

GURPS[®]

Fourth Edition

Boardroom and Curia[™] **Tomorrow Rides**[™]



Written by **STEVEN MARSH**

Edited by **NIKOLA VRTIS**

Illustrated by **TITHI LUADTHONG**

GURPS System Design ■ **STEVE JACKSON**

GURPS Line Editor ■ **SEAN PUNCH**

GURPS Project Manager ■ **STEVEN MARSH**

Production Artist ■ **NIKOLA VRTIS**

GURPS FAQ Maintainer ■

VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO

Chief Executive Officer ■ **PHILIP REED**

Chief Creative Officer ■ **SAM MITSCHKE**

Chief Operating Officer ■ **SUSAN BUENO**

Director of Sales ■ **ROSS JEPSON**

Page Design ■ **PHIL REED** and **JUSTIN DE WITT**

Prepress Checker ■ **NIKOLA VRTIS**

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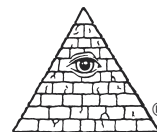
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INTRODUCTION

Heroes often have a need to get from Point A to Point B . . . sometimes very quickly. But it can be difficult to justify the cost of quality transportation, in either dollars or **GURPS** points. Sure, some adventurers have Contacts or Patrons that can provide a ride if the need arises . . . but wouldn't it be great if some organization just handed out cutting-edge technology, with few strings attached?

If you've got the adventure, Tomorrow Rides might have what you need. Across the land, garages wait to loan out strange and interesting vehicles . . . and they *want* their customers do dangerous or unexpected things with them! Do you have what it takes to become a Tomorrow Rider?

GURPS Boardroom and Curia: Tomorrow Rides is designed as an organization for just about any high-tech campaign, from cliffhangers to **GURPS Action** or **GURPS Monster Hunters**. It also supports near-future ultra-tech and somewhat beyond. However, the further into future that the

campaign is set, the more the GM will need to extrapolate from the core ideas of what's presented here. Although the premise ranges from somewhat cinematic to "your car can do *what?!*" craziness, the basic assumptions are rooted in reality; there's little to keep Tomorrow Rides from existing in even the most realistic campaign.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer, editor, and project manager. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Steve Jackson Games, Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He wrote for and edited *Pyramid* magazine for over 10 years; during that time, he won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY

The line between control and chaos is shattered, as is the line between motion and stillness. So, too, is glass. Screams. Darkness. Of those, only darkness remains.

The story of Tomorrow Rides begins about 20 years before today (for definitions of “today” that befit the campaign). On that fateful day, self-made businessperson Jody Macht was celebrating her 21st birthday by treating herself to a brand-new top-of-the-line automobile, with all the features and amenities money could buy. Since she’d made her fortune on automotive technology, it was an especially apt splurge.

Unfortunately, even the most safety-minded vehicle can fall victim to chance. Reports are inconclusive as to the exact cause of the accident: unexpectedly heavy rainfall, an unknown oil-like substance on the road, fault in the vehicle, or user error. Rumors even hinted at personal impairment, of the alcoholic or other variety . . . a charge that Macht has steadfastly denied.

Although the *cause* of the incident may forever remain a mystery, its *effects* were all too real. The vehicle was totaled in a single-car accident, and its driver suffered almost as extensive damage. For many long days, Macht flitted between life and death, only to finally turn a corner in her mortality and return to the realm of the living. However, one permanent impairment resulted from that fateful day: owing to the debris and damage, Jody Macht lost her eyesight.

THE ROAD TO TODAY

This setback didn’t deter Macht. Her business mind as sharp as ever, she continued to expand her holdings and company. Although by no means one of the richest people on the planet, she still maintains enough ties in the corporate world that those who keep abreast of such developments tend to know of her.

However, the strength of much of her empire primarily serves as a means of financing her true passion. The forces that forged her on that fateful night decades ago were not the beginning of her story, but the continuation of her lifelong interests. Her primary passion is making vehicles that are faster, more effective, more stylish . . . and, especially as of 20 years ago, *safer*.

THE SPEED OF SOUND . . .

Among Macht’s various holdings are a group of garages that stretch across the country, taking the somewhat modified name Mach Station (but see *What’s in a T?*, below). Although not “budget,” Mach Station repairs are relatively affordable and especially honorable. Mach Station is also a full-service

garage, from routine oil changes to engine repairs to full body repairs or vehicular restoration.

Mach Station has the “Mach It Right” guarantee: If they can’t fix a problem to the customer’s satisfaction, they offer to *buy* the vehicle from the customer (for only slightly below market value of a vehicle in that condition) instead of the customer paying for those repairs. The company generally offers about 10% less than the “true” fair-market value. This valuation has come to be known informally as the “Mach It value.” The guarantee is quite popular; since Mach Station mechanics have a reputation for trustworthiness, customers often find it easier just to cut their losses after an unsuccessful repair and sell the vehicle, rather than continuing to throw good money after bad.

Mach Stations also have *another* agenda. Each Mach Station has a separate, discrete (*and* discreet) garage building, which has an altogether different purpose.

WHAT’S IN A T?

The assumption is that Mach Station exists in an era where the idea of “Mach” (to denote the speed of sound) is a relatively known concept, and the notion of “Mach” would convey some sense of speed. In settings where this isn’t the case – such as historically accurate-ish 1920s cliffhangers or Victorian horror – the garage would retain its “t” and be known as Macht Station. (Similarly, the adjoined garages are known as Macht Twos . . . the name seems to coincidentally predate the notion of “Mach 2” as a speed.)

In a suitably long-lived campaign that begins this way, it could be a point of interest when the notion of the sound barrier catches the public’s imagination, and Macht Station changes its name to public fanfare.

. . . AND THE SOUND OF SPEED

Each separate garage is known as Mach Two (collectively called Mach Twos). They house a distinct but related agency known as Tomorrow Rides. Generally speaking, Tomorrow Rides does not have its own employees or representatives; they use the existing Mach Station managers, mechanics, support personnel, phone lines, etc., with few exceptions. In fact, Mach Twos are closed and dark unless they’re needed, although they can be lit at a moment’s notice. Mach Twos are nondescript – lacking any kind of markings or windows – and are generally placed to discourage walk-up traffic or gawkers.

On paper, Tomorrow Rides is a consumer-testing facility. Its stated purpose is to employ demanding drivers and high-stakes individuals to test vehicles and vehicular components under real-world conditions. Indeed, it sells its findings to

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

So, are Mach Twos and Tomorrow Rides secret? Well, the answer's complicated.

The easiest way to think about them is that they are publicly visible but difficult to access, somewhat similar to special clubs at airports, special-collections rooms in libraries, or private facilities at amusement parks. That is, people off the street probably know about them, but it's also clear that the facilities are not for most normal folks.

Tomorrow Rides goes out of its way to maintain an air of "not secret but not that interesting." Thus in a similar way that most people know there are vehicle crash-test facilities – which are presented very clinically and discourage uninvited visitors – so too does Tomorrow Rides just kind of exist in most major cities but it's not a big deal. Sure, there have been (dry) documentaries that tell what Tomorrow Rides does, but it hasn't stuck in public consciousness, outside of some enthused fans who like the idea of it more than its reality. "Oh, you want to see the car in the Mach Two? Okay. It's under a sheet, it hasn't been washed, and it doesn't have any tires on it."

In fact, Tomorrow Rides tends to promote and employ those who have *Boring!* (usually at level 16+), a new wildcard skill that replaces any social interaction, Acting roll, Fast-Talk effort, etc. where the desired outcome is to convince others that "there's nothing to see here."

JODY MACHT

Details of Jody Macht are intentionally left vague, to make her more easily inserted into campaigns. In "modern times" (by the campaign's standpoint), she's in her early 40s. She has a strong but compelling personality, which has served her well both in the business world and in her vicarious adventuring fantasies. However, she's learned to play below people's perceptions; the less time she spends in the spotlight, the more she can accomplish what she wants.

If game stats are necessary, she should be designed at *least* as competent as a PC, plus she has Blindness [-50] (p. B124). She could team up with heroes on an adventure, and she could easily be an Ally or romantic interest.

In campaigns where Jody Macht's blindness can't easily be justified – especially those with healing capabilities beyond modern science – that disadvantage can be replaced with Phobia (6) (Operating a motor vehicle) [-10].

interested companies and research facilities. However, it's one of those operations where – if you stop to think about it – it's hard to see how it makes money. Mach Twos are everywhere, but they aren't really accessible to the public.

Additionally, Tomorrow Rides can glean a trove of data from analyzing wear and damage from vehicles that Mach Stations can't repair. In more fantastic campaigns, there may even be additional incentives to purchase unrepairable vehicles, from data that can be analyzed from onboard computers to residual "soul" material resulting from most people's close ties to their cars.

In fact, Mach Twos and Tomorrow Rides don't exist to support the rest of Macht's holdings. Rather, Jody Macht's holdings prop up the Tomorrow Rides enterprise. (Although it's possible more is going on than meets the eye; see *Conspiracy Theories*, p. 9.)



CHAPTER TWO

IN THE CAMPAIGN

From a campaign standpoint, Tomorrow Rides exists to give heroes cool vehicles to use. Here are game mechanics for how that plays out in practice.

Game stats (p. 6) are given in *GURPS Boardroom and Curia* format for modern-day *GURPS* campaigns. That supplement should provide a starting point for those wishing to reinvent the operation in other eras, modifying its stats to reflect comparable facilities in the campaign.

THE RIDES

Tomorrow Rides primarily concerns itself with land vehicles, with a special focus on cars and trucks (and possibly aircraft, if the campaign supports them at an adventurer level). More unusual types of transportation are possible, but unlikely. Watercraft are obviously more common at Mach Twos by coasts or large lakes. In general, vehicles that can't fit in a 15'-square garage or are designed to support groups larger than 10 people are even more rare, with that rarity going up dramatically with the size of the prospective vehicle.

Officially, any group who borrows a vehicle from Tomorrow Rides must have a driver or pilot who is officially licensed and permitted to operate a vehicle of that type. Unofficially, most Mach Two facilities take a *laissez-faire* attitude toward these certifications; in most cases, the associate filling out the paperwork permits the deal if the company has plausible deniability that the person they're lending a vehicle to could be *legally* permitted to operate it – whether this includes forged papers, insistent phone calls from a person of authority, or the like. And many of Tomorrow Rides' vehicles get around strict licensing requirements because they're often doing unusual enough things that no one has thought to outlaw yet. (Jody Macht honestly doesn't care too much about the law outside of its ability to hamper her.)

So You Want to Be a Tomorrow Rider?

Most people become Tomorrow Riders because they are contacted by an associate of Jody Macht (or – occasionally – Macht herself). This is especially possible if the heroes have cultivated a reputation as problem-solvers, people of action, or otherwise interesting folks who could make use of unusual vehicles.

In other circumstances, those who are of an adventuring sort might seek out Tomorrow Rides themselves. Any Mach Station facility can accept applications, but the process tends to be a *lot* slower, taking about as long as obtaining a non-expedited passport does. Most such walk-up applicants are rejected. Tomorrow Rides might speed up the process for applicants who are somehow

known to be heroic but otherwise keep a low-enough profile that Macht's agents haven't already contacted them or figured out who they are. In this case, it's up to the heroes' ingenuity and the GM's discretion to determine if they made their case for faster service.

Membership is considered perpetual so long as the borrowers continue prove that they need Tomorrow Rides' services. Otherwise, inactive Tomorrow Riders are removed from membership after about five years, although – in the event of frenetic drivers coming out of retirement – the process of getting reinstated generally doesn't take more than a week.

Tomorrow's Rides . . . Today!

Accepted applicants receive membership cards, which can be shown at any Mach Two facility to pick up a vehicle. These cards are comparable to government-issued IDs, as far as their security and proof of identity. Although someone might figure out how to forge or counterfeit the credentials, it's uncommon.

WHO RIDES TOMORROW RIDES?

One logical question that can arise when visualizing all this is: How many people are actually having rides furnished to them by Tomorrow Rides? And, for that matter, how many Mach Two facilities are there?

- Assuming Tomorrow Rides are of interest to PCs, there are no fewer active groups at any one time with access to Tomorrow Rides than about 1/10 the number of people or groups that are of a similar sort to the PCs. Thus, in a horror game world with (approximately) 100 groups in the country who are doing similar investigator-heroic-type activities to what the players' heroes are doing, there are no fewer than about 10 active groups at any given time who are also participating in a Tomorrow Rides test drive.

- For insight into Mach Two's placement, see p. 10. If groups that do what the heroes do are exceptionally rare, there are about 20 stations for every group that's active in the campaign area. (Even if the heroes are unique, 20 different facilities provides variety and spread.) This doesn't preclude *other* companies or facilities from filling similar niches in different regions, but finding and negotiating with them should be separate encounters.

In short, Tomorrow Riders are rare, but not particularly unheard of among those who do what the heroes do.

The actual process of *getting* a vehicle depends on the era. A little bit of bureaucracy needs to be navigated; after all, not every Mach Two facility has every vehicle ever. However, this paperwork can be done via telephone or Internet (as era-appropriate).

To start the bureaucratic process, Tomorrow Riders make known what their vehicular needs are, when they need it, and what kind of dangers or issues they expect to encounter during the lending period. If the Riders are members of an agency or other hierarchal organization, *their* bureaucracy

TOMORROW RIDES (MODERN-DAY)

Mission Statement: Tomorrow Rides provides vehicles to those willing to use them in dangerous or unconventional ways.

Capabilities

TL: 8[^]

Members: 2,500

Wealth: Comfortable

Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Technological skills-12 [5]

Member Traits: Unusual Background (Occasional access to TL9 or TL[^] gear) [10]

Notable Resources: There are several hundred Mach Station facilities in the United States, each of which has a Mach Two garage with access to Tomorrow Rides. Mach Two facilities technically have *no* employees; they are all “borrowed” from the adjoining Mach Station, which operates normal business hours (generally 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday).

Reaction-Time Modifier: +2. If the needs are modest (“any vehicle is fine”) this can go to +1. If the needs are modest *and* fit in with Tomorrow Rides’ goals, this can go to -1.

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: \$180,960,000

Resource Value: \$904,800

Patron Value: 15 points

Enemy Value: -30 points

Ally and Dependent Value: Most of Tomorrow Rides’ associates are trained mechanics and vehicle engineers, so they have the same point value as other professionals in the campaign. Jody Macht has a point value at *least* equal to the average non-superpowered adventurer in the campaign.

Social Attributes

Type: Commercial, Research

CR: 2

Loyalty: Good (13; +2)

Rank: Business Rank 0-2 [2/level]

Income Range: \$2,600 (Average) to \$4,500 (Comfortable)

Reputation: +2 (among vehicle buffs)

Notes

Tomorrow Rides is essentially TL8, but with sporadic access to superscience or ultra-tech gear. Tomorrow Rides does not actually *develop* any of the vehicles they provide; those come from elsewhere within Jody Macht’s other holdings or from other manufacturers. Anyone trying to steal from or defraud the company could make a powerful enemy.

can take care of these details behind the scenes. Tomorrow Rides does not need a security deposit; the company expects something other than money in exchange for their services (see *The Responsibilities*, pp. 8-9).

The more lead time that the borrower gives to Tomorrow Rides, the more likely Tomorrow Rides can meet the requested specifications. In general, the longest period of time needed is about a week, while the shortest period of time is literally “get to the nearest Mach Two – we’ll have the engine running.” In fact, if it’s more expedient, Mach Two facilities can deliver a vehicle (of the company’s choice) to Riders in need. Nearby, soon, perfect – pick two. (From a campaign standpoint, Tomorrow Rides gets the adventurers *some* kind of interesting transport for heroic missions with more than enough time to actually fulfill the mission . . . but it may not be exactly what they’re looking for.)

Transportation of Tomorrow

The vehicles of Tomorrow Rides are assigned a color code that determines how much they diverge from what’s “normal.” Which level Riders receive depends on a number of factors; see *Tomorrow’s Rides* . . . *Today!* (pp. 5-6) for tips.

Indigo

Indigo-level vehicles are considered the safest (and most boring). They are, in fact, bog-standard transports, already in common use, with appropriate **GURPS** stats for a standard vehicle of that tech level and campaign.

These vehicles are some of the *rarest* that Tomorrow Rides offers, since the operation is not really in the business of loaning out normal (read: “boring”) vehicles. However, sometimes fast-talking heroes can make a case that fulfilling a mission using a normal vehicle advances the goals of Tomorrow Rides.

In fact, Indigo-level vehicles are often just the loaner cars that customers borrow from the Mach Station when their car is worked on for an extensive period. These are called “Go Rides,” but hardly anyone in the mundane world realizes that the “Go” in question is a shortened form of the “Indigo” title. (Smart-aleck pedants often use this trivia bit to proclaim – with some accuracy – that they’re part of the Tomorrow Ride program because they had body-work done at a Mach Station at some point.)

Blue

These vehicles are otherwise mundane vehicles for a given campaign world and tech level, but are not commonplace among the general populace. Examples include limousines, hearses, ambulances, school buses, and the like.

Blue-level vehicles tend to be an oddball assortment. Most Mach Twos have at most one Blue vehicle at any given time, so it’s *very* difficult to request a specific kind of special-purpose vehicle without either luck (or perhaps Serendipity – see p. B83) or a willingness to travel to a location that has the desired transportation.

Moreover, since the Tomorrow Rides program is about pushing design, feature, and safety limits, the company doesn't provide ordinary special-purpose vehicles without a compelling reason. (Quick-witted heroes could certainly provide that: "Don't you *want* to know how well a limousine would perform during a high-speed chase through the roundabout capital of the world?")

Blue vehicles are the most common – but most eclectic – ones supplied to those who make a general request of the Tomorrow Rides program and want transportation fast but don't offer a reason in line with the company's mission. Mach Two support staff tends to get more creative the more the program is abused: "Good luck with your diplomatic mission; enjoy your ice-cream truck."

Green

Green vehicles are still mundane, but uncommon in some fashion. Examples in a modern setting include airplanes, semi-trucks, freighters, and the like.

It's almost unheard of for Tomorrow Rides to offer Green vehicles unless it furthers *the organization's* goals. If the heroes need some strange mode of transportation, they're going to get one that pushes the envelope in some fashion.

Yellow

Yellow vehicles are the most common that Tomorrow Rides supplies. They are considered safe(-ish), but are interesting in some fashion.

In general, a Yellow vehicle has one of the following modifications:

- An increase in ST/HP by (2d)%.
- An increase of Hnd by +1.
- An increase of HT by +1.
- An increase of Acceleration by +1.
- An increase of Top Speed by (2d)%.
- An increase of DR by +1.
- An increase in range by (4d)%.

See pp. B462-463 for information on these stats.

Alternatively, Yellow vehicles may have some specific bit of technology or augmentation that is on the cutting edge of technology beyond the abilities specified by the options above. Examples might include a "car telephone" in a 1950s-era campaign, or fully automated self-driving or remote control in a modern campaign.

In addition, any Yellow vehicle has a 2 in 6 chance of having a flaw. If it does, the most common flaws are as follows:

- A decrease of Hnd by -1.
- A decrease of HT by -1.
- A decrease of Acceleration by -1.
- A decrease of Top Speed by (2d)%.
- A decrease of DR by -1.
- A decrease in range by (4d)%.

The GM can either pick a flaw that's interesting or roll randomly, rolling 1d and treating the 6 items listed as all equally likely. The GM is always allowed – and even encouraged – to

STOCK PERFORMERS

For a selection of modern-day cinematic vehicles that can serve as either "baseline" vehicles that *Tomorrow Rides* modifies or an alternate system to provide augmented wheels the heroes can use, check out *GURPS Action 6: Tricked-Out Rides*.

SPECIFIC REQUESTS

A specific request requires a reaction roll (pp. B559-562), modified as per the rules on pp. B494-495 and as follows:

- Requestor in good standing with Tomorrow Rides: +1 to +3.
- Requestor in bad standing: -1 to -3.
- Requestor's mission seems like it will be "exciting": +1 to +3.
- Requestor's mission seems like it will be "boring": -1 to -5.

Any specific request for a vehicle that's coded Yellow or "cooler" requires a result of "Good" or better; any specific request that's Orange needs a "Very Good" result. Red vehicles – containing one-of-a-kind prototypes and impossible materials – require some kind of exigent circumstances or specific need; it's just not ordinarily possible to sweet-talk your way into borrowing the time machine. (See *Transportation of Tomorrow*, pp. 6-8, for coding levels.)

Keep in mind this roll is only to determine the *willingness* of Tomorrow Rides to loan out an unusual vehicle. The result doesn't dictate where it's at, how long it takes, or whether it's even possible.

be creative when coming up with flaws beyond the ones listed. Sometimes when you go fast, doors fall off.

In the event that randomly rolled benefits and flaws contradict each other – such as both an increase and decrease in Top Speed by (2d)% – they do *not* cancel each other out. Rather, the vehicle performs as expected with the increase for 1d hour. Then that increase goes away, and the flaw kicks in.

Those who are willing to take a Yellow vehicle can request a specific modification. Tomorrow Rides tries to honor the requests of its participants to the best of its abilities (see *Specific Requests*, below).

Note that all Yellow (and above) vehicles are most common with mundane shells (that is, "otherwise a normal car"). However, Indigo, Blue, and Green vehicles *can* be augmented with Yellow (and above) capabilities. Obviously, as rare as specific Blue or Green vehicles are, the odds of getting an exact desired modification at the Yellow or higher level are slim. But if it makes a cool adventure to have (say) a prototype underwater garbage truck, then Tomorrow Rides *definitely* has that available.

Orange

Orange vehicles push *beyond* the envelope. They often look very different from other normal types of transportation, either stylishly impossible or bizarrely utilitarian.

Orange vehicles have at *least* three different beneficial options listed under *Yellow* (above) **or one** beneficial option at double strength (for example, an increase of DR by +2). Alternatively, Orange vehicles can have one piece of really strange tech, generally one TL above the campaign's baseline.

In addition, all Orange vehicles have at least 1d-1 flaws, chosen as per *Yellow* (above) or made up by the GM.

Orange-level vehicles may have *more* beneficial options than that, as long as they aren't obviously doing the impossible; in this case, packages tend to follow the same ratio of "two to three benefits per 1d-1 flaws." This leads some longtime Tomorrow Riders to informally classify Orange-level vehicles anywhere from "Navel Orange" (lots of relatively boring upgrades where you "contemplate your navel") to "Burnt Orange" (strange tech that'll likely result in a fireball).

If a vehicle is interesting enough to become a recurring "character," *GURPS Supers*, pp. 84-85, offers guidelines for making vehicles that can be turned into Allies or Signature Gear.

Tomorrow Rides only provides Orange vehicles to those who have completed at least five previous missions to Tomorrow Rides' satisfaction (see *The Responsibilities*, below).

Red

Red vehicles are the *really* strange ones. In most campaigns, this classification might only exist as a hypothetical level. Abilities or tech for Red vehicles are at least two tech levels above the campaign baseline and/or incorporate

superscience. Examples include any anything that can travel through time, hyperspace, the ethereal realm, and so on.

These vehicles tend to have flaws that are at least as interesting as the benefits provided. The GM is encouraged to be creative.

Except under exigent circumstances, Tomorrow Rides only makes Red vehicles available to its most trusted associates – those who have completed at least 20 previous missions to Tomorrow Rides' satisfaction (see *The Responsibilities*, below) or have otherwise gained the company's trust. Tech associated with Red vehicles is often one-of-a-kind, and – unlike the lackadaisical attitude Tomorrow Rides often takes with other loans (see p. 5) – Jody Macht really wants to make sure that Red vehicles return safely if at all possible and that borrowers respect the equipment and their duty to report results.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES

Tomorrow Rides doesn't simply hand the keys to cutting-edge tech to heroes. They want *something* out of it.

Fortunately, what Tomorrow Rides (and – ultimately – Jody Macht) wants is information. Specifically, what works, what doesn't, how effective the vehicle is, and so on.



CONSPIRACY THEORIES

The core assumption of *Tomorrow Rides* is that the company is doing exactly what it says on the tin: loaning out cutting-edge vehicles to death-defying heroes.

However, it's possible that the GM wants there to be more beneath the hood. To that end, here are some ideas to make the core premise a bit more complicated . . . or even sinister.

- Tomorrow Rides is the front of some large, nefarious conspiracy. By encouraging all the world's most capable agents to use its services, they have the possibility to harm or incapacitate them all whenever they want.

- The purpose of Tomorrow Rides is to accumulate data to make multifunctional AIs that simulate the abilities of adventurers. In this case, the "end game" might be computer constructs capable of death-defying feats without human mistake or limitation. Given enough time and

resources, this could easily provide the stepping stones to a post-apocalyptic *GURPS After the End* or *GURPS Reign of Steel* campaign.

- The vehicles of Tomorrow Rides are somehow enchanted or augmented to detect, extend, or strengthen ley lines (*GURPS Thaumatology*, pp. 12, 53); increase or decrease the mana level of the area in which they operate (*GURPS Magic*, p. 6); increase the number and/or potency of Bad Places (*GURPS Horror*, p. 77); or decrease the Threshold Rating of affected areas (see "Safe as Houses" from *Pyramid* #3/58: *Urban Fantasy II*).

- The forces behind Tomorrow Rides somehow think that Tomorrow Riders have dormant metagenes. By encouraging drivers and passengers to place themselves in dangerous situations, those abilities may activate. (This could form the basis for a transition to a *GURPS Supers* campaign.)

At its core, Tomorrow Rides cares about the following:

- How well did the vehicle fulfill its baseline functions? (E.g., Did the limo perform at least as well as a limo would be expected to do?)

- How well did the vehicle perform outside its normal design parameters? (E.g., How did the limo do in its high-speed chase during a tornado?)

- How well did the vehicle's benefits manifest? (E.g., Did the limo's Top Speed boost perform as expected?)

- Were there any flaws? If so, were they well documented by the users?

One thing that Tomorrow Rides doesn't typically care about is getting the vehicle back in one piece (except for Red-level ones – see p. 8). In fact, a failure to return a vehicle may be seen as a *positive*, in that it meant the adventurers were pushing themselves and the vehicle to its limits. However, they do have a concern about letting prototype or unusual tech fall into others' hands.

Beyond that, Tomorrow Rides doesn't charge for what it provides (including fuel or other expendables), nor does it pay those who "test drive" their vehicles. In this way, Tomorrow Rides can afford to be selective in who they let become Tomorrow Riders; those who would be interested in driving strange, possibly dangerous vehicles in stressful situations tend to be self-selecting. Both sides of the bargain seem to be getting what they want.

Judging Success

There's no fixed system for determining whether Tomorrow Rides considers its loan a success. In general, the more information the heroes can give, the better. If a vehicle has flaws that the players (and characters) could realistically have discovered, Tomorrow Rides will be unimpressed if the PCs fail to discover them.

Perhaps more importantly, a significant premium is placed on how *exciting* the use of the vehicle was. At its core,

Tomorrow Rides is wish fulfillment for Jody Macht, furnishing a life of excitement and high-stakes vehicular action that she can never have. Anything that fits that narrative is especially appreciated.

However, Tomorrow Rides isn't stupid. Any effort required to counteract fast-talking or deceptive heroes or outright fraud should be considered to have an IQ of at least 13 and appropriate skills of at least 16. (See *GURPS Social Engineering* – especially *Deception*, pp. 36-39 – for various ways that less-than-scrupulous folks might try to trick Tomorrow Rides, and the different ways they might be discovered.) Fraud – such as selling vehicles or stripping them for parts – results in blacklisting the heroes at best . . . and the company might even hire rival groups for retaliatory efforts.

Any vehicle borrowed from Tomorrow Rides can be returned to any Mach Two facility, keeping in mind the limitations of the facilities. A desert Mach Two might not want to deal with heroes bringing back a yacht (although – if they do – it's likely to result in a *great* story). In the event that the vehicle is incapacitated or damaged beyond operational ability but not so great that it's a total loss, Tomorrow Rides expects its equipment to be watched after while a truck from one of their facilities comes to retrieve it. This is informally known as a "Mach Tow."

In general, the GM should reward players and characters who are creative in how they acquire or provide the desired information. The GM should also err on the side of the heroes; from a game-design standpoint, one of the primary functions of Tomorrow Rides is to give the heroes cool vehicles they can use to have more fun adventuring.

USE AND ABUSE

At its core, Tomorrow Rides can just exist as a background element, designed (from a game standpoint) to get the heroes into the action faster. In this way, the operation can be treated as any other gadget-supplying facility, with the odd feature that they concern themselves *only* with vehicles.

In fact, other agencies might “outsource” their own vehicular operations to Tomorrow Rides, allowing for cross-agency mingling in campaigns with lots of exciting factions.

However, there are some other ideas that can be used to add *Tomorrow Rides* to a campaign.

- Villainous forces have acquired a Tomorrow Rides vehicle – quite possibly a “Burnt Orange” or “Red” ride (see pp. 7-8 and p. 8, respectively) – and the company needs the heroes to get it back.

- The heat’s been turned up too high on Tomorrow Rides, and they need to redouble efforts to convince the world that they’re boring and aren’t worth attention. To that end, a condition of the current Tomorrow Rides loaner vehicle is that the PCs permit a reporter, journalist, and/or documentarian to accompany them, with the caveat that the adventurers

must do everything in their power to make the mission seem as mundane as possible (at least, as far as the observer can determine).

- Another group of Tomorrow Riders needs a vehicle as soon as possible for an important mission, and Tomorrow Rides calls in a favor with the heroes to ask them to deliver it. If they accept, they have the opportunity to get entangled with a new group of possible allies or rivals – along with *their* problems.

- Perhaps the accident that took Jody Macht’s eyesight wasn’t an accident, but rather a plot more nefarious than mere fate. If so, the same forces that caused her original misfortune might rise again to endanger her or her holdings. (This can be an especially effective plot hook if her motivations are not as they seem – see *Conspiracy Theories*, p. 9.)

ALTERNATES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Most details of Tomorrow Rides have been left vague enough for the GM to tailor it to the campaign’s needs. In general, any town of decent size likely has at least one Mach Two facility, and they are common enough that it’s usually possible to get from one Mach Two facility to another using a “tank of gas.” However, Mach Two locations are rare enough that the selection of readily available vehicles should be limited and interesting. Furthermore, many Mach Two garages are *empty*, ready to receive vehicles at the end of missions.

The core assumption of *Tomorrow Rides* is that Mach Two is a national organization – whichever nation the campaign takes place in – but there’s no particular reason it couldn’t be *international*. The biggest reason to *not* do this is that it may stretch disbelief that an organization large enough to be global could still fly below the radar (perhaps the facilities go by slightly different names in other countries) . . . but this may be the least worrisome believability issue in a game with loaner airships.

As designed, Tomorrow Rides is assumed to be within the realms of believability; the standard “Yellow-level” vehicles are well within plausibility for just about any campaign. However, the premise works fine in campaigns where larger-than-life modes of transportation are the norm. If steampunk or cyberpunk vehicles are commonplace, then maybe Tomorrow Rides provides vehicles that are even beyond that. In that case, the firefights are likely to get more exciting, as are the stories and data accumulated by Macht.



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