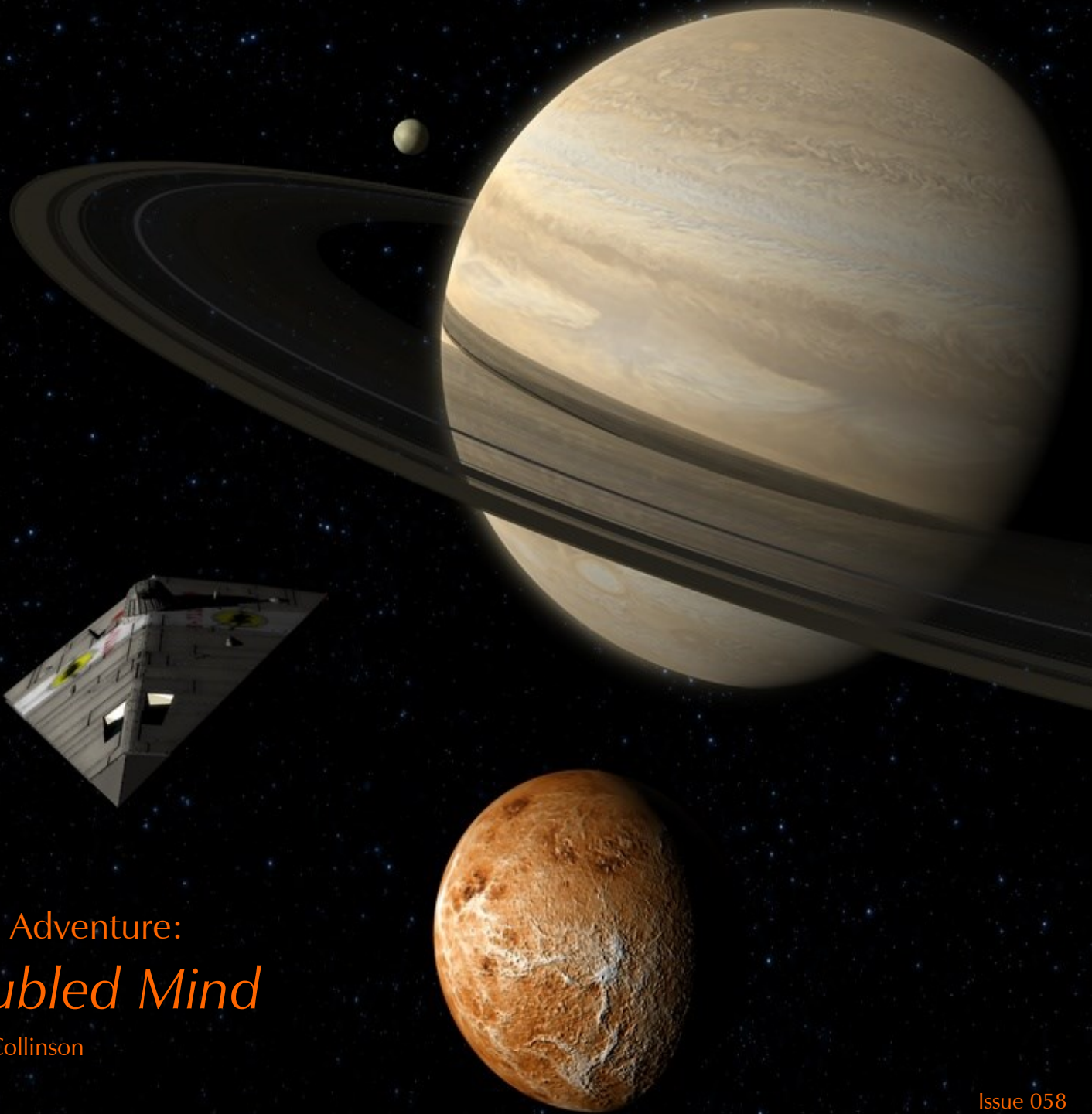




FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured Adventure:

A Troubled Mind

by Timothy Collinson

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October 2014

A Note About Production

Freelance Traveller is prepared using Microsoft Office Publisher 2010 running on a Windows 7 Ultimate x64 system. The program is reasonably easy to use, and produces good results with moderate effort; it also supports advanced typographic features such as typographic quotes and apostrophes, small caps, ligatures, swashes, and stylistic alternatives (if the advanced features are implemented in the font). Generation of the PDF files is built in to this version of Microsoft Office; no additional products are needed.

The title and heading typeface is ZapfHumanist BT, a Bitstream adaptation of Hermann Zapf's digital redesign of his 'hot lead' typeface Optima, chosen as a 'tie-back' to the title typeface of the original edition of *Traveller*. The black-and-orange of the section headings is also a tie-back to *Traveller's* origins, though we felt that the 'correct' red was too dark. The heading sizes vary from 12 to 16 points. Body text is set in Palatino Linotype, also designed by Hermann Zapf, and is set at 11 points for most body text, giving approximately the same text spacing as Times New Roman at 12 point (which was the original *Freelance Traveller* body text), but a lighter 'color'. Palatino Linotype also 'balances' better as a body text typeface to Optima as a titling typeface.

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From the Editor



I've been noticing a trend in *Freelance Traveller*. I've been getting fewer articles (and having to resort to reprinting older articles from the website), and generally from the same few authors. That's a problem, in a couple of ways: first, it makes *Freelance Traveller* look like a closed clique, with new blood not permitted to enter. That's simply not the reality. I'm willing to print good work from anyone. But the key is the word "good". Some material that is submitted is *almost* fit for publication, and where I can clean it up (e.g., grammar and spelling) without 'breaking' obvious authorial intent, I do so. Where I can't, I'll try to reach out to the author for clarification or revision. That's one place that I see problems: Often, I never get a response from the author, and, eventually, I try one last time and get a server bounce saying that the address is no longer valid. That's sad; it means that a potential author has missed a chance to be published. I admit, sometimes I have to take part of the blame; if the original article is submitted, and not responded to *at all* for months or years, I can understand the author losing interest. That's definitely a place where I have to say *mea culpa*; at the very

least, I should acknowledge receipt immediately, and give a first reading within a month and comment back to the author. I'll try to do better in the future—but I do need the new articles submitted to be able to do it.

Second, it makes it harder to maintain an approximately monthly schedule. That what I've been getting is generally inching up in length isn't necessarily a bad thing; it means that fewer articles make a same-sized issue—but it would be so much better if issue size were also creeping upward. Unfortunately, though, it's becoming a given that there will be one or more reprints in each issue, just to keep the issue size steady. That, in my opinion, is bad. It's a sign that there isn't the same level of support in the *Traveller* community for *Freelance Traveller* that there has been in the past. Which in turn makes me wonder why, and why, if it's something I'm doing—or not doing—I haven't been getting any feedback about it. Please, talk to me. Let me know how I can make *Freelance Traveller* better. Write, or draw, or review. Help me make *Freelance Traveller* into the *Traveller* magazine you want to see. I'm willing to work with you, but I can't do it alone. ☼

Supplement 7: 1001 Characters

reviewed by Megan Robertson

Supplement 7: 1001 Characters. August Hahn.

Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

hardbound, 212pp

US\$34.99/UK£24.99

This review was originally posted to <http://www.rpg-resource.org.uk> and is used with permission.

Are you good at coming up with instant NPCs out of thin air? Even if you are, this book contains a wealth of characters all ready to populate every world, every ship, any location you care to name in your universe....

The Introduction sets out the scope and purpose of the book. Each character comes with game statistics of UPP, main skills and the gear he will likely have with him when encountered... but more importantly there's a name and some background: what he looks like, the sort of things he's doing, perhaps even a goal or ambition—and a phrase that sums him up. Many of the characters are human, but other races are included—Aslan, Droyne, Hiver, K'kree, Vargr and the Zhodani—to maintain the diversity of the universe.

The first thousand characters are arranged in six chapters, to make it easy to find suitable ones for your purposes. The chapters are Corporate, Government, Military, Criminal, Independent and one with a motley collection of 'Aliens, Outcasts and Fringe' characters. Some are organised in six-person teams, designed to work as a group—naturally, if just one of them is what you need, the others do not have to be around. Whilst it is suggested that a bit of time be spent rounding them out and developing them further, any character will do as a player-character should the need arise. All have been created using the standard character generation rules, so are compatible with a party created the conventional way.

Within each chapter, the characters are further subdivided, so if you have a sudden need for an accountant, say, or an insider trader you can lay your hands on one at once. Reading through, many of

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Supplement 7:
1,001 Characters

them also spawn plot ideas, so if you need a distraction, a filler adventure, or a side quest, drop one or more of these characters in and let matters develop.

The 1001st character is a bit different. Given a whole page to himself, he's a Duke with a long backstory and twisted psyche, ripe for use in the convoluted intrigues that *Traveller* nobility indulge themselves in, as evidenced by the way that he's clawed his way up from second son of a mere Baron to his current title. He could prove a dangerous enemy, or an even more dangerous employer or patron!

Generally well-presented, there's a slightly annoying quirk in layout that has nearly all of the text underlined, and I've spotted the odd 'over-reliance on spelling checker' error—a rogue selling 'vacations' instead of 'vaccinations' to mild diseases he infiltrates into air handling systems on space stations, for example.

Overall, this is a useful resource for any Referee, particularly if your players get inquisitive about everyone that they meet... potentially less embarrassing than using your students' names! 🎲

Nostrum

by Michael Brown

The travelers are called upon to help a business owner root out the traitor within his company.

“Nostrum” is a Classic *Traveller* adventure for a group of 3-5 characters with varied backgrounds. It is assumed that the group has been working together for some time prior to the adventure, but the adventure can be easily modified to serve as a way to assemble them. The setting can be any world with a Trade Classification of Industrial (In). No particular skills or equipment are necessary for the scenario, although it is lighter on combat than most *Traveller* adventures and focuses more on roleplaying and character interaction. Thus, the heroes will be called upon to primarily use their observational and information-gathering skills.

Assistance

While traveling through the planetary capital, the PCs come upon an angry mob clustered around an overturned vehicle with smoke billowing from it. As they survey the scene, a bruised and battered woman runs toward them, screaming hysterically for help and claiming her husband is being killed. Barely visible in the midst of the crowd a man is being beaten. The police are not yet in sight; the man's fate rests solely with the team. Fast action on the heroes' part will save the victim.

To rescue the man from the violent mob:

DIFFICULT; Brawling, DEX; 15 seconds.

REFEREE: Failure means the crowd inflicts 1D-3 hits on the heroes per combat round, and the unfortunate man takes 1/2 of the hits the crowd inflicts on the team.

Firing warning shots may help disperse the crowd; any team member firing a weapon should throw for the damage as usual; the result, divided by 5, acts as a positive DM to throws to see if the crowd backs off.

When the adventurers try to escape, the mob will pursue them, but for no more than a few blocks, and might be persuaded not to do so at all.

To escape the pursuing mob:

ROUTINE; DEX, INT; 30 seconds

REFEREE: Failure indicates that the crowd has caught them; use the procedure above to determine the resulting injury.

Warning shots again might make the mob think twice, but if the group tried that tactic already, the new reaction DM is 1/10 of the damage thrown.

The grateful couple is Eldin van Morrow and his wife Ilse. The group will have heard of him on a throw of INT or less; Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals was instrumental in helping stop a plague on a nearby world years ago. Recently, the company was again called upon. A previously nonlethal virus suddenly mutated into a deadly strain. The planetary health authorities feared the outbreak would become a pandemic. Quarantine protocols were hastily instituted but all it takes to defeat such things is one infected person getting on a global transport...

Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals contracted to produce effective antiviral drugs, which it did in record time. The treatment was put on a production fast track with the first doses given a few weeks ago. A few days later, the first deaths occurred from complications blamed on the medicine. Since then, more people died and a halt was called to the program; meanwhile the virus began its march through the population. World opinion has been savage in its blame of Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals in general and van Morrow personally. Despite the danger, however, van Morrow insisted on leading the production facility on this world himself.

Van Morrow is adamant that his drugs had nothing to do with the deaths. His quality control program is excellent, and his manufacturing plants are generally guarded against intrusion. Nevertheless, he fears the drug manufacturing process has been sabotaged. Worse, there seems to be a coordinated effort to further damage the company's reputation.

He has need of a group of investigators not affiliated with the company to find out what's going on. He offers the team Cr25,000 to investigate and expose the culprit, double that if their efforts lead to an

Active Measures

(Continued from page 3)

arrest. He pledges to notify his company—what’s left of it—to place any resources they require at the adventurers’ disposal. He and Ilse plan to disappear for a while for their continued safety, so the group will be largely on their own.

Proprietary

The main Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals facility is just outside of the second-largest city on the planet. It is composed of a manicured administrative campus adjacent to a sprawling industrial plant.

The adventurers don’t have to infiltrate the company overtly. They can use such means as posing as new hires or slip in with buyers or delivery people. The risk is that if caught they’ll be treated as any other intruder; van Morrow’s orders assumed that the band would be working out in the open. And his decision to disappear makes it harder for the heroes to contact him for help or advice. Although he leaves them a way to do so (his personal commcode), it means that the team will only be able to contact him sporadically.

To contact van Morrow:

DIFFICULT; INT; 2.5 hours

Van Morrow can help them with advice or answers to questions. He cannot do more—including taking direct action—without revealing his hiding place, but any information he gives them grants DM+2 on any subsequent actions they take based on the subject matter.

If the team investigates openly, their contact is Liam Wolczak, a hard-charging, humorless man who is the regional Vice-President in charge of facilities on-world. Wolczak confirms van Morrow’s orders regarding access, with one caveat: only Wolczak personally lets them into sensitive areas such as the R&D labs, the company computer networks and the hardcopy files in the main office.

The team’s investigative efforts should drive this part of the adventure. Each day, they have an opportunity to gather clues that allow them to assemble a picture of what happened. The evidence won’t simp-

ly fall into their pockets, however; some of the clues can be found through active investigation; others through simply keeping their eyes and ears open.

Once data is obtained, it is added to the party’s information pool. The referee may also override the task procedure and simply dole out the clues, perhaps as a reward for good roleplaying. The items are grouped below based on the areas where they are most likely to be learned—with the areas themselves listed in alphabetical order—although most clues can be gleaned from several sources. The items in *italics* have further repercussions for the PCs; see Placebo below:

City/Media

- Wolczak is caught on a municipal surveillance camera meeting with a rough-looking individual in a Startown diner.
- Records from Vortai Delivery Service, a popular delivery company, show that a package arrived at Wolczak’s home soon after his meeting with the individual at the diner.
- News reports are abuzz with accounts of the progress of the virus and the establishment of quarantine zones to slow its spread.
- *Media video footage shows a brief image of Wu among a group of patients being checked into a QZ. The date is several days after he called in sick.*
- Amateur video shows the attack on the van Morrows where the PCs first met them.

Company Lab

- A small sample of the virus the researchers were using to create the vaccine went missing, but turned up after a brief search. None of the contents seemed to be missing, but the scientists can confirm that it only takes several drops of the medium to make someone sick.

Computer

The company computer has excellent software defenses. If the heroes try to access the computer without Wolczak, they must bypass the protections:

To access the computer files without the proper access codes:

(Continued from page 4)

DIFFICULT; Computer, EDU; 1 minute

REFEREE: Multiple attempts may be made, with a cumulative DM of -2 after the first. Any throw of a natural 2 activates a security lockout and encrypts the files. The task level then becomes IMPOSSIBLE.

- The computer history reveals a previous search through employee records using Wolczak's access code. Several candidates were flagged for further review. Wu's name is among them.
- Examination of the flagged employee results shows all of the flagged candidates had past scrapes with the law.
- Programs are set up to monitor news reports of pharmaceutical company stock prices and the ongoing public anger at VMP
- Several messages between Wolczak and Husaam Hamed, a SuSAG representative, discussing purchase options and stock prices. In the messages, Wolczak is passing himself off as a higher level employee than he actually is.

Manufacturing Plant

- The outer covering from the package brought in by Wolczak is in the trash. The material contains traces of the industrial chemical.
- Based on security camera footage and time sheet records, Wu could have introduced the chemical into the drug mixture at four specific points in the manufacturing process: Blending, Granulation, Compacting, or Coating. In the weeks leading up to the adulteration of the drugs, he manned all but the Coating station at one time or another. His employee records show he was not fully trained for the Compacting station, so he rarely manned it. His usual assignments were either the Blending or the Granulation stations; analysis shows the poison was introduced into the latter station. If the group pins down the time it occurred, they find that Wu was on duty at that station at that time.

Personnel Office

- Wu Zhiqiang, one of the factory floor workers, called in sick the day after (as it turns out) meeting with Wolczak in a corridor near his station.

Security Office

The security officers only allow access to the surveillance footage on van Morrow's direct order. The team may of course try to break in; such attempts are detected on a throw of 7+; a DM of -3 applies after business hours. If they are caught breaking in, they will be detained and turned over to the local police.

The footage shows the following:

- Wolczak coming in with a package the day before the drugs were tampered with, (although this isn't unusual. As a company representative, he is often sent samples of drugs for evaluation and possible addition to Van Morrow products.)
- Wolczak in the company lab, speaking with a technician. He slips something into his pocket when the technician isn't looking.
- Wolczak and Wu talking animatedly in a corridor outside the plant the day before Wu called in sick (see above). Wolczak can be seen touching Wu several times.

Wolczak's Office

The most damning information is in here. Unless they are adept at manipulating him into divulging information, the heroes must first wait until Wolczak leaves his office (he is a workaholic who only leaves his office for the day if he fails an hourly throw against his END), get past the electronic door lock, and then conduct a search, bypassing any other locks and uncovering hiding places in the process:

To break into Wolczak's office:

DIFFICULT; Computer, Electronics; 1 minute

To thoroughly search Wolczak's office:

ROUTINE; INT; 5 minutes

REFEREE: the group will be caught by Security on a throw of 3-, made once an hour.

The search of Wolczak's office finds the following items (one per adventurer per search):

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- *Comm call logs showing a code to an apartment in Startown.*
- Copies of a dossier prepared by a private detective agency, Vatica Investigations, a well-known agency based in the capital, concerning Wu. The report was annotated by Wolczak. Apparently Wu was once charged with several offenses on a world on the other side of the subsector.
- *A bill from Vatica, and a report from Vatica operative Piera Duumiir.*
- *A name, Fen Hullakav, scrawled on a pad. She is a noted professor of memetics at the local university.*
- A scrap of paper with a string of code on it, corresponding to a hidden bank account. The account holds Cr500,000, deposited within the past few days. The heroes can try to trace the origin of the money with the following task:

To trace the source of the money:

IMPOSSIBLE; Computer, Electronics, SOC: 1 hr.

REFEREE: a failed throw alerts the authorities, who begin a trace of their own. If successful, officers will arrive at Wolczak's office in 9D min. If the heroes succeed, they find the money came from a local SuSAG account.

The referee is free to create other clues and locations for the adventurers.

Quack Remedy

Liam Wolczak is used to having his way. When Eldin van Morrow chose another executive as a junior partner over him—something Wolczak had set his sights on almost from his first day on the job—he became quietly unhinged and secretly vowed revenge. If he couldn't be junior partner at Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals after all his hard work, then there would be no Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals!

The first thing Wolczak did was to damage the firm's credibility and reputation by tampering with the quality of the drugs during the viral pandemic. Calling in a favor from Dugesh Nakhi, a street contact; he received a shipment of a toxic chemical—a

common industrial compound that decays quickly in the body, leaving little trace of its presence. To get the compound into the manufacturing process while maintaining an alibi, he needed a patsy. Searching company records, he found several candidates with sketchy pasts and employed Vatica Investigations to evaluate them further, using the story of considering them for a promotion as cover. Through Vatica's efforts, he soon found what he was looking for: Wu Zhiqiang, one of the factory floor workers, was once charged with several offenses on another world, but skipped the planet before trial. Wolczak threatened to expose Wu unless he followed instructions and doctored the drugs with the chemical. Wu did as he was told. Afterward, Wolczak had to dispose of Wu, so he exposed him to a sample of the virus he stole from the company lab, forcing Wu into quarantine.

Wolczak then executed the second phase of his plan. Contacting a scientist skilled in memetics, he sparked a smear campaign against Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals. The campaign succeeded in turning the public violently against the company. With civic ire stoked, Wolczak could begin the final phase of his revenge: softening the company up for a hostile takeover. As the corporation's stock price fell, he quietly contacted SuSAG representatives and, citing Van Morrow's problems, proposed that SuSAG buy the company out, unsurprisingly keeping Wolczak on as executive. Wolczak has almost won; the van Morrows are in hiding, their company is on the ropes, and talks with SuSAG are getting serious.

Placebo

Several results from the clues above require the referee to run follow-up encounters:

Comm call logs: The comm call logs in Wolczak's office lead the group to the Startown apartment of Dugesh Nakhi, a notorious street operator who owed Wolczak a favor. When the heroes arrive, Nakhi mistakes them for the police and bolts. If he can't escape the group, he calls for help from some of his street friends:

For Nakhi to get his friends to help:

DIFFICULT; Streetwise

Active Measures

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REFEREE: 1D+1 friends armed with improvised weapons will help cover Nakhi's getaway. If they delay the team for 3 combat rounds, Nakhi escapes.

If they corner Nakhi, he produces a concealed body pistol and tries to fight. If questioned, he tells the group that Wolczak called him to get a quantity of the chemical. He sent it in a package through Vortai Parcel Delivery to allay suspicion. For his trouble, Wolczak paid Nakhi Cr500.

If Nakhi gets away, the team will have to find him again. This will be harder, as he now knows people are looking for him, and he'll be in hiding:

To find Nakhi after he escapes:

FORMIDABLE; Streetwise, INT; 2.5 hours

REFEREE: A throw of a natural "2" means that Nakhi is tipped off that the adventurers are coming for him, and he'll go even further underground. The task then becomes IMPOSSIBLE.

Piera Duumiir's report: Vatiga Investigations operative Piera Duumiir examined the candidates flagged in Wolczak's personnel records search. Her report is quite thorough and even includes the candidates' likely reactions to extortion attempts. If the group interrogates Duumiir, she cites client confidentiality unless confronted by a copy of the report. Even then, she'll only speak off the record. Wolczak assured her and Vatiga that he wanted the candidates vetted because he was thinking of promoting them. If the heroes present evidence that Wolczak lied, Vatiga will launch its own investigation, intending to sue Wolczak for breach of contract.

Fen Hullakav's name on a pad: Hullakav is a Professor of Memetics at the university. Her work and its social applications is very advanced. If interviewed, she discreetly tells the group that Wolczak hired her to craft an effective publicity campaign for Van Morrow Pharmaceuticals. She watched in hor-

ror as her work was turned to malicious purposes, but Wolczak was wily enough to have her sign a non-disclosure agreement, tying her hands.

Media footage of Wu at a quarantine zone: if the team needed Wu to shed light on his part in the plot, they will now be able to find him if they can determine which zone he's in:

To find Wu's quarantine zone:

DIFFICULT; SOC, Liaison; 1 hour

The adventurers must then gain admittance from the medical professionals running the zone, on a good Reaction throw. If they succeed, they are given protective clothing and allowed in. Wu is dying, but he can give the heroes the salient points of Quack Remedy above.

Counteragent

Armed with proof of his machinations, the heroes can confront Wolczak. He first tries to lie, but in the face of evidence, he panics, produces a gun and tries to escape. The referee can decide how he manages this; but it should be remembered that by this time, Wolczak feels he has nothing left to lose. He avoids killing the group (not wanting a murder charge on top of everything else) but short of that, anything goes. The adventurers should likewise avoid killing Wolczak to allow van Morrow to press charges and bring his former employee to justice.

Upon Wolczak's capture and arrest, van Morrow pays the adventurers as promised. The referee should determine the flow of subsequent events.

NPCs

Liam Wolczak 5AB998 Age 40 Cr100,000

5 terms Navy (retired)

Admin-3; Computer-1; Electronic-1; Mechanical-1

Wu Zhiqiang 855763 Age 40 Cr7,000

3 terms Other

Electronic-1, Jack-O-T-1, Mechanical-2

Dugesh Nakhi 797883 Age 30 Cr3,000

3 terms Other

Streetwise-2; Body Pistol-1



John Law III: Police Character Generation in *MegaTraveller*

by David Jaques-Watson

This is an edited version of an article that was originally posted to the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website in 2000.

Introduction

Throughout history, humaniti has been governed by laws and customs designed to keep societies from lapsing back into savagery and barbarism. The enforcement arm of society is the police force.

General Background

Police forces occur at several levels. A world may have metropolitan forces for each of its large cities, several constabulary forces for its lesser populated areas, a para-military force stationed against rebels in the outback, and one or more overall planet-wide investigatory agencies. Many times there will be several layers of police organisations, sometimes with overlapping jurisdictions, and often working at cross-purposes.

Within the Imperium, law and justice exists on three levels. At the planetary and local level, low justice governs everything from homicide to littering. At the subsector level, middle justice protects helpless societies from exploitation, and protects all societies from excessive military action. At the highest, Imperial, level, high justice prevents revolt against Imperial authority; keeps the peace between worlds, subsectors and sectors; upholds the rights of sentients; and preserves free trade among member states. High justice is presided over by the Imperial Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and enforced by the Imperial Navy, Army, and Marines, often assisted by the Security Branch of the IISS Operations Office.

The lowest two levels of law and justice are covered by this character generation system. MoJ characters have a separate MoJ character generation system, although Police characters do have opportunities to transfer up.

Police

The general term for officers serving in any form of police force, regardless of rank, branch, or type of force, is *police*.

Police Ranks

Ranks for characters in the police are shown in the Police Table of Ranks. Ranks O1 to O7 are called commissioned police officers. Ranks E1 to E7 are simply called police officers, and correspond to enlisted rank in the military.

Initial Activities

A beginning Police character must determine if their homeworld is Aggressive (more likely to use weapons to control tense situations) or Non-Aggressive (more likely to use negotiation to control such situations). If *Grand Census* or *World Builder's Handbook* is available and the homeworld is known, then check the world's Aggressiveness Action. Militant and neutral worlds are considered Aggressive for the purpose of these rules, whereas peaceable and conciliatory are considered Non-Aggressive.

Pre-career Options

Once the character's statistics are rolled, their homeworld determined, and their default skills allocated, characters intending to follow a Police career may consider attending College.

Admission	9+	DM +2 if EDU 9+
Success	7+	DM +2 if INT 8+
Education	1d-2	DM +1 if INT 9+
Honors	10+	DM +1 if INT 10+

Honors graduates receive the greater of +1 EDU or EDU 10.

Enlistment

	Planetary Police	Subsector Police
Enlistment	7+	8+, starport A or B
DM +1 if	INT 7+	INT 8+
DM +2 if	DEX 9+	DEX 9+

Enlistment is automatic (if desired) for College graduates. College graduates and normal enlistees begin with rank E1; College honours graduates begin with rank O1.

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Terms of Service

A term of service is four years long. Each term is subdivided into four one-year assignments, each resolved separately. At the end of a term, a character can attempt to re-enlist or elect to muster out.

Branch Assignment

Upon enlistment, the character must roll on the following table for their branch assignment. A character with SOC 9+ may choose any branch. Characters must stay in their assigned branch unless they undergo Cross-Training in another branch, in which case they can transfer to the new branch at the beginning of a new term of service.

Branch Assignment		
2D	Planetary Police Branch	Subsector Police Bureau
2	Riot	Strike
3	Uniform	Liaison
4	Uniform	Liaison
5	Uniform	Liaison
6	Uniform	Investigative
7	Uniform	Investigative
8	Detective	Investigative
9	Detective	Protective
10	Customs	Protective
11	Security	Security
12	Security	Security

Optional DMs: if STR 9+, DM-2; if END 7+, -1; if INT 8+, DM+1; if SOC 9+, DM+2.

Riot police control civil disturbances that are beyond the capability of uniformed police, but do not require military intervention.

Uniformed police deal with routine crimes in the community.

Detectives investigate crimes in order to identify and gather evidence against criminal suspects.

Customs police guard starport entry points and associated free trade areas, and deal with crimes concerning off-world trade (such as smuggling).

Planetary Security investigates crimes against the state. The scope of this mandate depends on the government. Societies with high law levels will treat even minor political dissent or illegal economic activity as crimes against the state; those with lower law levels will only deploy security police against clear dangers to the social order (espionage, sabotage directed against the defence forces, major economic crimes such as counterfeiting, etc).

Strike officers are a specialised force who raid newly-discovered havens of criminal activity.

Liaison officers maintain contacts between the Subsector Police and the various planetary police bodies.

Investigative officers investigate crimes that affect more than one member state of the Imperium, in order to identify and gather evidence against criminal suspects.

Protective officers guard non-military installations of the subsector government.

Subsector **Security officers** act as bodyguards to the subsector bureaucracy.

Brownie Points

Brownie points (BPs) are special DMs received for significant success efforts on the part of a character. A brownie point may be used as a special DM on any die roll after it has been rolled. Once expended in this way, a brownie point is used up for good. Any number of brownie points may be used on a given roll, as long as the character has them available. They may be accumulated for as long as desired and used whenever desired.

For police characters, BPs include:

Upon graduation from college	1 BP
Upon receiving honors from college	1 BP
Upon completing each four-year term	1 BP
After each assignment to Special Duty	1 BP
Upon receiving a Commendation	1 BP
Upon receiving a Meritorious Conduct Medal	2 BP
Upon receiving a Police Star	3 BP

No BPs are awarded for a Wound Ribbon.

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Basic/Advanced Training

Basic and Advanced Training together comprise the first year of the Police character's first term. Characters from Unaggressive worlds receive Brawling; characters from Aggressive worlds receive Gun Combat. All characters receive an additional two skills rolled on the appropriate Branch Skills table.

Career Resolution

Assignment Determination

Each year, roll 2D on the appropriate Assignment Table to determine the character's basic assignment for the year. If Special Duty is received, roll on the appropriate Special Assignment table.

Duty Assignment					
2D	Riot/Strike	Uniform	Customs/Liaison	Detective/Investigative	Security/Protective
2	Investigation	Undercover	Undercover	Undercover	Field
3	Staff	Staff	Undercover	Undercover	Staff
4	Field	Staff	Staff	Field	Investigation
5	Field	Investigation	Investigation	Staff	Investigation
6	Civil Disturbance	Field	Field	Investigation	Undercover
7	Civil Disturbance	Field	Field	Investigation	Undercover
8	Civil Disturbance	Field	Field	Investigation	Undercover
9	Undercover	Civil Disturbance	Investigation	Staff	Investigation
10	Training	Training	Training	Training	Training
11	Special	Special	Special	Special	Special
12	Special	Special	Special	Special	Special

Assignment Resolution						
Uniform, Customs, Liaison, Detective, and Investigative	Training	Staff	Field	Investigation	Civil Disturbance	Undercover
Survival	auto	auto	4+	5+	6+	6+
Decoration	none	none	11+	10+	9+	8+
Promotion	(9+)	(8+)	8+	7+	7+	7+
Skill	6+	8+	7+	6+	6+	6+
Riot/Strike	Training	Staff	Field	Investigation	Civil Disturbance	Undercover
Survival	auto	auto	3+	5+	6+	6+
Decoration	none	none	12+	10+	8+	8+
Promotion	(9+)	(9+)	9+	8+	7+	7+
Skill	5+	8+	7+	6+	5+	5+
Security/Protective	Training	Staff	Field	Investigation	Civil Disturbance	Undercover
Survival	auto	auto	4+	5+	n/a	5+
Decoration	none	none	10+	10+	n/a	8+
Promotion	(9+)	(9+)	8+	7+	n/a	6+
Skill	5+	7+	8+	5+	n/a	4+

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Table of Ranks					
Rank	Planetary Police	Subsector Police	Rank	Planetary Police	Subsector Police
E1	Probationer	Trainee	O1	(Detective) Deputy Inspector	Deputy Inspector
E2	(Detective) Constable	Constable	O2	(Detective) Inspector	Inspector
E3	Senior (Detective) Constable	Senior Constable	O3	(Detective) Chief Inspector	Chief Inspector
E4	(Detective) Sergeant	Sergeant	O4	Superintendent	Station Chief
E5	Senior (Detective) Sergeant	Senior Sergeant	O5	Chief Superintendent	Area Chief
E6	Station (Detective) Sergeant	Station Sergeant	O6	Deputy Commissioner	Bureau Chief
E7	(Detective) Area Sergeant	Area Sergeant	O7	Commissioner of Police	Subsector Chief

Assignment descriptions are as follows:

Civil Disturbance: attend at a major disturbance in the community

Field: perform routine field work. For example, uniformed police patrol the community.

Investigation: identify and gather evidence against criminal suspects.

Staff: perform administrative duties, complete paperwork.

Training: attend routine training.

Undercover: perform plain clothes undercover work, either surveillance or infiltration of criminal groups.

Special Duty: Special Duty represents opportunity for the Police character to obtain specialized training. roll on the Special Duty table.

Special Duty descriptions are as follows:

Administration School: Receive Admin, then roll 4+ for each of the following: Computing, Instruction, Interview, Legal, Liaison, Recruiting.

Attaché/Agent: Roll 1D. On 1-4, the character is seconded to serve as an attaché (liaison officer) to the Subsector Police; on 5-6, the character serves as an agent for the Imperial Ministry of Justice. An attaché receives Liaison, a promotion of one grade and +1 SOC. An agent receives one roll on the MoJ Staff Skills table (assume MoJ rank E2), +1 SOC and may choose their next assignment (other than Attaché/Agent). At the end of any subsequent term of service, the character may transfer to the seconding organisation (to the Subsector Police at equivalent rank, or to the MoJ at rank E2).

Combat School: Receive Gun Combat, then roll 4+ for each of the following: Battle Dress, Heavy Weapons, Recon, Survival, Special Combat, Vehicle. This school CAN be attended by a character from a Non-Aggressive homeworld.

Cross-Training: Roll twice on the Branch Skill table of another branch. The character may transfer to this branch at the end of any subsequent term of service.

Intelligence School: Roll 4+ for each of the following: Vice, Communications, Computing, Interpersonal, Interrogation, Language.

Medical School: Receive Admin, Medical, Science; if one of these skills is at 3 or more, receive Instruction instead.

Officer Candidate School (OCS): Advance to rank O1 (E5 advances to rank O2) in current or cross-trained branch. Roll twice on the Officer Skills table and once on the relevant Branch table. Rank E6 or E7 advances to rank O3, but receives no new skills.

Special Assignments	
1D	Special Duty Assignment
1	OCS
2	Combat School (Space Environ for Customs & Security)
3	Administration School
4	Technical School
5	Medical School
6	Cross-Training
7	Intelligence School
8	Attaché/Agent
DMs	+1 if Rank O1+ Optional +1 or -1 if EDU 8+

Doing It My Way

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Space Environment School: Receive Gun Combat, then roll 4+ for each of the following: Gunnery, Sensor Ops, Ship's Boat, Space Combat, Vacc Suit, Zero-G Environ.

Technical School: Roll 4+ for each of the following: Communications, Computing, Demolitions, Forensic, Sensor Ops, Technical.

Assignment Resolution

Roll on the appropriate table for the year in order to determine survival, decorations, promotions, and whether skills are acquired.

Survival: A character risks some chance of injury or death while serving in the Police. To survive a duty assignment, roll the indicated number or higher. If successful, the character survives and continues with the resolution of the assignment. If unsuccessful, the character must leave the service immedi-

ately. The current term of service does not count when determining the number of mustering out benefits, but the character does receive a yearly pension no matter how long they have been serving (they are "pensioned out sick").

If the indicated number is rolled exactly, the character has been wounded while on duty and receives a "Wound Ribbon".

The character may take up to -2 for survival (the police force discourages risk-taking) and add that figure onto the Decoration roll. Alternatively, they may take up to +2 for survival, but must subtract this from their Decoration roll.

Decoration: If a character rolls the indicated number or higher, they have performed outstandingly well and receive a decoration for actions above and beyond the call of duty. If the character rolls the indicated number or higher, they receive a Commendation (Com). If they roll at least three higher than the indicated number, they receive a Meritori-

Service Skills					
1D	Police Life	NCO Skills	Officer Skills	Field Skills	Staff Skills
1	Brawling	Brawling	Mental	Hand Combat	Admin
2	Carousing	Streetwise	Admin	Blade Combat	Computer
3	+1 STR	Gun Combat	Instruction	Gun Combat	Interpersonal
4	+1 DEX	Admin	Interpersonal	Vehicle	Medical
5	+1 End	Leader	Vice	Vice	Recruiting
6	Streetwise	Tactics	Inborn	Interpersonal	Legal
7	+1 EDU	Academic	Legal	Legal	Legal
8	+1 SOC	Interpersonal	+1 SOC	Liaison	Academic
DMs:	+1 if E4+; +2 if O4+	+2 if E4+	+2 if O4+	+2 if O1+	+2 if O1+
Branch Skills	Riot/Strike	Uniform	Customs/Liaison	Detective/Investigative	Security/Protective
1	Gun Combat	Gun Combat	Zero-G Environ	Gun Combat	Gun Combat
2	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle
3	Recon	+1 End	Language	Bribery	Forgery
4	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview
5	Gun Combat	Interpersonal	Vice	Interpersonal	Electronics
6	Heavy Weapons	Streetwise	Vacc Suit	Streetwise	Vice

Note: On Non-Aggressive worlds, Gun Combat may be replaced by Brawling, choosing each time rolled. At the referee's discretion, Martial Arts may be substituted for all occurrences of Brawling. On High Law Level worlds, Interrogation may be substituted for Interview.

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Doing It My Way

ous Conduct Medal (MCM). If they roll at least six higher, they are awarded the Police Star (PS).

If the character fails a decoration roll by 6 or more they have been criminally charged and must consult the Court-Martial Table (*MegaTraveller Players' Manual*, p 47).

Promotion: Promotion chances in brackets are for E1-E6 only; commissioned officers cannot be promoted in these assignments.

Skill Eligibility: Skills are received from basic/advanced training, special assignments, or from the skill roll. The Skill Tables are restricted as follows:

Police Life: any Police character.

NCO Skills: character is rank E4-E7.

Officer Skills: character is rank O1+.

Field Skills: character is in a Field, Investigation, Civil Disturbance or Undercover assignment.

Staff Skills: character is in a Training or Staff assignment.

Branch Skills: the character is in the appropriate service branch.

Contacts (optional)

Contacts are as per TNE rules. Police characters receive one Law Enforcement and one Criminal contact per term. The referee should determine the specific nature of these contacts, preferably by reference to the character's assignments during that term.

Reenlistment And Mustering Out

At the end of each term of service the player must decide whether to continue this career or muster out. If they want to continue, they must roll 5+ on 2D to be eligible to reenlist. If they want to leave, they must still roll 2D. If the result is 12 exactly, the character *must* reenlist.

Changing Branch

If the character has been cross-trained in another branch, the character can elect to transfer to that branch, re-enlisting as normal.

Changing Service

A character may transfer to the Ministry of Justice if at any time during the term, the character was seconded to the MoJ. Note that MoJ character generation is beyond the scope of this article.

Mustering Out Benefits

When a character leaves the service (for any reason), they are eligible for mustering-out benefits. Roll on the Mustering Out tables as follows:

Per term of service	1 roll
If rank O1-O2	1 additional roll
If rank O3-O4	2 additional rolls
If rank O5+	3 additional rolls

A character that has served at least 5 terms may retire and be eligible for retirement pay. Annual retirement pay is equal to Cr2000 per term served. This may be collected in monthly instalments.

Mustering-Out Benefits		
1D	Cash Table	Benefits Table
1	5,000	Low Passage
2	5,000	+1 INT
3	10,000	Forensic Kit
4	10,000	Weapon
5	20,000	High Passage
6	25,000	+1 SOC
7	50,000	Travellers'
DMs:	If Gambling 1+ or retiree, +1	If rank O5+, +1

No more than three rolls may be made on the Cash table. If homeworld is Non-Aggressive, Weapon may be taken as Brawling skill, unless the character already has other weapon skills.

For travel allowances and material benefits, refer to the *MegaTraveller Players' Manual*. For more information on the Forensic skill and the Forensic Kit, see "Law Enforcers" and "Forensic Science", both in *Travellers' Digest* No. 4.

Credits

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(Continued on page 14)

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- With apologies to *The Bill*. ☼



Raconteurs' Rest

Playing With Matches

by Andrea Vallance

Part 2

184th of 2029 (010-93): The Manish Estates

Madam Manish was waiting. Blandii had laid out the table for lunch with his usual exactitude; she did not know what she would do without him. The door opened, she received her customary kiss on the cheek. "My dear, it is so good to see you."

"And you, Mother, it has been too long." her daughter surveyed the table and grinned, "I swear Blandii must use a set square to lay out the dishes."

"He is simply thorough, my dear. I must say I'm a little surprised to see you; I would have expected you to see the children first. You know they miss their *bawa*⁸ and your stories. They think your new life must be most exciting."

A chuckle, "And their *bawa* greatly misses them. I'm planning on calling in on the school later today, I have a few new tall tales for them. But I wanted to see you first, Mother."

Madam Manish tsked, "You must mind your conjunctions my dear; there is no excuse for sloppy language."

This elicited a laugh, "Oh, Mother, you must forgive me; I've never understood your insistence on such precision."

"I just do not approve of the tendency of the young to introduce modern Vilani mannerisms into our language, simply no need for it." Madam Manish was more aware than most of the import of maintaining the slender line that separated the *Mmarislusant* from the Vilani. "However, I must ask what is so important you would put aside time with the children."

Her daughter could see no point in beating around the bush. "Lord Sakuya Trace."

Madam Manish looked grave. "I suspected you might take an interest in his fate."

"Yes, Mother, I do. So, what's to become of him?"

Madam Manish sighed; she knew this would not go down well. "There is already an order transferring him to Sesh Liryn."

She could see the concern on her daughter's face "So soon?"

She paused a moment, dreading what she had to say next. "There is worse. Oskar Sherin⁹ has secured the release of Padter *Kolnel-Lekhtenant* and had her placed in charge of it."

Madam Manish saw her daughter's look turn to one of sheer horror. She spoke so very softly, "Mother, he will not survive."

She spoke comfortingly, "I know, but the order was signed by Oskar Sherin himself."

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Her daughter spoke heavily, "I suppose that limits your influence somewhat; I believe he still hasn't forgiven you for calling his wife¹⁰ an ignorant, intolerant shrew."

She sniggered slightly, "No, nor his grandson an ill-mannered spoilt brat."

"Is there anything you can do Mother?" There was pleading in her voice.

Madam Manish drew a long deep breath "Perhaps; Lord Protector McCloud still favours me. For you I will try; I do understand your... distress."

Her daughter took her hand. "I have forgiven you, Mother, you must know that."

"Yes, my dear, but I have not forgiven myself."

Her daughter kissed her cheek once more. "What's done is done, Mother," she sighed remembering. "However, Siishubuu is also likely to call on you regarding the matter. I would prefer if you didn't mention my interest."

She smiled slightly, "Of course, my dear."

Her daughter chuckled, "I do believe he has pre-empted you this time, though."

"Oh? How so?"

"He has already asked Sharik Gubashiidi to the Lord Protector's birthday ball¹¹."

Madam Manish most uncharacteristically dropped her knife laughing. "Your brother is full of surprises. And, my dear, are you attending?"

"I wasn't planning to, Mother, and no, I do not wish you to arrange an escort for me." Her heart was still somewhat tender from her mother's last 'arrangement'.

"A pity, it could have helped with Lord Trace."

"Mother?"

"Corwin¹² and Peter McCloud are without anyone to escort. Lord McCloud had asked me if I could arrange something."

"Really?" She grinned evilly, "Mmmm... I might just have a solution for that. Though it may annoy the Sherin's a little."

Her mother returned her grin, "And that is a bad thing, my dear?"

As predicted, Siish called on his mother later that day. He kissed his mother lightly and sat. Blandii had already brought tea. Madam Manish smirked ever so slightly, "So Siishubuu, your employment with Kirsov *Geenal-Majkor*, it went well?"

He was uncomfortable enough without her playing with him so obviously, "Mother, you have retired?"

His mother was caught off guard a moment. "Siishubuu?"

"I believed you were still a member of the Security Committee. As such, there would be very few reports you would not be privy to if you so chose."

Madam Manish couldn't help but smile just a little, so much of his father in him. "Indeed Siishubuu, and yes, I have reviewed your report to the *Geenal-Majkor*, most unfortunate. However, at least nobody was killed. All in all, an acceptable result in the circumstances."

There was the slightest trace of anger in Siish's reply, "Two people were killed, Mother, one far too young to be in this business. And two of my *ami* seriously injured. All in all, a fairly bad result, I'd say."

His mother studied him carefully at length. "Yet you will do it again."

His anger slipped away and his head fell forward. "Probably, yes." It struck him as odd that he was so sure that they all would.

Madam Manish spoke gently, "I can guarantee your father would have been proud of you, though." She poured him a tea. "But, regardless, I believe you are on holiday; will you be staying with us?"

"Most likely, Mother."

"I've already had your room made up."

"Thank you, Mother." He considered, he'd avoided asking too long, "I have a favour to ask, Mother." *Might as well come straight out with it.*

She suppressed the urge to smile and tried, with limited success, to sound innocent, "Yes Siishubuu?"

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He took a deep breath. "The young man we brought back."

"Trace Marquis' son?"

"Yes; he was taken by intelligence after we returned. I am... concerned about what may happen to him."

"He will be interrogated and hopefully ultimately paroled in some fashion, I imagine, once we can be sure he won't draw undue attention to himself."

His mother was not making this easy; he drew breath again, *time to be blunt*, "Mother, I am asking if you can expedite the process. He is... fragile, I doubt he would fare well in Intelligence's hands."

Madam Manish sipped her tea slowly and delicately, making a point of deliberating. "I may," she emphasised the word, "be able to do something. However, the case is under the auspices of Oskar Sherin, so my influence is limited. But I will see what can be done." She sipped her tea again

"Thank you, Mother." He waited for the toll.

"Now Siishubuu, the Lord Protector's birthday ball is almost upon us, have you asked to escort anyone yet?"

And there it was. "I have already invited Sharik Gubashiidi, Mother."

She feigned surprise, "Really! I am most relieved; it would have been such a scandal if my son were to attend unaccompanied. And she is quite the dancer I am told."

186th of 2029 (012-98): An apartment in Antiavash

I'd arrived at Isabella's the night before. I didn't want to spend too long with my family; it had been... difficult. They tried, but it just wasn't the same any more. My mother Renal was still mourning father Wilhem. Mother Seshka and father Erras told me of all the news. My sister Liakti had matched to Shen Raaryn and there was a baby expected soon. Kamees had joined the Navy and was

away at the academy, while Jkaee had just graduated from the *Tandaryn Lajkca y Daramm*¹³ with honours in composition and performance. He'd make a fine musician; the whole family was proud of him. I just didn't fit in with them any more.

Isabella's place was not what I'd expected. I'd thought it would be one of those small two bedroom things, compact for someone living alone. It was huge, four bedrooms, separate kitchen, dining and living. Apparently a gift from the Manish's when she decided to stay, something to get her started in the Protectorate. I had to chuckle; Isabella looked lost in the place as she gave me the grand tour. Her taste in décor was conservative, subdued without much movement. Oddly, it was quite restful. I noticed very few 'personal' touches, just a few pictures of Isabella with the Manish's. Most noticeable was a big family portrait of the whole Manish family, Siish and his brother and sister with their spouses, Madam Manish, the grandchildren, and Isabella. There were five grandchildren, so it had to be fairly recent. She also seemed to have a thing for *sesherin*, the apartment was full of sculptures and paintings of them. I slept well; I'll say something for luxury apartments, the beds are really comfortable.

Isabella woke me early, "Hey, sleeping beauty, breakfast's up and you got mail."

I didn't want to get up. Four years cooped up in an Imperial prison and best part of four months on a starship. I eventually emerged, clean and bright, there was a bathroom just for me off the bedroom. This place was pure bliss. I wandered out into the kitchen, Isabella was eating. "Over in the pan; I'm no Ariaryn, but not that bad."

I grinned as I served myself eggs and sausages "Isabella, I love this place; I think I'll marry you."

She sniggered at that, "Well, probably more reliable than my last proposal. But first you have to call me Issee."

"Issee?"

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"Just an old nickname; I worked in a small hospital during the war, mostly with children, they had trouble saying 'Isabella'."

The thought of Isabella working with children and being called Issee seemed to somehow suit her. "You said I had mail? How can I have mail?"

"Ah, the universe works in mysterious ways." She handed over two gilt-edged envelopes.

"This one is from Peter McCloud; isn't that Lord Protector McCloud's son's spouse?"

"Yep," She was smiling knowingly.

"What's he writing to me for?"

"Well, if you open it, you'll find out." Her smug look was infuriating.

I opened the letter. "My dear Afira Renal Wilhelm Corig Corig *Seshyishinti*, may I have the great honour of escorting you to the Lord Protector's birthday ball? I look forward to your reply presently. Peter Arthur Anna Blumme McCloud *Mrigadeer*. But isn't he..."

"Gay as the oceans are deep? Yep, but he is a wonderful dancer and quite charming. I got one from Corwin. Apparently neither had partners for the ball and somebody suggested us."

"The Lord Protector's ball, I thought you weren't going?" Isabella had the benefit of being favoured by Madam Manish. It meant she got invitations to things like that.

Her eyes were twinkling, "Well the entire Sherin clan will be there and in the circumstances, I changed my mind. Being seen with the Lord Protector's son..." she just smiled.

A sudden thought, "What about Jane?" I couldn't go with her.

Isabella just grinned, "I'm sure something can be worked out."

I picked up the second, no name on this one. "So who's this one from?"

"No idea."

I opened the letter, my jaw dropped. "It's from Sharik Gubashiidi. An invitation to lunch. Why in the name of every single god and spirit does she want to meet me?"

Isabella slapped me playfully, "You know, sometimes you are just so incredibly dense, Afira."

The invitation was for one in the afternoon, at Ilesejk's in Waicir¹⁴, one of the finest restaurants on Daramm. I caught the scheduled shuttle and arrived around ten minutes early. I'd managed to convince Isabella to come with me; I just didn't want to meet her alone. She was already there and stood as I entered; she was pretty, very pretty. I still didn't quite understand what was going on. "Ah Corig *Wa*, I've been so looking forwards to meeting you." She looked a little surprised at Isabella's presence. "And Isabella, how are you? I've not seen you for an age." She smiled and embraced first me then Isabella.

"Please, call me Afira."

Her smile was a little odd, "And you simply must call me Sharik." We all sat. "And Isabella, you are looking so well, Kamsi¹⁵ was asking after you the other day, hoping she might catch you before she set off on her latest expedition." She seemed nice, but I still felt uncomfortable; I wasn't used to mixing with her level of society.

Isabella flicked out her napkin, "So, Sharik, to what do we owe the pleasure?" I guess four years with the Manish's had taught her how to blend in.

"Well, the ball is fast approaching and I thought perhaps we could fit in a little shopping later."

I was a little puzzled, "Shopping?"

"Yes my dear, we'll need new gowns, you know." She talked as if I were a child.

"I was just planning on dress uniform."

"Oh how... Imperial¹⁶. But you'd look stunning in something by Eervir¹⁷."

The waiter approached, "Hello, my name is Enli. I will be your server today; would you care for anything to drink?"

Sharik looked up, "May I?"

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I wasn't quite sure what to do. "Please." Isabella just nodded.

"We'll have bottle of Imadi, I think, a twelve if you have one."

"I think so, *Wa*." He left.

I'd grown up in a simple working family and was so out my depth here. Isabella seemed to be coping so I just followed her lead. We ate and we shopped, we drank wine as we tried on outfit after outfit. Eervir himself saw to us. I had to laugh, he was the first person I'd met who was honest. He said whatever I chose would have to altered, to hide the scars. He didn't treat me like I was fragile and would break, just was honest. I let Isabella and Sharik help me pick a dress, it was something that Jane would have approved of. The ball was in a few days and the outfit was made to measure and expensive, but I had four years back pay and, well, we were rich now. I smiled; I liked Sharik, she'd do.

188th of 2029 (014-98): Waicir, Rurur Garintylil

She was utterly insane. "Isabella, you can't, not dressed like that."

She was adamant. "I can and I will and people will just have to damn well deal with it."

"Isabella, please see reason; it's a memorial, a lot of people died."

"Yes, I know, I was there, remember. And I will wear this, damn what anyone thinks."

There was no reasoning with her, she just stood there, arms folded; I wasn't going to change her mind "At least wear something to cover it up while we're travelling, please. You can take it off at the ceremony."

She sighed, "Okay." She went to her wardrobe and got a long winter coat, "only till we get there."

We caught the shuttle to Waicir, we sat. I could see people looking at Isabella in her heavy coat. "Well it would be worse if you weren't wearing it."

She wasn't in a good mood. "Maybe, but I'd feel better and it's bloody hot in this thing."

I tried to be understanding. "I know; we'll be there soon, though." We sat quietly awhile longer. I tried to make conversation. "So, what do you think of when you remember the battle?"

She looked at the floor and sounded far away. "The number three." We rode the rest of the way in silence.

The others were already there, all dressed in uniform like me. Jane looked at Isabella. "Why are you wearing that coat? It's the middle of summer."

She looked at me. "Afira thought what I'm wearing was... inappropriate."

"And what are you wearing, sweetie?"

She took off her coat and stood there, dress uniform of an Imperial Navy lieutenant, medal on her right breast. Everyone just stared; Ariaryn was the first to say anything. "Well, it'll get a reaction."

Siish turned to her. "You sure, Isabella? It might not be too popular."

She was annoyed. "Yes, I'm sure, and I don't care about the reaction."

We stood waiting for our passes; the *bashet* looked at Isabella and paused. Siish spoke, "Is there a problem, *Bayanshet*?"

He looked at Isabella and then at Siish. "No, *Vebmral*, no problem."

"Good, now, our passes, if you please." The passes were issued. We sat. The stadium filled, people stared and gawked at Isabella, they muttered and moved on. Nobody would sit near us. I was supposed to sit with the others of the Thirty-Seven, but I sat next to Isabella. It was the least I could do.

I saw Madam Manish enter. She had the whole family with her, Gam and Mazun, Eneri and Kamsi, all the grandchildren.

She came over. "Isabella, you're looking well, my dear." She turned to Siish. "Well, Siishubuu, move along, I'm not as young as I was; I'd like to sit." She sat beside Isabella. I watched as the stadium

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continued to fill. Many glowered at us, but some made a point of coming over. Sharik Gubashiidi, though her parents sat with the Sherins. She sat by Siish, took his hand and smiled at me. Seven other councillors¹⁸, Eelamm *Marsheel*¹⁹ himself, Corwin and Peter McCloud. I looked at those around us and those not; points were being made. Hawks and doves, as the *Verasti Dtareen* would say. But those by us were smaller than those who chose to sit elsewhere. Eelamm *Marsheel* shook Isabella's hand before he sat. I could see cameras flashing at us. There was quite a stir; I could see Sherin *Femral* giving an interview flanked by his father. I chuckled quietly, the news channels would be busy tonight, no doubt.

A reporter came up and asked Madam Manish for a comment. She simply replied "I'm sitting with my family." Eelamm *Marsheel* told her, "The dead don't really have sides." She asked me, I just said "My friend." Very busy tonight.

We sat through speeches, a parade, fireworks. It was long and mostly boring; I was glad when it finished. Madam Manish spoke to me briefly after, "Corig *Wa*, so good to finally meet you. Siishubuu has been most remiss."

I wasn't sure what to say. "My Lady Councillor Manish, I'm honoured."

"I hear you lunched with Gubashiidi *Wa* the other day; I do hope the two of you can be friends."

I thought, *what an odd comment*. "I'm sure we will be, My Lady."

She smiled, "Good, good, I think it is so important the two of you get on." She noticed my confusion, tsked and shook her head slightly. Very odd.

191st of 2029 (017-98): The Manish Estates

Siish came down for breakfast; there was a lot to do today. Clothes to prepare, a bouquet to pick up. The ball was the social event of the year; it was important to get it right. He kissed his mother, sat, and

looked at the spread somewhat disappointedly. "I see Eneri is cooking."

"Yes, Siishubuu?" She understood his meaning.

He looked at the table again. "It's very... healthy."

"If you mean your usual fats, grease, and sugars are missing, yes. Eneri is only thinking of our health Siishubuu, he is after all, a *Shugili*²⁰. And given your uniform appeared to be a rather... snugger than last year, it would do you no harm to forgo indulging your, what is the term? Candy dentine."

"Sweet tooth, Mother, and I like indulging my candy dentine."

"I am sure you will have ample chance for that tonight, Siishubuu."

Madam Manish served herself some of Eneri's healthy breakfast. "Siishubuu, have you talked with Corig *Wa*?"

He was a little puzzled and a touch uncomfortable. "Afira, Mother, about what?"

"Yes, Siishubuu, Afira, about your feelings."

Siish suddenly moved from a touch to extremely uncomfortable. "Mother?"

She sighed, sometimes her son was infuriating. "Have you informed her you love her?"

His discomfort increased by at least an order of magnitude "Mother, I, um, I'm fond of..."

"Siishubuu, you are in love with her. You know it, I know it, Gubashiidi *Wa* knows it, all your friends know it, I would not be surprised if half the Protectorate knew it. The only person who seems to be unaware of it is the lady herself. Though one has to wonder how she's missed it. You need to do something about it."

He drew a deep breath. "Mother, it would be pointless."

"Pointless? How so?"

He fixed his gaze on the table "You don't approve of her."

"On the contrary, Siishubuu, I barely know her, but by all accounts she's a fine woman and an excellent officer."

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His eyes remained firmly on the table. "But you'd never allow a match."

She sighed slightly, "Perhaps, but there are other options. A discreet arrangement is always possible. They are far more common than you might imagine."

He became slightly angry. "I don't want 'an arrangement', Mother, I want a match."

"Siishubuu, any match must be able to give you children. And no matter how good a woman your Afira is, she can not do that."

Siish's anger grew. "And love, Mother, what of love?"

She laughed, "Siishubuu, you are such a hopeless romantic. You will one day inherit my place on the Council²¹ and your spouse will become Madam Manish. Your match is not a question of love, it's a matter of politics. And anyway, love is no guarantee of a stable match; respect and honesty are far more important."

It was Siish's turn to laugh. "How can you be honest and respectful if you have 'an arrangement', Mother?"

"If, Siishubuu, your spouse is party to that arrangement from the start."

Notes

8. *Bawa*, a compound of *ba* (smaller) and *wa* (woman), usually translated as Miss. The male equivalent is *Balul*. Originally honorifics referring to an unmatched adults, such usage had been obsolete since pre-contact times. The words are only retained now as terms of endearment.

9. Lord Councillor Oskar Sherin, father of Fleet Admiral Kamees Sherin. A powerful member of the Lord Protector's Council and political opponent of Lady Councillor Manish.

10. Madam Caroline Sherin, matriarch of the Sherin clan.

11. The premier social event in the Protectorate. An event normally restricted to the highest levels of society. The ball is a deliberately anachronistic event, patterned after the great balls of pre-spaceflight Terra.

12. Second son of Lord Protector Samuel McCloud, an arbiter on the bench of the Daramm High Court. Normally he and his spouse Peter would attend social functions as a couple, but

the anachronistic nature of the birthday ball dictates a mixed gender couple.

13. Senior University of Daramm, the most prestigious tertiary institution on Daramm.

14. One of only a handful of traditional cities on Daramm and seat of the Protectorate Council. Home to over two million people at the time.

15. Kamsikinash Manish, a noted archaeologist and spouse of Lady Councillor Manish's son Eneri.

16. Protectorate culture was usually regarded as markedly less martial than Imperial. The Luriani themselves never developed a ruling military elite and overt expressions of military traditions were far less prevalent, primarily inherited from the *Verasti Dtareen*. Thus, dress uniforms were usually reserved for military functions with even serving personnel wearing civilian clothes for other formal occasions.

17. Eervir Ajdkar, one of the leading Luriani fashion designers of the period.

18. The full Lord Protector's Council consisted of the Lord Protector and twenty councillors. It had long been the seat of real power within the Protectorate.

19. Marshall Despi Eelamm, commander of the *Verasal* (short form of *verastifersaal*), the Protectorate Army. Normally a cadre organisation, heavily weighted towards support and technical services. During times of need it could be rapidly expanded from a trained militia known as the *Iadtlu*.

20. Food preparation specialist in Vilani and *Mmarislusant* culture. The biochemical nature of life on the Vilani homeworld of Vland is totally incompatible with humans. Therefore the role of the *Shugilii* arose to prepare food suitable to be eaten. They fill the role of a priestly caste in other cultures. They also serve as dieticians and encourage healthy eating habits. Curiously, Daramm is one of the few worlds where the *Shugilii's* traditional role of food preparation is still important. There is an extremely high level of heavier elements in Daramm's food chain making it slightly toxic to most humans. While the Luriani are adapted to deal with this, most other branches require their food to be treated beforehand. In addition to being a *Shugilii*, Eneri Manish was also a trained doctor and head of surgery at Antiavash central hospital.

21. Members of the Lord Protector's Council were theoretically non-hereditary life appointees. However, the seven great houses (McCloud, Sherin, Chaudhary, Minomoru, Khaadii, Zagiirmiskur and Maval) had had permanent representation since the First Protectorate. The exact protocol for inheritance depended on the family. In the four *Verasti Dtareen* families (McCloud, Sherin, Chaudhary and Minomoru) the eldest child took the Council seat, the two *Mmarislusant* clans (Khaadii and Zagiirmiskur) followed the Vilani practice of third child inheritance, while the Luriani Maval family worked by consensus.



Game Master's Guide: How To Run Fast & Exciting Combats

reviewed by Timothy Collinson

Game Master's Guide: How To Run Fast & Exciting Combats.

Tony Medeiros and John Four.

Roleplaying Tips Publishing <http://www.roleplayingtips.com>

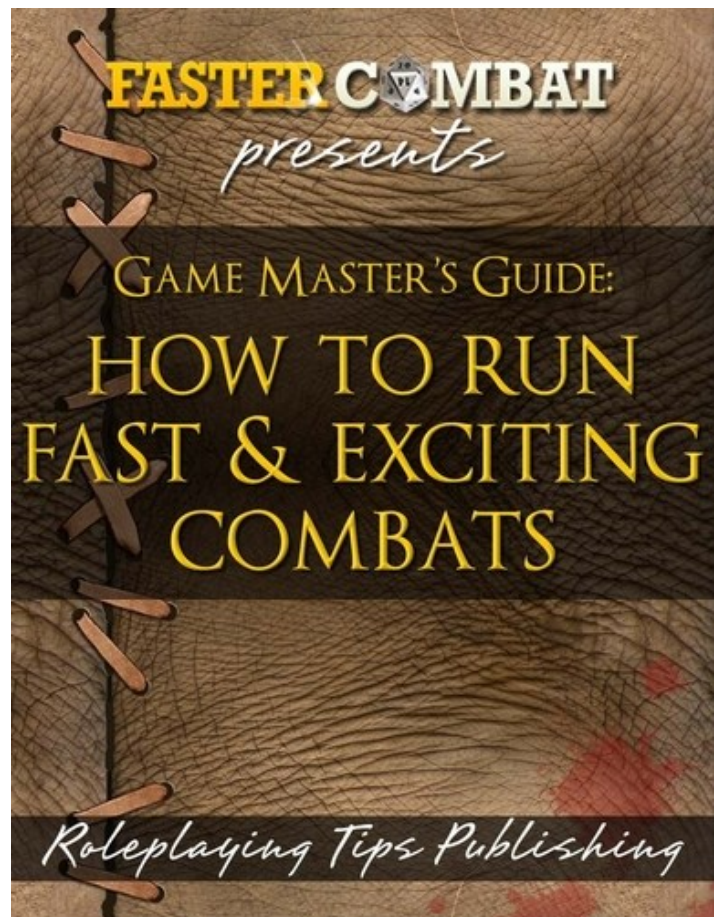
PDF, 266pp

US\$20

I wrote a little while back about combat not really being my favourite part of *Traveller*—although it can be exciting enough, and as I learn how better to run it, I think I'm growing more appreciation for it as a player. My biggest problem isn't combat in principle, but that it can slow down a game quite considerably if not handled well. I've sat through convention games where a fairly brief fight can take up nearly half of a four hour game with not all of the players directly involved.

It was therefore with some interest that I saw this book, *Game Master's Guide: How To Run Fast & Exciting Combats*, and wondered if there mightn't be some help there that could assist as I thought about running my first formal combat at TravCon. My approach up to then had been to keep my combat fairly limited and specific, and to simulate it over and over until I felt I understood and could manage the wrinkles that rolls and weapons and movement would throw at me. This Game Master's Guide widened my approach and thinking considerably.

Let's be clear from the outset: This isn't a *Traveller* book and doesn't consider *Traveller* or even science fiction role playing games at all. It's fair and square aimed at fantasy games such as *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Pathfinder*. Having said that, while the examples and routines are specific to that kind of game, there's much here that can be mined generically and the canny *Traveller* referee will find enough here to give plenty of hints and ideas on speeding up *Traveller* combat even if not everything applies directly. But not just speeding it up – the book has great advice on making it much more inte-



grated into the story, relevant to the adventure and exciting for the players.

A supporting website at <http://fastercombat.com/> offers options to have the content in 52 segments with access to a members' area and some bonus material, if a single PDF book to teach yourself isn't your cup of tea. I've not investigated the course. It's fairly clear that the book has grown out of this 'course' but is certainly none the worse for having been thoroughly tested out before this compilation. The title on the cover of the PDF is as given above, the title page gives a longer version which adds a little more information: *Faster Combat: How to GM Fights in Half the Time While Doubling the Story and Excitement*. There are six chapters: Knowledge (Game), Combat by Design, Launch, Finish, Mastery, and 1d6 Extras. A map of the full layout of the book, which only gives a hint at how useful this might be for you, can be downloaded for free at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/FasterCombat/bonuses/faster-combat-mind-map.pdf>. Each chapter is made up of several of the segments.

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The book begins by encouraging you to examine your own practices and what's going on in your combat sessions. It gives detailed notes on how to track time (where's it going?), measure performance, and profile characters. Of course, mastery of the actual combat rules you're using is critical and there are sections on this as well.

Chapter 2 looks at how the referee can design combat to improve the playing experience. It's not all about speed, it's about considering the goals of the combat (not just to the death!) and making it relevant and punchy (if you'll forgive the pun). So, for example, under combat goals, it highlights five of the authors' favourite missions: to acquire something, to escape destruction, to hold the line, to infiltrate, and to save the innocent. For each of these missions it notes what success and failure consists of, what encounter elements might be considered, what tactics help that kind of mission, and what twists might be thrown in. This is just five pages of the book and yet already had me thinking more clearly about the what and the who and the why of a combat session. A particularly interesting section following this covers story structure which can help plan a scene and develop a 'combat encounter plan'. There are considerations too of the 'combatscape' or where the combat is actually taking place.

Having now planned more comprehensively before the actual game, Chapter 3 moves onto launching it at your players. It kicks off with 17 excellent (and generic) tips that can immediately speed things up, but continues with ideas that will work in any combat: checklists, good descriptions, initiative trackers, and faster decision making. There are considerations for rewarding speedy play, playing as a team, tracking damage and using props such as maps and miniatures. There are some sections that are more fantasy specific such as those dealing with monsters, but to be honest I'd already got so much out of this chapter it didn't matter much.

The fourth chapter, *Finish*, covers wrapping up the combat with good advice on actually ensuring there is roleplay and not just die rolling, ways to negotiate, and ensuring that the foes are not just abstract 'monsters' but may even be leaders with some honour! The next sections deal with making sure there is a way out – from surrender to various forms of escape. Again, a section on 'monster waves' (i.e. waves of monsters rather than giant tsunami or friendly ogres) is more game specific but can still provoke thought about what constitutes enemies in *Traveller*. The final section on making quick judgement calls suit any role playing (for #2 'complex monsters', simply read 'complex opponents', etc.).

The penultimate chapter is entitled *Mastery*, and is wonderfully applicable to any combat – whether in a dungeon or an Imperial Domain. Keeping a rules log, (un)breaking the rules, creating cheat sheets, multitasking and delegation, adding atmosphere, post mortems (analysing the combat session not actually going through the bodies of the slain...), style and consistency, and leading by example are all covered in ten sections that every referee should read. Just to take one of those at random, analyzing encounters gives advice on taking apart a scene after the session to see what worked, what didn't work, what consumed time, what was 'unremarkable' even, and most importantly to learn from this analysis to improve things for next time.

Finally, chapter 6, *1d6 Extras*, gives lists of helpful material that doesn't quite fit into the above. Some of it's useful in *Traveller*: alternative character rewards, splitting the party (or not), and adding more story. Some are partially useful: 20 cool places to fight covers the usual fantasy possibilities but includes some interesting items that might inspire an SF setting referee. And some such as 50 monster quirks are perhaps not so useful for *Traveller*, although it's quite amusing to apply the list to a typical *Traveller* opponent, let's say a Zhodani agent or something and "#6: Dance - Breaks out into dance, even while traveling, whenever it rains or snows."

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At the end of each section there are links to further related resources which can be very useful. Some of the resources continue the theme of the chapter in books, articles, or blog entries; others support the referee in tasks the chapter recommends, and may be online tools, useful software, and so on.

There are few illustrations: some beautiful woodcuts (I think I recognize one from Treasure Island) at the start of each chapter of which only the chapter on Mastery is in colour. Subtle! I like it! There are also a two photos of "3D" initiative trackers and a half dozen screenshots. There are supporting tables where relevant.

The book is immensely readable and the short sections with plenty of headings keep you reading. The pages aren't dense with text which helps with that as well but does contribute to the page count. You don't get bogged down in it and the headings

have the additional bonus of allowing you to locate sections you want to reread very easily. The authors clearly bring a lot of experience to the issue and their advice one suspects is born out of a lot of frustration in the past and a desire to help others avoid the same. I'd recommend it to anyone running combat in any type of role playing game although obviously some of the specific examples are going to be more directly relevant to those running fantasy games. You may have worked towards many of the solutions offered by trial and error, but this could well save you a lot of time in working out how to improve combat sessions as well as within the sessions themselves.

As I said at the start, it's not *Traveller* but will help any referee running combat and has actually inspired me to not be afraid of including combat in games I run and perhaps even looking forward to the next round of combat I'm involved in as a player – if only to analyse how the referee is handling it! ☼



Active Measures

A Troubled Mind

by Timothy Collinson

This adventure is designed for a solo player as the parent of a young child. It could be set virtually anywhere in the Imperium although for convenience this describes locations in the Spinward Marches. Deetah Marinda is a 33-year-old arcology environment engineer from Horosho who is growing increasingly aware that there's something wrong with her seven-year-old son. At first, Sabby seemed to be having bad dreams which doctors could do nothing about, then she began to fear that there was some mental health issue going on. However, now her suspicions are that her son has psionic Talents and although she's heard of such things in holoshows and the like, she doesn't know where to turn. If a reason is required as to why she's thinking along these lines, perhaps there are hints that a great grandmother may have had psionic powers. She

fears the government finding out and Sabby being taken away or lobotomized to 'cure' him, or both.

This could be used as an introduction to psionics and could possibly be run as a small group adventure with additional PCs representing other members of the family, such as Marinda's spouse or an older daughter. The adventure is set in 1105 although this could be changed to any time after the PsionicSuppressions (800-826). Mongoose *Traveller* rules are used throughout. *LBB9: Library Data* has useful entries on both Psionic Institutes and the Psionic Suppressions. News items are sprinkled throughout for flavour but can be ignored; the final one hints at the coming Fifth Frontier War.

Deetah has worked for much of her life in the arcologies of Horosho where's she's become skilled at looking after the environmental support equipment throughout the vast constructs. She's now handed in her notice so that she's free to do whatever it takes to help out her seven-year-old son Sabby.

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The Referee should determine if her partner has died, left her and child, or is present as another PC.

Sabby is an apparently ordinary 7-year-old, generally doing well at school but increasingly suffering from night terrors and odd events such as apparently setting fire to a waste basket in his classroom although no witnesses saw him do this. He seems to be increasingly psychologically troubled.

His problems stem from having psionic ability which hasn't been diagnosed and he can't control. Assuming such random psionic ability does crop up in the Imperium from time to time, the Referee may wish to consider how such conditions aren't well known. See Act Three, Scene Two for Sabby's abilities.

Act One: A Psionic Institute in the news

One possibility for Marinda and her son might be to travel to the Zhodani Consulate to try to get tested, but firstly the Imperial propaganda that the Zhodani are enemies is hard to overcome so this isn't an obvious option, secondly it's illegal to make such a trip for such purposes and there have been a few high profile cases recently of people being caught, and thirdly the cost of trying to travel covertly with bribes and so on is beyond Marinda's means. However, she's heard a rumour of a psionic institute amongst the asteroids of Glisten (Spinward

NEWSLINE

BORDERING ON INSANITY

Spinward Times, dateline: 134/1105, byline: editorial.

Our top story carries the news that for the third time in as many years, a merchant ship has been impounded on the coreward borders of the Marches. Once again, the Imperial Navy has performed brilliantly in preventing our citizens from illegally travelling to the Zhodani Consulate for education of a nefarious kind². It is to be regretted that citizens of the Imperium feel the need to break the law in this way but our empire wide strictures are both few and reasonable. They're in place for good reason and in this instance give us hope that we can avoid the pain and suffering that occurred three hundred years ago. The *Times* commends our boys in blue for their bravery and submits that Navy funding for such patrols should be increased, not held at last year's figures as previously reported.

Marches 2036, A000986-F) which is only Jump 2 away and which she can easily reach.

On arrival she has four possible leads to follow which are outlined in the following scenes. They can be approached in any order, skipped altogether if the PC doesn't think of them, or the Referee can outline the possibilities.

Scene 1

The news outlet that first published the story she's vaguely remembered is well known across the subsector.

NEWSLINE

PSI SPIES ON PISCES 924A

Glisten Gazette, dateline: 066/1104, byline: Jerb Mikkleman.

A sports facility on one of the larger Pisces third-ring asteroids has been identified as a training ground for psions. In popular parlance this 'psionic institute' is understood to have at least two dozen adepts who have used the facility as a cover for their activities. The long established and well regarded halls, gyms and pools are known for the physical training they offer beltlers and other Glistenites, but the mental training comes as a shock to the management. Qalli Yui, Chief Instructor, said "I can state categorically that my team and I had no idea this was going on. We will of course be investigating fully and our records and staff are being made available to the authorities as an absolute priority." It is unknown at this time whether the so-called institute was actively recruiting new members, but the *Gazette* understands that at least three of the psions may be Zhodani.

She can easily enough track down their offices a short journey away from the main starport, but they say they had to publish a retraction 20 days later after following up the story and finding there was nothing to it. Marinda missed the retraction. Their information led nowhere and in fact the journalist who ran the story has since been sacked.

Scene 2

If Marinda attempts to track down the journalist who first published the story, his name will be on the byline of the original piece, Jerb Mikkleman. With a bit of detective work she should be able to track him down – although it might be another hike out to yet another asteroid. At first he will be very reluctant to talk to anyone on the subject – it's cast a shadow over his career and he wants to forget about

Active Measures

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it. But he's still looking for the next big story and once he hears a bit of Marinda's tale he'll at least give her the time of day. Mikkleman will explain that he thought his sources and leads were solid but it turned out he'd been misled. He now believes it was a clever con job with several people working together to discredit the news outlet. He's long had an interest in psions under Imperial rule and can tell all sorts of stories if Marinda is interested.

NEWSLINE

NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

Glisten Gazette, dateline: 086/1104

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES – for 'Cloen' read 'Cleon'

PSI SPIES ON PISCES 924B – further investigation has revealed there is not and never has been any psionic activity on Pisces 924b, nor is there any psionic institute. We regret any upset this article may have caused; it did not meet our usual journalism standards.

OBITUARIES – We unreservedly apologize to DAME ILDA O'DEN (aged 149) for publishing her obituary yesterday. We're delighted to report that she is alive and well and will no doubt see many more issues of the *Gazette*.

"You call that an explanation?" Mikkleman will rant showing Marinda the offending item if she's not seen it.

Scene 3

The asteroid which the media outlet named is another possible avenue to explore. It's not hard to get a shuttle to somewhere in the vicinity from which she can hitch a lift for the short trip to the relevant rock via a belter who is passing. There are some old played out mining caverns on the asteroid but the only signs of life here are the detritus of long gone miners and their families.

Scene 4

She could make the usual run of starport bars and dives to see if she can pick up any rumours that might be in circulation. Marinda is pretty enough that amongst these rough and ready beltters she will attract a fair amount of attention. Most of it ribald, some of it teasing her about psionic institutes or

dirty Zhodani mindflayers, and one guy who discreetly accosts her in a particularly seedy bar and offers to show her out to an asteroid where the institute is – for a price. He's a conman and will dump her on an asteroid with a small population and quickly vanish. The Referee should play up the differences in Imperial attitudes with the more open attitudes of non-Imperial space later on.

NEWSLINE

B NICE OR C RED!

Glisty Goss, dateline: 158/1105, byline: /.

Markus B – known system wide for his subtle harmonic crooning – was thrown out of Sir Peters last night. Eyewitnesses saw him unceremoniously dumped in the corridor outside the raucous bar whilst railing vociferously at staff. An unidentified woman who can only be described as statuesque, was also seen wobbling unsteadily out on the latest in Padam liftheels and trying to help him to his feet. Now we wouldn't say that anyone or anything goes at Sir Peters, but it must take some doing to get thrown out of that rundown jynjoint. Vid here.

In short, Glisten will prove rather a dead end. It may take a while for Marinda to eventually realize that.

Act Two: The Zhodani may be the solution

Scene 1

Meanwhile, Marinda's son appears to be getting worse. His nightmares are increasing both in number and also their power to engender terror in the young lad. His mental aberrations seem to be getting worse as well. A particularly nasty episode in a public space on one of the Glisten asteroids means her son is taken by emergency paramedics to a hospital accident and emergency unit and before she's really aware of what's happening he's being seen by psychiatric specialists. If they're granted permission they'll run all sorts of tests and recommend that he begins psychiatric counselling. There'll be no mention of psionics unless Marinda chooses to bring this up. She should be aware, however, that if she does, her son is likely to be taken away from her. Amidst all of this, Marinda will overhear nurses tutting about the whole situation and one of them gossiping about a friend who had suffered for much of her life

Active Measures

(Continued from page 25)

with mental issues, travelling to a Zhodani community on Tarkine in District 268 (Spinward Marches 1434, C566662-7). Other possible worlds might be Squallia, Milagro, or Singer with some adjustment to the institute description. (Alternatively, Jerb Mikkleman might have put her onto this track in which case this scene would only require the 'incident' and the medical opinions.) Marinda should at this point be desperate enough to try this.

NEWSLINE

ST CHESSIES TO OPEN FOURTH WING

Spinward Times, dateline: 157/1105, byline: Rista Gonzal.
Glisten's premiere medical facility, St Francesca of the Laser, unveiled plans yesterday to 'complete' the hospital by opening a fourth wing in a burrow running northish on Andromeda 2b. Volume in the rock has long been set aside for this purpose ever since the original architect, Bilton hault-Abstermacclethin suggested a cross-shaped design back in 1043. The wing, costing Cr100million, will be paid for from a mixture of government funding, lottery grants, bequests and private donations.

Scene 2

The Referee may wish to flesh out the journey to Tarkine with other incidents germane or irrelevant to the plot. Perhaps on one world, Sabby is able to get them out of a tight spot although he isn't quite sure how. Perhaps on another, they face particular hostility from the authorities or the locals or both because of Sabby's 'condition'. Now, having arrived at the planet, the aim is to get to the Zhodani psionic community and see what help she can get from them. It's a very small group of just a few hundred people who for one reason or another have left the Consulate. Some are there to escape it, some are there in an effort to represent the race more favourably to non-Zhos. Various approaches can be made either to individuals or to organizations and the Referee may wish to detail various possibilities. However, Marinda will almost certainly be speaking to proles who can't really help her. One might direct her to an Intendant manager but she will be unwilling to help fearing a trap being set either by the gov-

ernment of Tarkine or by Imperial agents known to be active in the area. The Zhodani are trying to maintain good relations with the populace and don't want to give the appearance of subverting Imperial citizens. However, the Intendant will recommend a good bookshop in the main city which she knows has some well-regarded texts on mental healing.

NEWSLINE

DOCKERS' STRIKE CALLED FOR SIXDAY

Tarkine Telegraph, dateline: 206/1105, byline: Verz Ussing Wa.
Down dockside t'TUD have called strike for Sixday next. Tarkine Union of Dockworkers did fair ballot and took 58% members. Thort to have started with dissatis with former man'ger Berk Dimplemannen Buk, is now 'scalated to pay/conditions/perquisites in line with Tarkine Union of Cargohandlers. TUD rep quotes: "fair's fair" and TUC rep quotes: "we support our sibs".

Scene 3

On the verge of giving up perhaps, Marinda has few remaining options. She can try the bookshop which is a large modern establishment on several floors with displays of bookchips, printed volumes and advertising for a large variety of print and even electronic magazines which are just beginning to take Tarkine by storm as the latest thing. In the relevant section – on a higher floor way in the back of the shop – there is indeed a great section on problems of the mind just as the Intendant suggested. If Marinda is accompanied by Sabby at this point, she'll draw the attention of a member of staff very quickly; if not, there will be a member of staff nearby who appears to be keeping a close eye on her. If Marinda shows any sign of breaking down, she'll be offered a hot beverage and a sit down. If she merely browses for any length of time, she may be asked "can I help you?" The shop assistant is employed by the psionic institute to keep an eye out for anyone showing a particular interest in this section of the shop and with her own psionic talent can either immediately spot Sabby as needing help, or eventually gather that Marinda is genuinely seeking assistance. If Marinda hints at the kind of help she wants, the shop assistant will suggest Marinda takes Sabby to a

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dockworker who she's heard can help with kids who have troubling dreams. She won't say more than this as an additional precaution. Contact details are passed over.

NEWSLINE

REVIEW: *THE KIAN'S ENTRAILS* BY GORD BRAATH ER-U

Tarkine Telegraph, dateline: 206/1105, review editor.

... shortly, this late offering from our newest 'tective penner is 'citing blend of character/drama/wellseen local detail.

Act Three: Haven

Scene 1

The dockworker, Zax Fron Ee, is at last someone who can really help. He'll meet Marinda and Sabby near the cargo docks and take them on a small boat down an estuary. He'll be friendly and ask them about their background and reason for travelling. After about an hour in the small boat, they'll pull into a quiet shore where there are thirty or so beach huts a little way back from the shoreline. These huts, or perhaps chalets would be a better description, aren't really permanent residences but used as holiday houses in the better months of the year.

The Haven Institute

The average Imperial citizen, if they think about them at all, have clichéd images of psionic institutes that can range from the monolithic structures of venerable architecture that supposedly date from before the PsionicSuppressions but are probably only the fantasy of holovids, through to the secretive university department with hypersecurity. In fact, these days, with Imperial attitudes to psionics, they're more likely to be a run-down café with "extended" kitchens or an old apartment block basement with two or three alternative, and well-disguised, exits. The Haven Institute is anything but what might be expected. The staff are a wide variety of humanity: Zhodani Consulate émigrés, humans from Foreven sector and non-aligned worlds in the Spinward Marches, the odd exiled Imperial psion, and even representatives of a couple of psionic minor races.

The main 'institute' is a series of beach huts on one side of an estuary and the staff barely think of themselves as an institute at all – more a collection of like-minded individuals trying to help those in need. There's an oil refinery across the water so the view isn't spectacular although there's a certain charm to the sun setting behind the smoke stacks and storage tanks. The 'front' end of the Institute is the shop assistant in the city centre bookshop who vets any enquirers long before they are anywhere near the real action.

Scene 2

After the stresses, rigours and perhaps hostility of their travel, the Marindas are now in the very different experience of a very laid back, warm and welcoming atmosphere. Zax takes a lead in introducing them to one or two key colleagues who'll be working with the young boy. One of them may have the ability of Dream Reading³ to help understand Sabby's fears and calm him. They'll be given an empty beach hut to themselves with basic but serviceable facilities and told to make themselves at home.

Sabby's testing will result in the following:

Psionic strength = 10 with +2 for his age instead of a negative DM for being over 18. The Referee can ignore this latter if desired. It doesn't affect the rolls below showing what order Sabby is tested.

Telepathy roll 12 + 2 (psionic strength) + 4
(Telepathy DM) = 18

Telekinesis roll 7 + 2 + 2 - 1 = 10

Clairvoyance roll 11 + 2 + 3 - 2 = 14

Awareness roll 10 + 2 + 1 - 3 = 10

Teleport roll 7 + 2 + 0 - 4 = 5

The above gives Sabby Telepathy 0, Telekinesis 0, Clairvoyance 0 and Awareness 0 and of course the denizens of Haven will begin to train him in controlling his Talents. This will slowly reduce and eventually remove his nightmares which were a result of one of the forms of Telepathy impressing him with all the minds around in a terrifying manner. He may also be able to develop into quite a powerful psion. (Although the above die rolls were "straight out of

Active Measures

(Continued from page 27)

the box,” as it were, if the Referee feels they give too much power, they should be adjusted as desired. Of course, they could always be rolled at the time.)

Scene 3

Deetah Marinda will now have to decide on futures for her and her son. Perhaps it will be while sitting on the pebbles chatting with Zax as the stars come out one evening. While Sabby is so young she may want to stay with him and the institute can no doubt find work for someone with her skills to support them while the lad undergoes training. The Institute may become their home for the next few years, or after a suitable period of development to get the boy’s abilities under control, Marinda may feel that she wants them to return to a ‘normal’ kind

NEWSLINE

ZHODANI CLAMPDOWN CONTINUES

Travellers’ News Service, dateline: 010/1106, byline: TAS staff.

The Imperium’s ever tightening controls on Zhodani within its borders continues with tighter regulation of Consulate citizen’s movements. Notices at all starports detail the particulars which are required of any such passengers carried through Jump-space. Starships are expected to lodge these particulars on departure and arrival. Ship captains are held to be personally responsible for such lodgements but crews may be held accessories after the fact for any infractions.

of life without training to the highest degree possible. But at least Sabby will have a future to look forward to – providing, of course, he is discreet about his abilities in Imperial space.

Characters

Deetah Marinda, 4A8B66, 33 year old former Civilian: Worker

STR 4 (-1), DEX A (+1), END 8 (0), INT B (+1), EDU 6 (0), SOC 6 (0)

Homeworld: Horosho (Spinward Marches 2138, C3378A6-A¹)

Skills: Engineer (life support) 3, Computers 1, Diplomat 1, Drive (wheeled) 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Mechanic 1, Melee (unarmed combat) 1, Streetwise 1, Trade (civil engineering) 1, Carouse 0, Flyer (grav) 0, Melee (blade) 0, Physical Science (electronics) 0, Steward 0, Trade (food preparation) 0

Equipment: Ally, Slug Pistol, 2 Ship Shares

Sabby Marinda, 457545, 7 year old (UPP at 18 will be 77A685)

Notes

1. As given in *The Spinward Marches*. T5 Second Survey data at www.TravellerMap.com gives the UWP as C4378A6-A
2. See *GURPS: Psionic Institutes*, p.11.
3. See *Freelance Traveller* 056:4

Doing It My Way

QREBS Revisited

by Timothy Collinson

Following my ‘QREBS in the Shopping Mall’ in last month’s *Freelance Traveller*, someone has pointed out that there is indeed linkage between quality and

Code	D
Descriptor .	Disposable
TL	+3
Range	0
Mass	×0.9
qreBs	-1
Misc Q=	-2
D	0
Comment ..	Cr ×0.5

price in *Traveller*⁵. Although I’d noted the QREBS rules on pp.190-196 and ‘Cost’ in the ThingMaker section (p. 599) suggest there should be a connection, I completely missed that p.499 has a Tech Level Stage Effect table with QREBS

indirectly connected to cost and that in the various Makers, there are QREBS modifications directly contributing to price (e.g., pp.251-253). The example I was sent (sidebar) will service nicely (from p.253).

The error was entirely mine – my fault for not being completely *au fait* with 650+ pages of rules all at once. My thanks to those who took the time to read the article and write in about it. I’m delighted to see the appearance of *Imperiallines* specifically supporting *Traveller*⁵ and giving worked examples. Perhaps they’ll cover this in some detail. Meanwhile, I hope the article provides some useful notes despite its faults and gives some inspiration to use QREBS in future adventures.

Lost Diaries #1: Lost in the Ziru Sirka

by Rob Eaglestone

This is a lightly edited version of a story that was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2002.

[Editor's Note: The origin of this diary excerpt is unknown. The original was written in an archaic form of High Vilani. There are indications that it may have been found on a world that was on the periphery of the Ziru Sirka, hence the title.]

... I buried Khaashuur yesterday. We were attacked by nomads who had no conscience at all, leaving us with our clothes and some new bruises. Khaashuur suffered internal injuries and was coughing up blood not long after. I still cannot use a cutlass. Now I wish I had learned a long time ago.

If only the calendar here made sense. Everything is local. Money is local. Time is local.

Everything is primitive. Money is disorganized and silly, with strange denomination ratios... 3 to 1, then 5 to 1 or 6 to 1 or even (Sharshurshid protect us!) 7 to 1.

With a functioning memclip and patience we were able to learn these people's simple language. They certainly sound strange, with some noises I've never heard before. Kind of nasal, like the yokels in Ilelish, liberally peppered with yowls and coughs.

Medicine is horribly primitive. I don't want to talk about it. Though I must say their herblore is of an extremely high quality—they can extract benefi-

cial chemicals from the local flora without all our expensive and tedious processing techniques.

Let's just say it, shall we? I'm doomed to die on this miserable world, so far from all I know, and too close to all these smelly people. Actually, they don't smell anymore, which means I must smell like them now.

Though, of course, they must have technology somewhere on this world. The atmosphere is pleasant, if a bit dry, and people actually eat most of the smaller vegetation here! In fact, they even eat the animals, which proves that there must have been genetic engineering going on at one time. That, or someone transplanted most of the edibles in the galaxy and planted a garden-quality reserve world, perhaps for hunting? My goal is to find the emergency starport that must be on this world.

On the schedule for these next couple days is the end of a great feast. The religious caste are playing tug-of-war or something with the warrior caste over a trouble-maker who claims to be the king. He's obviously an artisan, but I heard he says the most extraordinary things, inciting riots and disturbing the peace. And now this bit about being the king. I mean, if he went around saying he was the Emperor we'd put him away! They take things like that very gravely down here. I'll stick around and see what happens. ...



News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

September 2014

- **Thunderegg Productions** has released *Species and Societies*.
- **DSL Ironworks** has released *Bastards of Foreven 2: Starships*.
- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Starships Book II0I0I: Blast Class Torpedo Interceptor*, *Starships Book II0II0: Tadpole Gunship*, and *Bulletstorm Grav Tank*.
- **Stygian Fox** has released *Colonial Times #6*.
- **Game Designers' Workshop/FarFuture Enterprises** has released *Imperiallines #6*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Japanese Vehicles of the Second World War*.
- **Greylock Publishing** has released *Player's Data for use with Cirque*.



Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
- what you think of the articles we publish
- how we can make our magazine better
- how we can make our website better
- what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
- what you think of our look
- how we can make it better

Please, give us your opinion! We've provided several ways you can do so:

- e-mail: feedback@freelancetraveller.com.

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.
 - Forums:
 - Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg-discussion.net/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>
 - Lone Star at Citizens of the Imperium: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>
- Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.**

Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

Freelance Traveller sponsors channels for *Traveller* fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks, and the two channels are "bridged" so that if you're visiting either, you can see what's going on in the other, and talk to people there. For more information about both channels, see our informational pages at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travnet.html#IRC> and <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travchat/index.html>. Come talk "live" with other *Traveller* fans about anything at all, *Traveller* or not, and make both channels "jumping" places to hang out!

You can also run "play-by-IRC" game sessions in either channel; please stop in and ask one of the channel operators (FreeTrav or EMT_Hawk) to schedule it, so we can ensure that the 'bridge' and the 'bartender' are set into a nondisruptive mode.

Please watch the *Traveller Mailing List*, the *Mongoose Traveller forum*, and the *Lone Star* section of the *Citizens of the Imperium forum* for announcements of *Topical Talks*!

Information Center: Request for Information

Traveller and Traveller-compatible Publishers

This is a list of all publishers that we are aware of that are currently putting out material for *Traveller* (any version) or *Traveller*-compatible material not specifically for *Traveller* (this list is based on products that the editor owns, and notifications from "follow your favorites" from DriveThruRPG). If you know of others, or if any of those on this list are not in fact currently operating/publishing, please write and let us know. We'd also appreciate either lists or pointers to lists of all of the *Traveller* and *Traveller*-compatible material put out by any of these companies, or any companies that we may have omitted from the list. If you have contact information, we'd appreciate that as well.

13Mann Verlag (German, English)
3Hombres Games
Avalon Game Company
Avenger Enterprises
Christian Hollnbuchner
D.B. Design Bureau
DSL Ironworks
Expeditious Retreat Press
FarFuture Enterprises
Forever People
Game Designers' Workshop
Gorgon Press
Gypsy Knights Games
Jon Brazer Enterprises
K-Studio
Loren Wiseman Enterprises
Mongoose Publishing
Postmortem Studios
QuikLink Interactive
Samardan Press

Sceaptune Games
Scrying Eye Games
Spellbook Software and Games
Spica Publishing
Steve Jackson Games
Terra/Sol Games
Toxic Bag Productions
TrooperX
Zoyer Games

Submission Guidelines

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

We're looking for anything and everything to do with *Traveller* – reviews of products, house rules, alternate settings, NPC profiles, world write-ups, adventures, equipment, starships, fiction, “color” articles... If you see it in *Freelance Traveller*, or on our website, we're interested in it. Even if you don't see it in the magazine or on the website, we might be interested; write to editor@freelancetraveller.com and ask.

Some things that we want that you might not think of as “*Traveller*” would include reviews of non-*Traveller* products that easily lend themselves to being ‘mined’ for ideas for use in *Traveller*, or reviews of fiction (in any medium) that “feels” like *Traveller* in some way. In these cases, your article should focus on the *Traveller*-esque aspects of the item. There may be other things, as well; if you're not sure, write and ask.

What about ...

The rule of thumb is “If it's a *Traveller* ruleset, or a setting that has been published for use with a *Traveller* ruleset, go for it!”. That includes the non-Official *Traveller* Universe settings that have been published for use with any version of the *Traveller* ruleset, including (but not limited to) *Judge Dredd*, *Strontium Dog*, *Babylon 5*, *Reign of Diaspora*, *Twilight Sector*, the two *GURPS* variants on the Official *Traveller* Universe, *Avenger Enterprises' Far Avalon*, and the forthcoming *Traveller Prime Directive*, and any others we may have forgotten.

...Hyperlite?

We've made the decision to support *Hyperlite* as though it were an alternate *Traveller* setting, much like *Twilight Sector* or *Reign of Diaspora*. The changes that Sceptune Games has made to *Traveller* to get *Hyperlite* aren't really much more than the differences between Classic *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller*, and *Mongoose Traveller*, and converting between any of those systems and *Hyperlite*, in either direction, should be ‘trivial’.

... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” or supported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold

the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

At the very minimum, we need the submission itself, your name (for credit), and a valid email address to contact you at if we need to.

What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

Text should be submitted in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF), Microsoft Word 2003 (DOC) or 2007/2010 (DOCX), OpenOffice Writer (ODT), or plain text (TXT). Most word processors will support one of those; if yours seems not to, please write to us for assistance. Avoid PDF if at all possible; it is difficult to reformat PDFs for our magazine or website.

Graphics should be submitted in the format that's best for the type of graphic. Most of the time, that will be GIF, PNG, or JPG/JPEG. Submitting in higher resolutions is better; we have tools to resample a picture to make it smaller if we need to – but it's not possible to make a picture larger without it becoming pixellated.

If you're submitting a graphic that you'd like to see us use for a cover of an issue, please make sure that it will fit nicely on both US Letter and ISO A4 pages—we'll crop the picture to fit, to avoid distorting shapes, so please leave reasonable “margins”; don't run “critical” imagery right to the edge where it will look bad if we crop it. A good resolution is 100 dpi or more.

Plans (deck plans, building plans, maps, etc.) may be better submitted in a vector-based format such as CorelDRAW! format (CDR) or any format that can be imported into CorelDRAW! X4. Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), Windows Metafile (WMF), Enhanced Metafile (EMF), Encapsulated PostScript (EPS), or Microsoft Visio (VSD) are some common vector formats that can be imported.

How do I get it to you?

Email it to us at our submissions address, submissions@freelancetraveller.com. Your subject line should specify the type of article that it is, and what section you think it should be put in, e.g., “Combat Rules for Doing It My Way”.

