment fitted to the tank (except for the weapons), not all of which is present on any given Intrepid, many electronic systems having been replaced with TL10-12 replacements as necessary.

Trepida I/Intrepid/74

Tech Level: 14
Price: MCr9.996736
Size: 140 cubic meters = 10 displacement tons (VS)
Mass: 210.97 tonnes empty, 237.21 loaded
Power: TL14 7.98 MW fusion power plant supplying 1 MW to high-efficiency contra-grav lifters, with HEPlaR thruster generating 86.62 tonnes of thrust (0.0298 MW excess power)
Maint: 40
Controls: Holographic linked, TL10+ flight avionics, TL14 terrain following avionics, 3×TL14 Model Flt flight computers, TL10+ IGS navigation system
Commo: TL14 3000-km radio, 2×TL14 3-km masers
Sensors: 30-km passive EMS sensor, 3000-km passive EMS sensor, 3-km active EMS sensor, 2×WSV goggles
ECM: Electromagnetic masking package, 4 decoy dispensers each with space for 20 of any combination of anti-laser, anti-active sensor, or anti-active sensor decoys
Life Support: Heat, light, extended life support, artificial gravity/G-compensators, and one air lock
Cargo: 155 kg of crew equipment (0.62 m^3)
Crew: 2 (Driver, Commander/Gunner)
Passengers: None
Fire Control: EMS rangefinder and TL14 point defense ballistic computer (ignore 5 Diff Mods, and multiply Diff Mods of ballistic target by 0.5, dropping fractions), EMS rangefinder may function as 3km short range laser/EMS designator
Armament: TL14 rapid-fire 74-Mj fusion gun, coaxial VRF gauss gun
Stabilization: Advanced (fire at any speed) for both weapons
Ammo: 410 rounds of 74-Mj 18.5×55cm PFC cartridges (Cr592 each, MCr0.243 for full load of 410) and 60,000 rounds of 4mm gauss ammunition (Cr600 for full load of 60,000 rounds dart)
Speed: 713 kph max, 535 kph cruising, 178 kph safe NOE
Travel Move: 2140/1068
Combat Move: 99 (high mode absolute speed)/25 (NOE safe speed) in 10-meter grid squares
Signature: +1 Diff Mods vs. HRT and Radar, None vs. other methods
Diff Mods vs. Fire: −1 Diff Mod stationary, +5 at maximum speed (high mode combat move), +4 at cruising speed (high mode travel move), +3 at safe NOE speed, +4 at 2× and 3×safe NOE speed
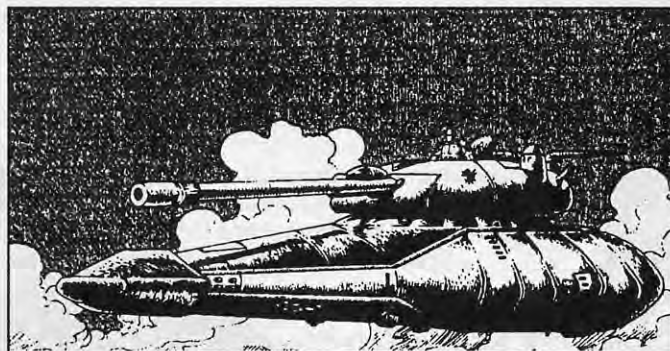
Maximum Acceleration: 0.365 G
Fuel Capacity: 19,922.6 liters reaction mass plus 66.5 liters for fusion reactor
Fuel Consumption/Endurance: 1082.75 liters/hour (endurance of 18.4 hours), plus reactor fuel is sufficient for one month constant power

Combat Statistics

Config: Turret	TF: 258	HF: 258
Susp: Grav	TS: 129	HS: 129
	TR: 129	HR: 129
	Deck: 129	Belly: 129

Trepida IIA/Intrepid/125-1

Tech Level: 14
Price: MCr15.628721
Size: 140 cubic meters = 10 displacement tons (VS)
Mass: 216.12 tonnes empty, 235.11 loaded
Power: TL14 6.63 MW fusion power plant supplying 1 MW to high-efficiency contra-grav lifters, with HEPlaR thruster generating 86.62 tonnes of thrust (0.0298 MW excess power)
Maint: 39
Controls: Holographic linked, TL10+ flight avionics, TL14 terrain following avionics, 3×TL14 Model Flt flight computers, TL10+ IGS navigation system
Commo: TL14 3000-km radio, 2×TL14 3-km masers
Sensors: 30-km passive EMS sensor, 3000-km passive EMS sensor, 3-km active EMS sensor, 2×WSV goggles
ECM: Electromagnetic masking package, 4 decoy dispensers each with space for 20 of any combination of anti-laser, anti-active sensor, or anti-active sensor decoys.
Life Support: Heat, light, extended life support, artificial gravity/G-compensators, and one air lock
Cargo: 238 kg of crew equipment (0.955 m^3)
Crew: 2 (Driver, Commander/Gunner)
Passengers: None
Fire Control: EMS rangefinder and TL14 point defense ballistic computer (ignore 5 Diff Mods, and multiply Diff Mods of ballistic target by 0.5, dropping fractions), EMS rangefinder may function as 3km short range laser/EMS designator
Armament: TL14 rapid-fire 125-Mj fusion gun
Stabilization: Advanced (fire at any speed)
Ammo: 170 rounds of 125-Mj 22×66cm PFC cartridges (Cr1000 each, MCr0.17 for full load of 170)
Speed: 712 kph max, 534 kph cruising, 178 kph safe NOE
Travel Move: 2136/1068
Combat Move: 99 (high mode absolute speed)/25 (NOE safe speed) in 10-meter grid squares
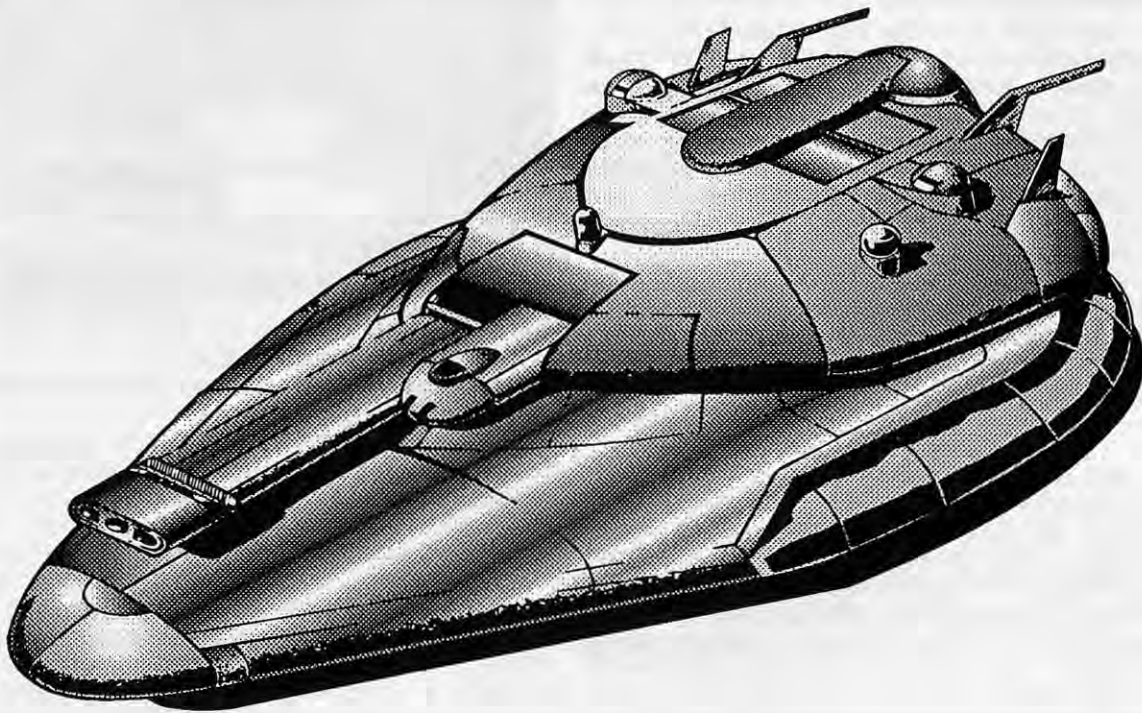
Signature: +1 Diff Mods vs. HRT and Radar, None vs. other methods

Diff Mods vs. Fire: −1 Diff Mod stationary, +5 at maximum speed (high mode combat move), +4 at cruising speed (high mode travel move), +3 at safe NOE speed, +4 at 2× and 3×safe NOE speed

Maximum Acceleration: 0.368 Gs

Fuel Capacity: 19,922.6 liters reaction mass plus 55.25 liters for fusion reactor

Fuel Consumption/Endurance: 1082.75 liters/hour (endurance of 18.4 hours), plus reactor fuel is sufficient for one month constant power

Combat Statistics

Config: Turret	TF: 258	HF: 258
Susp: Grav	TS: 129	HS: 129
	TR: 129	HR: 129
	Deck: 129	Belly: 129

Trepida IIB/Intrepid/125-2

Tech Level: 14
Price: MCr15.780371
Size: 140 cubic meters = 10 displacement tons (VS)
Mass: 216.45 tonnes empty, 238.09 loaded
Power: TL14 6.63 MW fusion power plant supplying 1

WEAPON CHARACTERISTICS
125-Mj 20-Chamber Rapid Fire Fusion Gun

TL	Weapon	ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Pen Val	C-B	Short Range
14	125-Mj RF Fusion Gun	SA4	335	1-1-2-10	335-335-168-34	112-35	1680m

"Rapira" TL9 120mm/75-Caliber Electrothermal-Chemical Hypervelocity Autocannon

Round	ROF	Conc-Burst	Dmg Val	Pen Val	Danger Space	Short Range	Ammo Price	Ammo Weight
APFSDSDU-9	SA3	—	26D6	331/321/311/291	—	780	979	45.75
APFSDSCI-10	SA3	—	26D6	491/481/471/451	—	780	1129	45.75
APFSDSSD-12	SA3	—	26D6	545/535/525/505	—	780	1279	45.75
HEAP-9	SA3	C: 19, B: 35	—	137C	—	580	529	45.75
HE-9	SA3	C: 29, B: 35	—	11C	—	580	379	45.75
Flechette-9	SA3	—	2D6/1D6*	1-Nil*	30x120	580	1579	45.75

*In primary/secondary burst area, see **TNE**, page 280

Secondary Weapon

Round	ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Pen Val	Magazine	Short Range
TL9 15mm RC (E) MG-ball	5/10	16	2-2-2-2	8-8-8-8	5000B	300
TL9 15mm RC (E) MG-DS	5/10	16	1-1-1-1	16-16-16-16	5000B	300

MW to high-efficiency contra-grav lifters, with HEPlaR thruster generating 86.62 tonnes of thrust (0.0298 MW excess power)

Maint: 40

Controls: Holographic linked, TL10+ flight avionics, TL14 terrain following avionics, 3×TL14 Model Flt flight computers, TL10+ IGS navigation system

Commo: TL14 3000-km radio, 2×TL14 3-km masers

Sensors: 30-km passive EMS sensor, 3000-km passive EMS sensor, 3-km active EMS sensor, 2×WSV goggles

ECM: Electromagnetic masking package, 4 decoy dispensers each with space for 20 of any combination of anti-laser, anti-active sensor, or anti-active sensor decoys

Life Support: Heat, light, extended life support, artificial gravity/G-compensators, and one air lock

Cargo: 95 kg of crew equipment (0.381 m^3)

Crew: 2 (Driver, Commander/Gunner)

Passengers: None

Fire Control: EMS rangefinder and TL14 point defense ballistic computer (ignore 5 Diff Mods, and multiply Diff Mods of ballistic target by 0.5, dropping fractions), EMS rangefinder may function as 3km short range laser/EMS designator

Armament: TL14 rapid-fire 125-Mj fusion gun

Stabilization: Advanced (fire at any speed)

Ammo: 200 rounds of 125-Mj 22×66cm PFC cartridges (Cr1000 each, MCr0.2 for full load of 200)

Speed: 673 kph max, 505 kph cruising, 168 kph safe NOE

Travel Move: 2020/1008

Combat Move: 94 (high mode absolute speed)/23 (NOE safe speed) in 10-meter grid squares

Signature: +1 Diff Mods vs. HRT and Radar, None vs. other methods

Diff Mods vs. Fire: −1 Diff Mod stationary, +5 at maximum speed (high mode combat move), +4 at cruising speed (high mode travel move), +2 at safe NOE speed, +3 at 2×safe NOE speed, and +4 at 3×safe NOE speed

Maximum Acceleration: 0.364 Gs

Fuel Capacity: 16,890.9 liters reaction mass plus 55.25 liters for fusion reactor

Fuel Consumption/Endurance: 1082.75 liters/hour (endurance of 15.6 hours), plus reactor fuel is sufficient for one month constant power

Combat Statistics

Config: Turret	TF: 258	HF: 258
Susp: Grav	TS: 129	HS: 129
	TR: 129	HR: 129
	Deck: 129	Belly: 129

Intrepid/120

Tech Level: 14/12/9

Price: MCr4.4030655

Size: 140 cubic meters = 10 displacement tons (VS)

Mass: 208.05 tonnes empty, 234.62 loaded

Power: TL14 7.98 MW fusion power plant supplying 1 MW to high-efficiency contra-grav lifters, with HEPlaR thruster generating 86.62 tonnes of thrust (0.41725 MW excess power)

Maint: 47 (at TL12)

Controls: Holographic linked, TL10+ flight avionics, TL14 terrain following avionics, 3×TL14 Model Flt flight computers, TL10+ IGS navigation system

Commo: TL14 3000-km radio, 2×TL14 3-km masers

Sensors: 30-km passive EMS sensor, 3000-km passive EMS sensor, 3-km active EMS sensor, 2×WSV goggles

ECM: Electromagnetic masking package, 4 decoy dispensers each with space for 20 of any combination of anti-laser, anti-active sensor, or anti-active sensor decoys

Life Support: Heat, light, extended life support, artificial gravity/G-compensators (40 m3), and one air lock

Cargo: 356 kg of crew equipment (1.424 m^3)

Crew: 2 (Driver, Commander/Gunner)

Passengers: None

Fire Control: EMS rangefinder and TL12 point defense ballistic computer (ignore 4 Diff Mods, and multiply Diff Mods of ballistic target by 0.5, dropping fractions), EMS rangefinder may function as 3km short range laser/EMS designator

Armament: TL9/12 120L75 hypervelocity smoothbore autocannon with coaxial 15mm machinegun

Stabilization: Advanced (fire at any speed)

Ammo: 520 rounds of 120mm (prices on table below) and 5000 rounds of 15mm RC(E) (Cr33,250 for 5000 rounds ball or Cr66,500 for 5000 rounds DS)

Speed: 722 kph maximum, 542 kph cruising, 180 kph safe NOE

Travel Move: 2168/1080

Combat Move: 100 (high mode absolute speed)/25 (NOE safe speed) in 10-meter grid squares

Signature: +1 Diff Mods vs. HRT and Radar, None vs. other methods

Diff Mods vs. Fire: −1 Diff Mod stationary, +5 at maximum speed (high mode combat move), +4 at cruising speed (high mode travel move), +3 at safe NOE speed, +4 at 2× and 3×safe NOE speed

Maximum Acceleration: 0.369 Gs

Fuel Capacity: 19,922.6 liters reaction mass plus 66.5 liters for fusion reactor

Fuel Consumption/Endurance: 1082.75 liters/hour (endurance of 18.4 hours), plus reactor fuel is sufficient for one month constant power

Combat Statistics

Config: Turret	TF: 258	HF: 258
Susp: Grav	TS: 129	HS: 129
	TR: 129	HR: 129
	Deck: 129	Belly: 129

Decoys

Decoys are of three types: antilaser (which affect attempts to detect a target with ladar or to designate it with a laser designator), antiactive sensor (which affect attempts to detect a target or designate it with radar or active EMS), and antipassive sensor (which affect attempts to detect a target with HRT or passive sensors, including infrared goggles and sights). Each decoy only works against its specified sensor, and increases the difficulty of a detection or designation task by 1 level vs. TL14+ systems, or by 2 levels vs. TL13− sensors. Each decoy lasts one combat turn (five seconds), and affects all appropriate sensor attempts against the owning vehicle, regardless of direction. Decoy dispensers may launch one decoy per second.

Decoys for Intrepid grav tanks cost Cr20,000 each regardless of type, or MCr1.6 for a full load of 80. Ω

A Fire Upon the Deep

Tor Books. $5.99.
Written by Vernor Vinge.
613-page paperback novel.
Published in paperback in 1993.
Review by Paul Lucas.

I make no secret that Vinge's novel, *Marooned in Realtime*, is one of my all-time favorite books. I never thought he would be able to surpass it. But, five years of work later, Vinge has done exactly that. *A Fire Upon the Deep* is science-fiction at its very best, a suspenseful, thought-provoking, and passionate tale set in a fascinating and intriguing universe.

In the novel, the galaxy is divided into Zones of Thought. The farther away from the Galactic core one goes, the more efficient electronic systems—and intelligent thought—becomes. Hugging the Core is the Unthinking Depths, where no sentience or sophisticated technology is possible. Next is the Slow Zone, which Earth currently inhabits, where intelligent thought exists but civilizations are forever trapped within the boundaries of light speed. The Beyond occupies the periphery of the galaxy, where faster-than-light travel and communication is possible. The Beyond is home to an ancient community of civilizations connected by a galaxy-wide FTL communications Net. Beyond the Galaxy is the Transcend, where super-human intelligence is possible. This region is inhabited by Transcendent Powers, artificial intelligence so far removed from the human sphere as to be incomprehensible.

A group of humans, descended from a colony of Old Earth that had stumbled into the Beyond, decides to experiment with creating a Transcendent Power. They unintentionally unleash an ancient, malignant force called the Blight that begins a reign of merciless terror as it slowly but unstoppably enslaves the races of the Beyond and murders the other Powers in the Transcend.

Opposing this Blight are an unlikely group of mortals: an otherwise nondescript human data processor who is unwillingly thrust into the central role; an amalgam hero with the shattered memories of a god; and two entrepreneurial plant-like aliens who may or may not be agents of the enemy. After barely escaping the Blight's attack on a Net relay station, the foursome race to the Tine's World, just on the edge of the Slow Zone, where two human children and a race of medieval pack intelligences unknowingly guard the one thing in the universe the Blight fears.

A novel like *A Fire Upon the Deep* offers more ideas and inspirations for game campaigns than most official game supplements three times its price. The Zones of Thought, the Transcendent Powers, and the Galaxy-spanning Net are just the tip of the iceberg. Other campaign-worthy concepts include: Relay, a vast, planet-wide corporate structure whose sole purpose is to regulate a portion of the Net; a massive translight starship battle; the Qeng Ho sub-light traders; the destruction of the Sjandra Key; the Death to the Vermin Fleet; the world of Harmonious Repose; Zone storms; godshatter; and much more.

Of special consideration are Vinge's alien races, two of which are vividly detailed—enough to allow their easy transition into a science-fiction campaign. The first race is the Tines, a dog-like pack-intelligence which can only be sentient in groups of four to six. The Skroderiders are practical and witty individuals who happen to resemble giant ferns on wheeled, electronic pots.

EVALUATION

A breath-taking universe, memorable characters and a tense, tight plot make *A Fire Upon the Deep* a book that is not to be missed. The plotting is fast-paced for all of the story's thoughtful asides and will keep the reader turning page after page in eager anticipation. The characters, even the alien ones, are three-dimensional and believable.

My complaints about the book are minor at best. The protagonists' escape from Relay seemed a bit contrived, and some of the key plot elements—such as what exactly what the Blight was and where it came from—are never addressed satisfactorily. The latter, I suppose, only leaves things open for future stories in the Fire universe, which is okay by me.

Here is my final recommendation: Go out and buy this book. Put it at the head of your reading list. Then sit back, open to the first page, and prepare to be blown away.

Zombies of the Gene Pool

Ballantine Books. $4.99.
Written by Sharyn McCrumb.
216-page paperback novel.
Published in paperback in 1993.
Review by Paul Lucas.

I've always been a fan of science fiction, but I've never been a Fan. A fan is someone who likes science fiction and sees it primarily as a hobby, something one can indulge in one's spare time. According to McCrumb, however, a Fan (plural: Fen) is someone lives science fiction; a Fan goes to conventions as often as possible, writes incessantly to fanzines and other Fen, and practically worships published writers. There is supposedly an underground culture of these hard-core followers of science fiction and all its related genres (including RPGs), complete with its own slang and traditions.

It is this close-knit society that is the focus of McCrumb's *Jay Omega* mystery novels, of which *Zombies of the Gene Pool* is the second. *Jay Omega* (actually the pen name of Jay Owens Mega) is a mild-mannered electrical engineer who also happens to be a part-time novelist. His first novel, titled *Bimbos of the Death Sun* by a sensationalist publisher, has met with lukewarm suc-

cess but has enabled him to be caught up in the bizarre world of science-fiction publishing and the odd characters that inhabit both it and its fandom.

In *Zombies of the Gene Pool*, Jay and his sidekick/girlfriend Cr. Marion Farley are invited along to the reunion of the Lanthanides, a group of hopeful young SF writers who, in the fifties, lived on a farm in Tennessee and dreamed of publishing Immortality. Now, nearly 40 years later, they are all getting together again to dig up a time capsule they buried near the farm. Some of them have achieved the fame and fortune they all dreamed of; some settled down to nondescript lives in the "mundane" world; some are no longer around, time having taken its course.

Or so everyone thought, until one of the Lanthanides who was supposed to be dead for 30 years turns up alive and threatens to expose old secrets. Murder isn't far behind his reappearance.

Now, with reporters and TV cameras descending on the unearthing of the time capsule, it's up to Jay Omega to get to the bottom of both death and resurrection mysteries.

McCrumb's focus throughout the book is her characters, which are a varied, quirky lot. The characters and their pasts are given so much attention, in fact, that the plot develops at a glacial pace. It takes until page 70 for the principals to arrive in Tennessee; the actual murder does not occur until well into the second half of the story.

Fortunately, McCrumb is very adept at drawing her characters, and their interactions are entertaining enough to keep the reader around long enough for something to happen.

All the Lanthanides are intriguing, insightful and believable. Especially likable is the protagonist, a practical scientist in the midst of dreamy and impractical science-fiction writers. I especially liked how most of his detection work was done on computer via modem, an unusual twist in books like this, where the hero often has to depend on hours of footwork and face-to-face meetings.

Less enjoyable is his significant other, Marion Farley, an uppity know-it-all English professor of the type I hated in college and high-school.

She is not an unbelievable character; she is just an annoying one who seems to steal the spotlight from her much more enjoyable boyfriend.

Another criticism I have is McCrumb's penchant for loading her novels with truckloads of superfluous characters. For instance, in the last 50 pages of the book, we are introduced to a half-dozen very detailed new characters who have no real bearing on the plot.

There is not much in the book gamers can use per se, though the actual murder plot and the gimmick of a draw down can be used as sources for inspiration. However, since the worlds of gaming and science-fiction are so closely linked, there is much in both Zombies and the first book starring Jay Omega, *Bimbos of the Death Sun*, that gamers will find interesting. The books are as much satire as they are mysteries, and many gamers will no doubt see some of their friends—or even themselves—in the characters in McCrumb's work. Reader should be warned, however, that many of the portraits of the fans, the writers, and the industry itself are often as unflattering as they are amusing.

EVALUATION

The mystery is well-though-out and provides for a shocker of an ending, one that even caught a cynical reader such as myself by surprise.

The characters are not all charmers, but they are all interesting, many of them even poignant. McCrumb's tone throughout the book is tongue-in-cheek as she skewers science-fiction creators as well as hard-core fandom.

Anyone who is interested in science-fiction or a good mystery—or both—will definitely find a good night's read in Zombies *of the Gene Pool*.

Operation: Rimfire

Despite the well-known industry axiom that adventures don't sell, most gamers expect a little adventure support for a game. For years, Mekton II has had no adventure support (the campaign suggestions in *Mekton Empires* notwithstanding.) That changes with *Operation: Rimfire.*

This supplement is not your standard "the PCs meet in a bar and go off to kill something" adventure! It is a pseudo military space opera drama right out of *animé*, complete with mysterious and ruthless opponents, political intrigue, murders, espionage and more personal problems than you can shake a stick at. *Animé* and manga fans will love it; I couldn't help but be reminded of the Zeta Zeta Gundam series.

How is this managed? For starters, player characters are provided, complete with beautiful color illustrations, psychological profiles, histories and personal problems! These are not so detailed as to curtail roleplay. They are merely enough to give the players a guide on how to roleplay their characters. True to animé form, about half the characters are female (including the commander), and there are enough types (killing machine hero, hero, leader, technician, etc.) to satisfy most player groups. In addition, the plot and subplots are flexible enough to allow player generated characters to come along too.

The PCs are all members of a special military force composed of former enemies (for the sake of tension, of course), assigned to a patrol mission in the space surrounding the planet Algol. Of course, things go wrong before they can even get to their base! I cannot give

too much of the plot away, but the PCs have to deal with the political maneuvering and sabotage before they even make it to their ship, the *Rimfire*, to go tearing off though space chasing the evil Axis leader, Lord Dremmond, in a desperate attempt to save the entire human population of the system from an ancient threat. Along the way, they have to deal with plenty of subplots, largely new and old romances of the most charmingly corny types— okay, so they are corny; they still work, right?—including romantic entanglements with the enemy! In true manga/*animé* style. Just like the first chapter of Mekto*n II* promises: Danger! Romance! Giant Robot Combat!

Don't worry, there's enough robot combat in *Operation: Rimfire* to satisfy the most jaded robot combat junkie. Over half a dozen desperate battles occur, each one sufficiently nasty to require generating a couple of PC replacements! Players will probably be disappointed that they have to use wimpy issue mecha instead of their own super accurized special designs. However, special designs would throw off the play balance, so the gamemaster should tell these whiners, "Tough." What you see is what you get. (Stats on all mechanicals, be they for the PCs or for the bad guys, are in the back.)

The format is quite interesting. Rather than staging the adventure in one major act after another, like most adventures, this adventure is staged in minor acts, short and sweet. It's like watching a TV show; each act is one eight- to 10-minute block, coming to a minor climax or cliff-hanger before each commercial break. Experience is handed out during the commercial, so to speak, after each act (or episode). Each episode contains the vital information necessary to stage it; as there is plenty of room for roleplaying and improvisation in each episode, the gamemaster is going to have to be good enough to cover player reactions from left field. There are 21 episodes leading up to grand finale of frantic robot mangling, so this campaign can last quite a while.

EVALUATION

Operation: Rimfire sets the precedent for *Mekton II* adventures with its reliance on classic *animé* subplots and plot devices, its episodic format, its gorgeous *animé*-style illustrations and its emphasis on heavy roleplaying in situations where combat and stomping around in giant robot suits just aren't applicable (the biggest problem of any game where the characters have heavy toys to play with is getting them to abandon those toys…). The only real flaw I could find in it was the need for a plot overview, so the gamemaster could find out what was going on without the need to read the entire thing through (this would also be handy for reference during the campaign without having to hunt throughout the book to confirm or deny plot complication the gamemaster thinks he might have read).

I recommend this supplement to *Mekton II* GMs, if nothing else than a pretty good example of how an *animé* campaign can be done.

Army of Darkness

Leading Edge. $30 (Can.).
Primary Design: Barry Naka-zono
Writing and Design: David McKenzie
Graphic Design: Toni Dennis
Production: Irene Kinzek
Production Assistance: Mike Alford
Boardgame with 22¥17" full-color mounted map, 12 full-color character cards, 26 full-color stand-up counters, 32 full-color equipment cards, rulebook. for 1-8 players (solitaire team play).
Review By Dan Panamaroff.

Army of Darkness is a "team solitaire" game, just like *Aliens*. The players work together toward a common goal, and although there is competition it is of a constructive kind.

Army of Darkness is a movie written and directed by Sam Raimi. It continues the *Evil Dead II* film at the point where Ash (the survivor of the last film) finds himself in medieval Europe. Ash is the "hero from the sky" who will deliver the people from the terror of the "Deadites" (Demons, ghosts, undead). Ash just wants to return to the 20th century, but as he tries, Ash finds he must help these people if going home is to be in his future. Screwing up his quest for the book, Ash releases the deadites fully and must now help King Arthur defend the *Book of the Dead* at his castle.

The *Army of Darkness* game package simulates the last episode of the *Army of Darkness* movie, in which the army of deadites is storming the castle in hope of capturing the "Necromonicon ex Mortis." The Deadites are run by the rules, while the mortal heros and normal mortal units are run by the players.

The basic game requires that the players pick four out of the seven available hero characters to play. Of course, one player could play all four, but it is more fun to play in groups. One of the characters must be Ash.

All hero characters are described by their attack value, the number of attacks they may conduct, their movement rate and their defense value. The attack and defense values are the number needed to roll at or under on 1D10. (0 is still 0 on 1D10 as it is in *Aliens*.) In all cases, one must roll at or under the attack value to wound a hero or kill a unit, and the unit may roll its defense if it has a value in order to survive the attack unscathed.

The opposition are the Deadite warriors and their four Deadite champions. Evil Ash is the leader of the Deadites and seeks the book. When he appears, he will move toward the book, killing all in his way. The players will lose if Evil Ash is able to carry the book out of the castle. The flying demon will fly toward the pit in the castle, open it and allow deadites to swarm in through the passage. The Deadite captain will destroy mortal banners that give the mortal units a defense

value when they are with it. Evil Sheila will appear beside Ash and try to kill him very enthusiastically. Normal Deadites will also be swarming over the walls, trying to kill every mortal in the area. The mortals are in a lot of trouble, but do have a few equalizers on their side.

The players may pull from a deck of cards to gain help in defending the book of the dead. The deck provides mortal units such as men at arms, and the devastating halberd squad (a group especially trained by Ash). It also provides special weapons and one-use attacks such as the explosive arrows and catapult attacks.

However, the deck also dictates when the Deadite champions appear, so chose carefully when and where you pull from the deck.

There is one last equalizer: Ash "brought" a car with him in his tumble to the past. It has been extensively modified and is now dubbed "the Deathmobile" It is hard to control, but will chop up those Deadite units in a pinch when you feel overwhelmed.

The mortals win by killing all four Deadite champions at least once at any time, and clearing the castle of all Deadite warriors in one turn. The players lose if the *Book of the Dead* is carried out of the castle, or all deadite warriors are on the board at any time. (The castle is overrun.)

EVALUATION

No game is perfect, and in this case the problems are very small compared to the overall game.

The components are visually striking. The stand-up counters and character cards sport photos from the movie. However, the cards are a little flimsier and not quite as waterproof as the previous offerings. The box is a "true" box, and the board is small but a full hard playing area rather than a big but flimsy play sheet.

The castle is portrayed as a photo of Deadite warriors in a foggy field, with a line graphic overlaid. The playing area is small, approximately 4/5 spaces, but the action is fast, and the area does not seem small enough when you are defending it.

The rule book is very straightforward, but unlike *Aliens,* it has none of the stills from the movie and no fun quotes, such as this one from Ash: "Yeah. All right, listen you primitive screwheads. See this? This...is my BOOMSTICK!" There, I got that out of my system. One question I have is what happens if Evil Ash is killed as he is moving the book? What happens to it?

The cards that are drawn from the deck all have a skull motive on the information side, as the cards are also used as playing pieces (lying flat) on the board. A few images of soldiers, fire, and chainsaws on them would have been nice, or even separate counters for these units. This is a very cosmetic problem, but does detract from e game visually.

The Champions Appear cards have full-color photos of those characters on them, so this request is not unreasonable.

Army of Darkness is a very strong offering as well as being packaged with a graphic flair, although it could have been slightly better. All in all, *Army of Darkness* is a fun game to play in groups or alone, and is worth the money. Ω

Being in the main...oh forget it. PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!

and not, regrettably,

Some completely different thing altogether, having nothing whatever to do with PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!

Shiver me timbers! Avast there! What do you do with a drunken sailor? Did someone mention prizes?

Who here remembers Jonathan Crocker, the Esteemed Canuck from "Ask Commodore Bwana" Volume 1, Number 5 in **Challenge 74**? Well, just the other day we received his **Challenge 76** feedback form with the following note affixed to it. To whit:

Has anyone won the "Dangerous Dan's Renegade Challenge Contest" yet?

Is the lady in black on the cover of TNE the same lady Strephon had a vision of in Survival Margin?

Just wondering.

Okay, first of all, it's not "Dangerous Dan," it's "Darlin' Dave." (Although I like the sound of that: "Dangerous Dan, Scourge of the Seven Seas!!" Walk the plank! Pieces of Eight! Har!) Normally this would be grounds for taking points off, but you did get the Renegade part right ("Renegade Bwana, Scourge of the Seven Seas!!" Helm's alee! Red skies at night! Hangin's too good for him! Polly wants a cracker! Har!), and I notice on your feedback form that you gave the highest possible score of 5 points each to CIN, TAD and "Ask Commodore Bwana," so I guess all is forgiven, you High-Minded, Upstanding, Scion of the Great Chilly North, you. ("Chilly North, Scourge of the Seven—ouch!")

Oh Canada, Oh Canada,
Da da da dum, dee dum dum.

It is also comforting that you have given up your theory about that being Cher on the cover of **TNE**. It's that sort of thinking that keeps so much of your former Dominion covered with ice, you know. Brrrrrr! You'd think with that perfectly *enchanting* Elizabeth Regina of yours you wouldn't have time to think about half-naked Hollywood pretenders, but I guess I'm just old-fashioned. (Hey, what's the story with that Philip guy? He's not around the palace much, is he? Prince-Consort Bwana, Scourge of the Polo Fields! I say, Har!) However, all this fuss pales to insignificance before the fact that

You got it right!!

Huzzah! Doubloons! An extra ration of rum for the men! Away the press gangs! Fifteen men on a dead man's chest! Barnacle Bill the Sailor! HAR!!!

This, as you know, entitles you to a free copy of **Deluxe TNE**. However, a man of such obviously discerning tastes as yourself may already have a copy of **Deluxe TNE**, in which case I invite you to select any other **TNE** products of an equivalent value.

And now over to Dave Nilsen for a bit of background trivia on the Lady in Black.

The identity of the Lady in Black is an example of game art inspiring game design, a delightful synergy which we do not get

to experience as often as I would like. The reason for this is simple: Art is usually commissioned after text has been written. Only rarely do we have neat art available in advance that we can then fine-tune our text to support, and the cover of TNE provided one of these rare occasions.

The LiB is the creation of John Zeleznik, who created the TNE cover painting in consultation with me. I like to give artists as much creative leeway as possible, so although I stipulated certain elements for the cover, such as the faces of one or two high-tech people, a spaceship, space scene, and military-looking person in a movie-poster-montage style, I wanted John to freely interpret the Traveller concept in a way that would best use his talents. The Lady in Black is his creation entirely (as are the large-mandibled critters and the concept of the text-displaying machinery which reappeared on Survival Margin).

All of us at GDW were suitably impressed by the cover when it arrived in late 1992, and Steve Bryant, who was our art director at the time, kept asking me, "Who's the lady in black?" although Steve may have actually used the word "chick" instead of "lady." (Steve, or Stvee as he is known to the license plate people, is now on the staff of the Freedonian Aeronautics and Space Administration, but still does free-lance work for GDW, including the upcoming Armor 21 cover.) Steve's enthusiasm can be quite infectious, and I took his insistent questions to heart when I compiled and wrote Survival Margin over my Christmas vacation. The LiB/CiB is indeed the woman Strephon refers to on pages 7 and 9. More information on this will be available in the upcoming Regency Sourcebook: Keepers of the Flame, but I will warn you that this information will be neither complete nor unambiguous. The whole point behind mysteries is to allow them to remain mysterious for a while, so please bear with us.

Incidentally, last fall Frank said that he would like to use the LiB for his newly created Empress Solee, a.k.a. Gabriella Ramstattan, the Christen Overtak (both Path of Tears/Striker II and Star Vikings are correct). Since there had still been no winner for the DDRCC at that point, and the LiB's identity had therefore not been publicly announced, I agreed that that would be a possibility, depending upon how the next few projects developed. I must confess that I was pulling for the Survival Margin angle, but didn't want to be greedy if she could have supported another project. With our decision last fall to return to the Regency sooner rather than later, Libby's prospective identity took a hard turn back toward Survival Margin, and Jonathan Crocker's response above provided the occasion to formalize the arrangement.

Welcome home, Empress. We've been waiting for you.

By Neptune, that landlubber talks a lot, doesn't he? Look at this, we're already at the bottom of the page, and I haven't gotten to heel-haul anybody yet! Arr! Hoist the mains'l! Strike the studs'l! Count the booty! Bring me my coffee! This is Commodore Bwana, Scourge of the Seven Seas, aboard the *Roxy Music*, signing off. Har!

GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP

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