

SPACEMASTER: DATANET™

Issue #5

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Introduction

Welcome to the fifth issue of **Spacemaster Datanet**. The purpose here is to expand and improve your **Spacemaster** game, both by broadening the rules and by deepening the setting details, giving you a richer and more fulfilling game and game environment.

This time we introduce the semi-psychic, a compromise between a psychic character and another profession. Also this issue we begin to examine the worlds of universe in our new segment called "Ports of Call." We also begin to outline three campaign plots for those who are at a loss about how to begin a *Privateers* campaign. We'll see an NPC write up for Paraxis, hands down the greatest general in the war. Finally, we continue our exploration into black market technology.

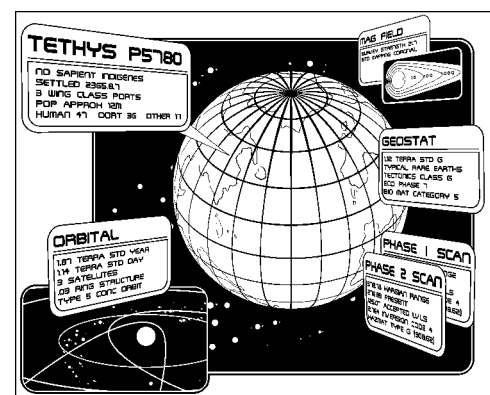
Enjoy.

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1.0 THE SEMI-PSYCHIC

This section allows a player to create a character that is a hybrid between a standard psychic and another profession. To do this, we must first explain how we assigned profession costs for psychic abilities.

First, we created a chart listing increasing costs. Then we assigned each profession a place on that chart. The cost assigned on the chart became the first psychic category cost. The second became the next highest cost up the chart, and so on. The chart for psychic costs isn't relevant to this section (as the effects of moving on that chart have already been figured into the tables below), but that information might be helpful for people trying to make semi-psychics of professions they invented for their own games.

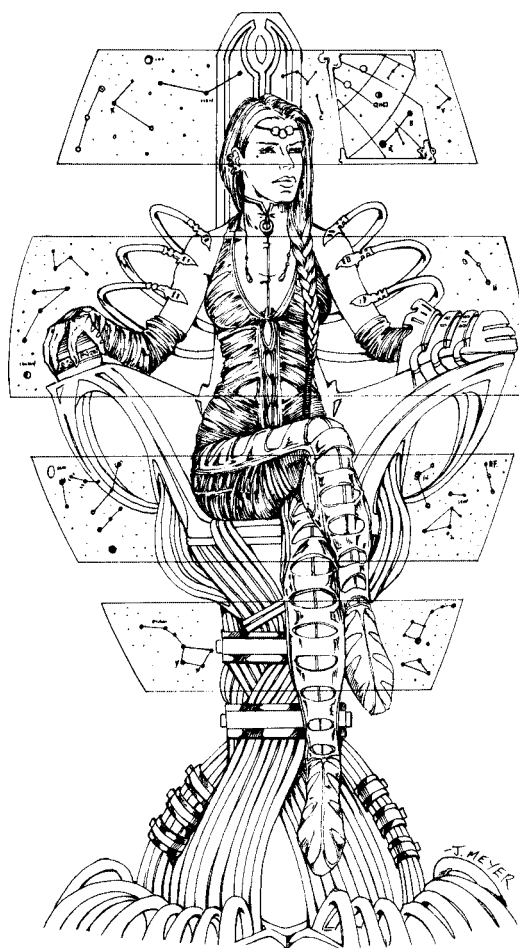
In addition, we assigned each profession an MP Development cost:

Cost	Profession
40	Entertainer
20	Criminal
18	Pilot
16	Explorer
14	Recon, Soldier
12	Technician
10	Bystander
8	Scientist
6	Academic
4	Psychic

A Semi-Psychic has psychic development costs starting as listed below:

Psychic • Category 1	3/3/3
Psychic • Category 2	4/4/4
Psychic • Category 3	6/6/6
Psychic • Category 4	8/8
Psychic • Category 5	10/10
Psychic • Category 6	12/12

They have an MP Dev cost of 8. To create a Semi-Psychic, begin with a non-psychic profession (other than the Scientist, Academic, or Psychic, which gain nothing from converting to a semi). Then find their location on each chart. Change their development costs as listed above, but note how many places on the chart they moved.



The first step in creating a semi-psychic is to replace the weapon costs of the profession with those listed on the chart below (these have already been adjusted to account for the improved costs). Then, look up the number of other combat categories which must be replaced (again on the chart below). For every one indicated on the chart, one other combat category must be replaced with the cost from the Psychic profession. Eligible categories include:

- Body Development
- Combat Maneuvers
- Martial Arts • Striking

Adjusted Combat Category Costs											
	Soldier	Exp	Rec	Pilot	Ent.	Crim	Bys	Tech.	Aca	Sci	Psy
Weapon 1	3/6	3/9	3/9	3/9	6	5/12	3/8	5/12	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 2	3/8	5/12	5	5	6	8	3/8	5	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 3	3/9	7	6	8	9	12	5	7	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 4	3/9	7	6	11	20	12	6	8	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 5	3/9	7	6	11	20	12	7	11	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 6	8	11	11	20	20	20	8	13	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 7	8	20	11	20	20	20	8	13	Na	Na	Na
Weapon 8	8	20	11	20	20	20	8	13	Na	Na	Na
Dir. Powers	2/5	2/7	2/7	2/7	2/9	3/8	3/9	5	Na	Na	Na
# of Cat Changes	1	2	2	3	4	3	0	1	Na	Na	Na

Martial Arts • Sweeps
 Martial Arts Combat Maneuvers (if used)
 Tech/Trade • Gunnery

Finally, for each place on the MP Dev cost table the profession must move, one other category must be replaced with a higher-cost category from the Psychic Profession.

Example: Greg wants to make a laser-sword-carrying Semi-Psychic, based on a series of pop-culture movies. He chooses the explorer, because he wants a careful blend of combat, piloting skills and psychic abilities. He starts with the explorer's skill costs, then changes the first psychic category to 3/3/3 (this makes the second 4/4/4, the third 6/6/6, etc.) He changes the MP Dev cost to 8. He notes that this is a four-position move on the chart. He changes the weapon costs to match those on the Adjusted Combat Category Costs. He notes the Other Cats entry on the chart say he must replace 2 other combat categories. He rules out Combat Maneuvers (it has combat pilot) and Technical • Gunnery right away. He needs Martial Arts as well, but not as much. He replaces Martial Arts • Strikes and Sweeps with the costs from the psychic profession.

That leaves the other categories, of which he needs to replace four (because of the four position shift for MP Development). He then swaps all three Subterfuge categories with the cost from the Psychic (a character based on a series of pop-culture movies craves not these things). For his final category, he selects Artistic • Active. The character's new costs look like this:

Skills and Skill Categories

Armor • Heavy	3/3/3
Armor • Light	1/1/1
Armor • Medium	2/2/2
Artistic • Active	2/6
Artistic • Passive	2/5
Athletic • Brawn	2/6
Athletic • Endurance	2/5
Athletic • Gymnastic	2/5
Awareness • Perception	2/7
Awareness • Searching	2/4
Awareness • Senses	2/5
Body Development	3/9
Combat Maneuvers	4/10
Communication	3/3/3
Subterfuge • Stealth	5
Crafts	4/10
Directed Powers	2/7
Influence	2/5
Lore • Academic	2/6
Lore • General	1/3
Lore • Technical	2/5

Martial Arts • Striking	9
Martial Arts • Sweeps	9
Mind Point Development	8
Outdoor • Animal	2/5
Outdoor • Environment	1/3
Weapon • Category 5	7
Psychic • Category 1	3/3/3
Psychic • Category 2	4/4/4
Psychic • Category 3	6/6/6
Psychic • Category 4	8/8
Psychic • Category	5 10/10
Psychic • Category 6	12/12
Science • Basic	2/6
Science • Engineering	6
Science • Medical	9
Science • Specialized	11
Science • Technical	6
Self Control	2/6
Special Attacks	3/9
Special Defenses	35
Subterfuge • Attack	15
Subterfuge • Mechanical	7
Technical • General	2/6
Technical • Gunnery	2/6
Technical • Professional	6
Technical • Vehicles	2/5
Technical • Vocational	3/9
Urban	2/5
Weapon • Category 1	3/9
Weapon • Category 2	5/12
Weapon • Category 3	7
Weapon • Category 4	7
Weapon • Category 6	11
Weapon • Category 7	20
Weapon • Category 8	20



2.0 PORT OF CALL: HELIOS

Helios, the first contact. Here humans first made it to their oort cloud, laying the prime stone in the foundation of the ISC. Originally designed by the Architects as an oort or valiesian system, everything changed when a comet hit the Yucatan Peninsula, killing off many of the larger life-forms, including the dinosaurs and the ancestor of the braat.

This makes the Helios humans the youngest human race in the ISC. However, the Architects seem to have quickened developing the humans there, fast-tracking them to bring them to fire and the wheel quicker than on other worlds. This forced evolution worked too well. In fact, if not for a few disasters in Helios history, it might have been *much* faster.

For instance, the Minoan culture of the Mediterranean had running water before the rise of Rome. If Santorini hadn't erupted, the Minoans were on schedule to place a man on the moon before the birth of Christ. That would have placed humans in the oort cloud before the Nicene Council.

Disasters happen and many think the Architects had a firm enough grasp of chaos theory to predict most of these hiccups in developing history. Comets might be out of their scope, but developing cultures on every world have setbacks and problems. Because of this Helios made it to their oort cloud just a little before the nearest likely competitor.

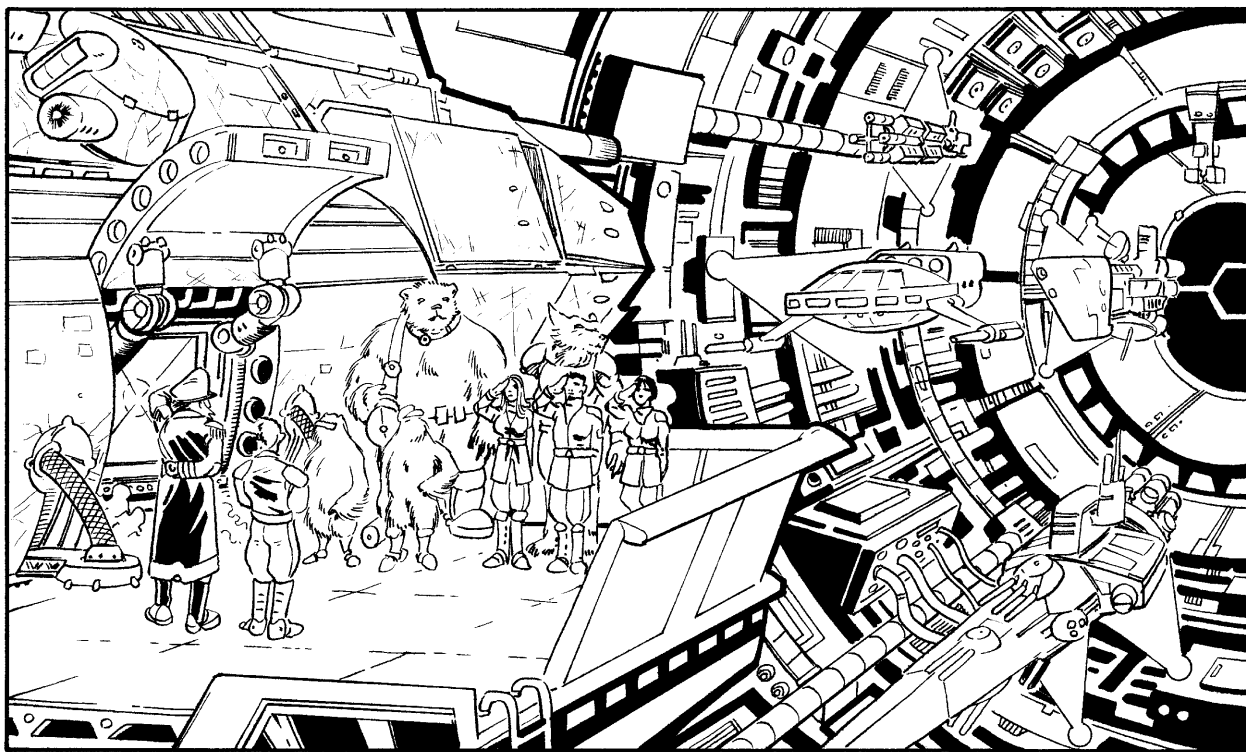
For years, Helios was the center of ISC culture. While the oorts claimed the right to the ISC Capitol, nothing could stop the human charisma from spreading from world to world. And human charisma shone the brightest in Helios.

Humans build, sometime recklessly, and so its no surprise that oort intelligence found a fertile ground in the industry of Helios. Helios had been something of a powerhouse before gear-up. After gear-up the world's industry seemed unstoppable. Several human businesses thrived and others merged with oort-owned companies. When the dust settled, Helios had rebuilt and retooled and human greed and human drives had put it back on top. Oort planets had a head start, but within two-hundred years, Helios dominated even those worlds.

Helios never faded from glory, not until the war, and even then the system didn't fade, it was doused. In 286 Paraxis shattered the defenses of Helios, bombarded the military sites in a brilliant siege, and seized the system. Since then, the birthplace of the ISC has been firmly in Jeronan hands.

2.1 RULER

In the early days of the war, Jeronan planetary governors were invariably Falar. Since the rise of Paraxis, things have been better on ISC worlds. The current ruler of the Helios system is Ralaphel, an oort with advanced degrees in economics, sociology, xenopsychology, and political science. Ralaphel walks a fine line between keeping the Jeronan falar of the occupation in check and holding the occupied population under control.



It takes a gentle hand as the falar ache for the ways of the past, where they could treat a population little better than chattel. In addition, the natives take the compassion of the ruler as an excuse to push the bounds of the occupation farther and farther.

Add to this the problems of industry. The Helios nets were databombed in the last days before the occupation, the factories sabotaged. Ralaphel has fought to retool the factories and build up that industrial base. His plans move forward faster than he estimated, and he thinks that within a year he'll have the full might of Helios production cranking out Jeronan fighters and small arms. When that happens, the Empire might be unstoppable.

Ralaphel is a short oort with a higher than average IQ (even for his race). He genuinely cares about the people he rules but he cares about his nation more, especially with people like Bretog and Paraxis in charge. He feels this is their golden age, and he is proud to be a part of it. Because of this, he holds secret meetings with members of the planetary Resistance, slipping them aid to keep them from open rebellion. While placating them to their face, his spies capture key elements of the Resistance forces, turning them over to the hard-line falar military elements (to appease them). It's a careful middle ground he walks, with each side thinking he favors them while he betrays both. If either side finds out, the barely contained violence of the system will explode.

2.2 GOVERNMENT

Helios is a military dictatorship. Ralaphel is the military dictator and planetary governor, commanding the planetary commanders, who are both falar. From there down the system is a straight military hierarchy. The government is rife with corruption, especially where lesser officers are involved.

2.3 CAPITAL

The Planetary Government of Earth is in Colorado Springs, Colorado where it commands the North American industrial power base. Ralaphel has placed his system government in Beijing. The Old Capitol in Geneva lays vacant.

2.4 ECONOMY

Helios' economy is on the rebound. It completely collapsed with the fall of the system and unemployment skyrocketed to at least 40 percent. People starved. Homes burned and the homeless rate soared out of control. The first system governor only made matters worse. It was a difficult situation Ralaphel inherited.

The Chinese industrial base seemed the easiest to repair and it was one of the most powerful before the occupation, so Ralaphel based his government there, where he could have the most hands-on control. His work has paid off (the Chinese refer to this as the New Step Forward, an old national joke). While North America is still on the ropes and Europe a smoking ruin, China has rebounded remarkably. Basic utilities and services function. The network of transport booths works and the roads and basic factories run. While Ralaphel has yet to build anything truly complex, the Chinese have the highest standard of living on Earth.

Unemployment drops.

People have basic housing again. Life in China has exceeded subsistence level, which is higher than most of the rest of the world. From here, the economy seems ready to spread, turning Asia into the new Mecca of industry.

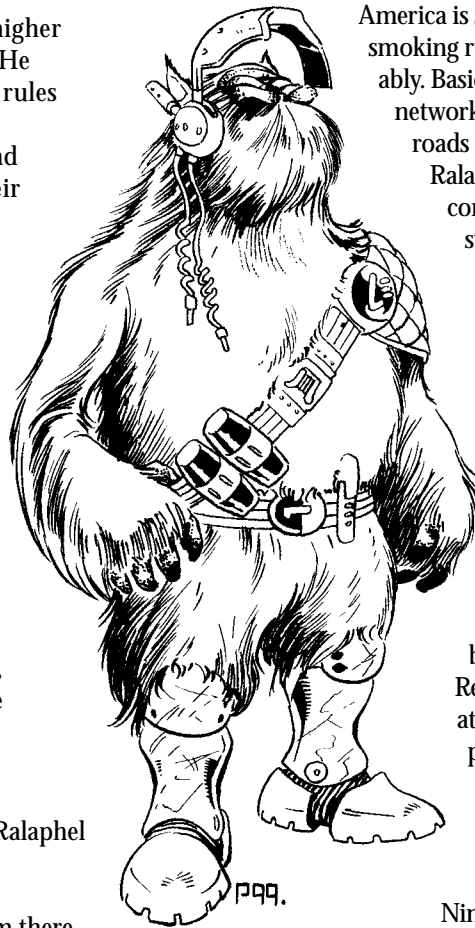
While the economy is far from recovered, it's on the upswing. The dark times seem to be ending, and the planetary Resistance has to decide daily between attacking the factories and hurting the people's methods of survival or letting them stand and build the power of the Jeronan occupation.

2.5 DEMOGRAPHICS

Ninety percent of the Helios population is human. 8 percent are oort, imports who formerly did most of the big thinking for the scientifically based industries on Earth. Of the remaining population, most of them are falar Jeronan troops. After that, none of the races rise to even one percent of the population.

2.6 LANGUAGES

The official language of Helios is the Royal Tongue, but most of the people on Earth and Mars speak either Human, which is a combination of several Helios languages, or a regional dialect such as Mandarin, Cantonese, English, or Spanish.



2.7 THE RESISTANCE

In the early days of the occupation, everyone flocked to the banner of the Resistance. The depredations of the first system governor are legendary, over-inflated, and often obvious lies. Still, many take them seriously and revel in the fact that in those early days, the Resistance fought the occupation to a standstill.

When Ralaphel took over, he slowly put the natives to rest with concessions and compromises. The force of the resistance dwindled, but the determination of the core elements didn't.

The resistance is still active in fundamental cells, but the overall leadership of the Resistance negotiates with Ralaphel, much to the chagrin of the more zealous elements. This puts the Resistance into something of an internal conflict, with the hardest elements attacking

Jeronan forces against orders even while the leadership meets secretly in Ralaphel, often unknowingly doing his work for him, taking out his enemies and weeding out Resistance elements that have gone off the reservation. It's a sticky mess.

But the resistance is still huge. If they rose as one, they could devastate the economy and fight the Jeronans back to a stand-still, but Ralaphel has played his hand well and so far no one suspects he works both sides equally.

So now the Resistance stands at a turning point and internal fundamentalist elements prepare to overthrow the leadership of their own organization. It's their plan to take control back and run the Resistance in the old way. Certain sympathetic elements have been secretly giving them weapons and aid and they believe these are businesspeople who have stashed preoccupation

equipment, but this isn't true. Hard-line forces within the Jeronan military supply the fundamentalist forces, believing that if the Resistance were to rise in force again, the Jeronans could wipe them out in one massive and glorious battle. The falar of the Jeronans believe they can't lose. The fundamentalists believe they won't.

2.8 SMUGGLING

With any occupied world, smuggling is a prime pastime of forward-thinking entrepreneurs with their own ship and a head for business. Helios is no exception. There are dozens of smugglers working in the Helios system at any given time. Most of them use one of three smuggler's bases in the asteroid belt. These bases act as sort of a market for smugglers, allowing individuals specialize in either insystem or outsystem smuggling.

Few smugglers do both.

Outsystem smugglers concentrate on entering the system undetected and making their way to a smuggler's base. Here they sell their goods to insystem smugglers, leaving immediately, sometimes with outbound cargo, sometimes without. The insystem smugglers then take the goods to Earth and Mars, where they land and sell them into the local black market.

While smugglers are outside the law, Helios is an occupied system and so many of the smugglers are otherwise law-abiding patriots. While they bring in and out goods for the people



on Earth and Mars, most smuggling involves weapons, and these they sell at just a bit above cost plus expenses. They aren't in this to make money. They are in it to help the populace. In addition, many ships bring in and out mail and news recordings for free, so they may be copied and distributed through the worlds.

As we said above, weapons and information are the highest volume of smuggled goods, but there isn't much profit in them to the honest smuggler. Profit comes from luxury items such as games and entertainment recordings and imported fabrics and foodstuffs and even drugs. Anything the rich might value but can't be created in Helios is a high-ticket item.

The smugglers divide mostly into two camps, but smuggler bases are so temporary, with changing codes and sudden Jeronan raids the two different groups must still mingle. The patriots call themselves couriers, and the profiteers call themselves freighters. Fights between couriers and freighters happen in every bar almost every night in the smuggler bases. There's a great deal of bad blood between the two.

Landing sites for smuggling involve out-of-the-way locales. They are set up on the fly most of the time because few smuggling ships have high enough passive EW to guarantee getting in and out unnoticed and so they must take their opportunities when the orbital patrols allow. Typically secure tight beam communications link the ship with the black market agents, they land at a quick opportunity site and unload and accept payment at high speed. Then everyone scatters before the Jeronan military can find them. The military is usually hot on their heels, but the smugglers have enough active EW to confuse the enemy sensors long enough to deal and run.

2.9 THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The Underground Railroad was important in the early days of the occupation. With a brutal dictator and many of Helios' braintrust still insystem, people needed ways to get out. In those early days, most people moving out through the Underground Railroad were scientists, military men, and spies who needed to get back into friendly space. Since then, most of the sensitive subjects have made it out and the rule of Ralaphel has been kind enough to allow the bitterest abuses to stop.

But the Railroad still operates. Spies are still necessary, especially from the Agency of Military Intelligence and the Department of Foreign Intelligence. Besides that, the Railroad does great work with medical patients that could find easy cures in ISC space but whose illnesses are beyond the scope of Helios in its current state of near-collapse. Help can still be found in Australia, but the Australian medical system can only do so much.

The difficult part is contacting the railroad. Once that's done, the black market will put the people in

touch with a courier, for free if the person is a common citizen, for a price if they're a spy. Then the person is handed off during the next planetside meeting. The person then rides out to the smuggler base, where they catch either the first outbound courier or one heading in the proper direction.

The Underground Railroad is quiet these days, handling less than a person every week.

2.10 PLANETS

Helios has nine planets if you count Pluto, but only two are inhabited to any real degree.

The first, of course, is Helios III, known officially as Terra, but called Earth by everyone insystem. Earth is the major population center and the origin point of the local species (humans). Once populated by eighteen billion, the war and early days of occupation caused massive die-off, dropping the population to a current estimate of 12.9 billion, most of them in China, North America, Australia, and the ruins of Europe. In these locales the economy and collapsed, but people were able to make due and distribute food. In more rural locations, things reduced to a farmer's market style economy. In other lands, such as India, die off raged out of control.

Helios IV, known as Mars, is the other inhabited world, with some 1.3 billion people. There wasn't as much die off here, as the Jeronan military knew they could destroy all or nothing. Paraxis took the planet with care, preserving the planet-wide farm sites, but paying special attention to Ares sector around Olympus Mons, where the planet's main population is centered. Mars has been terraformed to the point of a fully pressured atmosphere of mostly carbon dioxide, and while the terraformers were sure they'd be able to scrub the CO₂ out, they never got the chance. Many plants engineered just for that purpose flourish here, but it will take centuries for them alone to make a difference. Meanwhile, people can walk around in winter gear and breather masks.

2.11 SITES

There are many locations of interest in Helios, too many to fully detail in even a large book. Here are some of the more noteworthy, though.

2.11.1 THE OLD CAPITOL

Geneva is a graveyard. Once the home of hundreds of representatives and the virtual meeting place of thousands more, Paraxis dropped several tamper-proof canisters of nerve gas here to prove a point. After they turned out to *actually be* tamper proof and killed about a fifth of the city's population, everyone surviving evacuated. The first system governor set up a quarantine and mines throughout the place and its never been reoccupied, but the legless locals can testify that people still make forays into the city in an attempt to scavenge equipment.

2.11.2 THE NEW CAPITAL

Ralaphel has set up his capital (note the spelling difference, Ralaphel has no legislature) in Beijing, in the forbidden palace of the Chinese emperors of old. He finds the symbolism fitting. He's outfitted the place with all the finest luxuries and technologies, including the Sensenet and Datanet, and while Helios no longer has its connections to the ISC, he's still found wonders inside local caches which survived the databombing.

Beijing itself is the military center of the system now and the military has evacuated most of the populace for their own housing. Paraxis knew there would be a need for a great many troops here and so he shipped them in constantly over the first few months. Now the city is some 100,000 strong, just in infantry. The Resistance avoids it at all costs.

2.11.3 DENVER

Denver was the site of the only apocalyptic weapon used during the siege, a dirty bomb of some size. In the first blows of the battle for the system, Paraxis came to the sad conclusion the Earthlings weren't taking him seriously and the death tolls would be unnecessarily high because of it. Denver was the sacrifice to prove his point. The place is still awash with fallout to this day and although no longer highly radioactive, a person investigating the crater or handling metal here can still pick up a few REM in a matter of minutes. Most just avoid the place.

2.11.4 NEW DELHI

Another veritable graveyard, the streets of New Delhi are still so choked with the dead that most people venturing into the place wear breather gear to protect their lungs from decomposition poisons. The city is lost as a population center, most of them dead because of orbital bombardment, but among the ruins certain elements still move. The Resistance and smugglers both find this place useful as the lions don't like the smell, which clings to them for days after leaving. Many illicit transactions take place amid the ruins of the blasted houses and burned husks.

2.11.5 BUENOS AIRES

This city escaped relatively untouched during the war, and while terror squads roamed the streets under the old governor, Ralaphel has seen the need for the locals to have someplace to call their own. Here the native leaders meet, planning and working to rebuild the planet. Sensenet links between here and the Capital allow the natives and the

occupation leadership to meet virtually to discuss matters. By tacit agreement, no anti-Jeronan activities take place here in any real scale. No one wants the Jeronans to move in a battleship and start peppering the city with plasma.

2.11.6 MOGADISHU

This city is the unofficial center of the Resistance on Earth (and therefore in the system as a whole). The city was mostly leveled in the siege, but the residents have built it back up again, often with primitive bricks and mud like their ancestors. Still, there is nothing primitive about the city under the surface, with working power and high-tech communications. Mogadishu serves as the nerve center for Resistance cells around the globe and across to Mars.

2.11.7 SYDNEY

Sydney, in fact all of Australia, escaped the siege relatively untouched. Sydney sends aid to destroyed locales around the world and while the Resistance thrives here, they present a collaborative front. In return Ralaphel allows them to remain the hub of culture for Earth, knowing that to destroy the identity of the Earthlings would be to invite open rebellion. In Sydney one can still see an opera or a ballet. In Sydney most of the datanet and sensenet nodes remain untouched and the databombs are a thing of the past. A great deal of smuggling goes on in Sydney, but the Jeronans ignore most of it and so the Australians let it happen. It isn't surprising. Most freighters find their clients in Australia.



3.0 CAMPAIGN PLANS

The universe of the *Privateers* is a big place. The war is a good hook for many campaigns (including two of the ones we cover here) but even it is a mighty big subject for one GM to digest. So how do you run a *Privateers* campaign? Where do you start?

If you'd like, you can start here. Full adventures would take too much space for these datanets, and they'd be too narrowly focused as well. The purpose of this new feature isn't to teach you what to put in an individual game session. The purpose is to lay out a road map for adventure, a full campaign starting at 1st level and continuing until the end, one-way or another.

Below, we present three campaigns. Each of these campaigns has a different focus and a different feel. In this issue of the *Datanet*, we give you all the information you need to start the campaign, such as mood and tone and the type of characters appropriate. We also outline a first adventure in broad strokes and give you a couple ideas for follow-up adventures that will get you through to the next issue. Playing like that and filling in to your group's taste, you should be able to run a campaign with enough material for months or even years.

Each adventure below breaks down not by location, but by dramatic story points. We give you Setup, Complication, Twist, Reveal, Climax, and Falling Action. Run through these six points, and you'll have a narrative arc.

Setup is the beginning of the adventure, complete with background, inciting action, and instructions on how to get the PCs involved. In the complication, the adventure takes a painful turn, upping the threat and often widening the scope. In the twist, the story takes off in a new direction, shaking the character's perceptions of the issues involved. The reveal is the epiphany which shows the characters what's going on. The climax is the final dramatic confrontation. The falling actions deal with the implications of everything that's gone before.

Since this is the first issue dealing with campaign plans, let's breakdown a popular culture movie, *Star Wars*, by this model:

Setup: The Empire has taken over the galaxy.

A tiny 'droid receives a desperate message.

He's taken in by a farm boy that would like to join the academy and become an

imperial pilot. The 'droid escapes, taking the boy away long enough for the Empire to kill his family. The boy takes on the mantle of hero and sets off to deliver the message.

Complication: They head to a planet to deliver the message. The planet isn't there and they're captured by a space station.

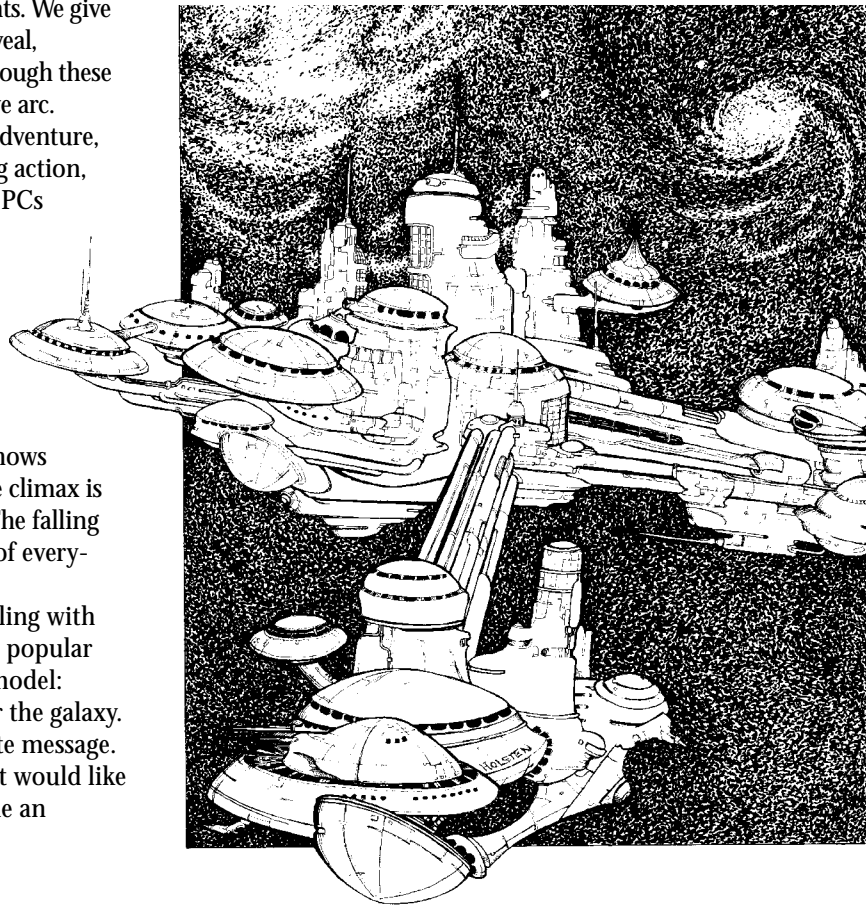
Twist: They discover the person who left the message is on the space station. Their escape mission becomes a rescue mission. Everyone is split up and a dramatic chase ensues.

Reveal: They escape and discover that they hold the secret to saving the galaxy by blowing up the space station. We discover that this too was a trap, and they've led the enemy to their door.

Climax: The dramatic assault on the station itself.

Falling Action: Men are hugged. Medals are distributed. The cast and crew have a wrap party.

Remember that this is just an outline and you aren't filming a movie. Don't railroad your players, but let them explore things on their own. Player freedom is more important than plot.



3.1 THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN

This is the most obvious type of campaign for a war setting, but the privateering conceit of the *Privateers* universe allows for a new twist. In this campaign, the characters are semi-free agents working for the military. While their missions and orders come down from on high, when they aren't marching to the orders of a general, they are free of the normal strictures of military service.

This is the campaign you see in the official fiction of the *Spacemaster* books. It has a long-standing tradition in the current system as it was the first play-test ever ran, back when *Spacemaster* was slotted as a single sourcebook for RMSS and a corresponding genre book.

In the military campaign, you play characters who have "retired" from military service, though they still draw pay through roundabout methods such as patent ownership and investment funds. They have created privateer crews on well-armed privateer ships. There are several of these quasi-military ships operating on the border and behind enemy lines. In the beginning, these crews were meant to bolster morale and jumpstart the privateer legend, but in the intervening years they've proven valuable in other means.

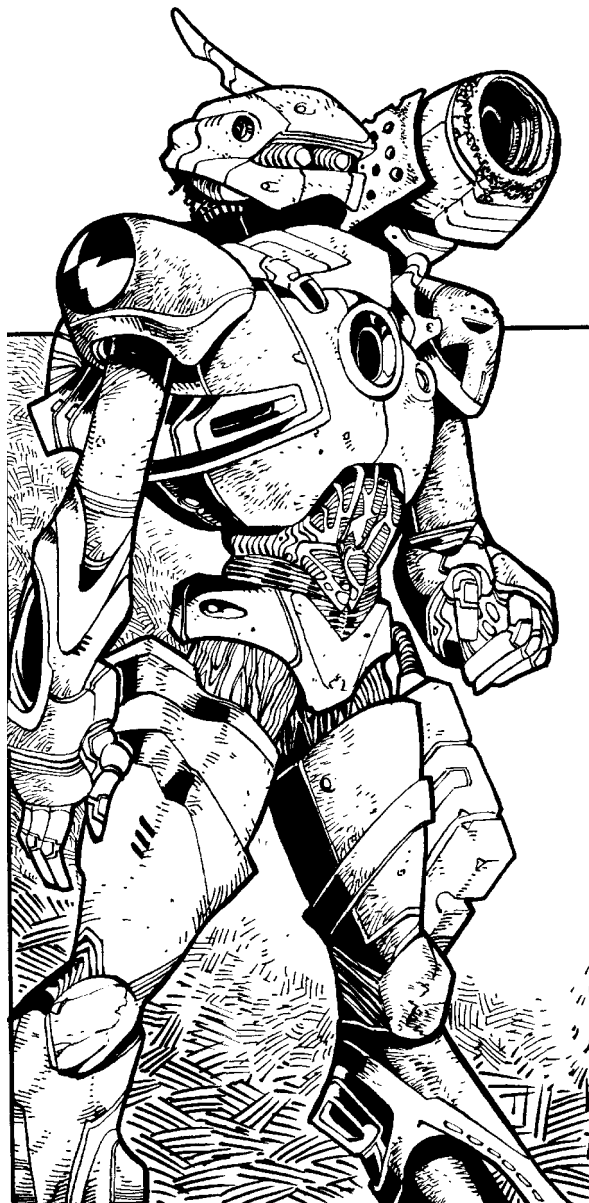
And they got the job done. Daring raids and stories of prize money and salvage helped drive up the numbers of privateers in the early days of the war. But the military found they had other values. Privateers became a close-knit group and they often excluded "regular military" from their private meetings. These privateer front groups could insinuate themselves into the privateer lifestyle without undo difficulty. From these positions they could apply great leverage to privateer operations, directing the general flow of these private soldiers with rumors and stories. Privateers trust their own in situations where they wouldn't trust information leaked directly from the military.

This is now an open secret. Almost all privateers suspect there are undercover military ships among them. Some even suspect the right crews. The irony is they don't hold it against them. These military crews have something of a special status among privateers, a mystique of sorts. Privateers will do missions suggested by these front crews even though they are military. They almost *seem* more willing to do them. The trick is the privateer front crews must go with them, but any mission that one of these crews undertakes is rumored to be a big score. The military has the best intelligence after all and they wouldn't risk one of their golden crews on a suicide mission.

Tone: the tone of the military campaign is a careful shade between real military rigor and pirate chaos. The characters are disciplined and earnest, usually a bit jingoistic, but the absence of rigid structure allows them to be wilder than a straight military campaign. Think of the movie *Aliens*, add more shore leave, and you probably have the right idea.

But the analogy to *Aliens* carries over to other aspects of tone. The military campaign is often the darkest aspect of the *Privateers* universe. At the very least, it's the most desperate. The war has not gone well for the ISC and while the privateers may attack where they will and seize what they can, the military front crews know they are a part of a greater machine, and the failures of the war hit them especially hard. With the rise of Paraxis, many feel like the end is near, the war cannot be won. The military crews are the privateers who feel this the strongest.

Players: a military campaign is perfect for characters who like to play actual soldiers. It allows them to indulge in all the military tradition and character they wish while allowing for the freedom generally associated with roleplaying games. Even the most military player can feel stifled by military discipline in a game, and this is the perfect balance between freedom and structure. It has the bonus of allowing the GM to simply brief the



characters on the adventure of the evening without forcing them to find their own missions every time. This can be a great time-saver.

Characters: Characters in the military campaign all come from military backgrounds. They should all have military TPs to represent this. These crews don't often pick up outsiders, at least not at first. Usually, characters are assigned here. As a general rule, these crews will be well-balanced. If there's one thing the military does well (at least in theory) is assign and fill quotas. It isn't likely one of these crews will be missing a major ingredient, such as an engineer. Players should coordinate to make certain they fill important roles.

FIRST ADVENTURE: CRISES AT ALARIARCAS

Setup: The Jeronans intend to hit the forward observer base at a small system named Alariarcas. The characters are within range to do something about it and most traditional military elements aren't. In addition, a major privateering raid will heighten the privateer mystique among the enemy, reminding them the military doesn't always have to respond directly. The wild cards can always get them.

The first problem is this crew isn't well established. They don't have a reputation to leverage into a privateer fleet. They need to find privateers and convince them this job will be easy and profitable, and that will take charisma and a little chutzpah. Perhaps there's a single, charismatic leader among the privateers, a pirate king of sorts. If the characters want to get a fleet, all they need to do is convince him, but that's easier said than done.

Complication: Once the characters have their privateer fleet, they travel to Alariarcas to set their ambush. It's here everything goes wrong. They arrive to find the outpost just falling, their intelligence wrong and communications cut off. They come flying straight into a shooting war, the Jeronans can see them coming and half their fleet deserts at once. It will take fast-talking to get the rest to attack, which leads to a major space war.

Twist: When the battle for space is ended, the characters prepare for a ground assault. A transport ship has landed and taken the post, but the characters have taken out the space defenses. Just when they prepare to land, the post explodes, many of the Jeronans still inside. It seems that they intended this all along but had to rush. Still, the Jeronans have won. On landing, however, they find plenty of ground troops still alive, sifting through the rubble. The characters fight and come to the conclusion the Jeronans are looking for something. Something *under* the post.

Reveal: They find a cavern under the base, revealed by the explosion. Whatever's inside, the Jeronans wanted it enough they were willing to blow up their own men to get to it. Inside, they find a base with greenhouses filled with alien (actually alien) plant life. In a central chamber, they find a strange, palm-sized piece of technology,

wildly beyond anything the ISC can produce. It's an Architect artifact, or rather a piece of one.

Climax: Just as the characters pat themselves on the back, they hear explosions above. Racing to the surface, they see ancient planetary defenses coming on line now the PCs have awoken the underground base. The defenses destroy the privateer ships as they take off. Strange droids scour the surface and the characters and the remaining privateers must fight these drones and blow up the various surface to space cannons to win. Luckily, this wasn't meant to be a military base (the drones are actually geological survey equipment, the lasers radiant heat technologies) and the characters are just able to defeat the forces and destroy enough architect equipment to get out alive.

Falling Action: The characters have probably fallen in the eyes of the privateers as a whole, but they have part of an Architect artifact. What it does, they don't know, but it responds with power then the player characters handle it, but not when anyone else does. It's as if it has a datalock keyed to the characters now. The ISC will hold it, but there doesn't seem to be any material technology in it that's new (they will hint to the party this isn't the first artifact they've found, though the party isn't cleared to know more.) While the characters don't have it any longer, there's a mystery to it and smart players will know that they will likely have the opportunity to unravel more of the mystery in the future.

Note: *It's an informal law of writing the first major conflict introduced in a novel is a major conflict of the story. It's just as true the first adventure in a campaign often sets the tone for the entire campaign. While this isn't a hard-and-fast rule, the players expect it, if only subconsciously. With the artifact bonded to them, they should realize what's going on with little more than a "keep an eye out for more like this," from their superior officers. They'll know what this campaign is about, even if they haven't figured out yet if their own government are the good guys or the bad.*

Follow Up Adventures: In the next issue of *Datanet*, we'll outline a new adventure. Meanwhile, some fill adventures will work wonders for flushing out the campaign. At the end of this adventure, the relationship between the characters and other privateers is strained at best. A good follow up would involve the party rescuing a group of Privateers after falling to a Jeronan ambush. A couple good runs on Jeronan shipping would start to build them a reputation of success, and if the damage to their equipment isn't bad, it will help to build the confidence of others in their mission choices. Another good adventure would have them raiding a damaged Jeronan ship and stealing their shipping records. With these, they could doll out some prime raids to other privateers.

3.2 THE PRIVATEER CAMPAIGN

The Privateer campaign is the default of the setting. Here, the characters have a ship, say a small freighter or stripped out gunship. The government approves their license and installs a mark 10 laser cannon on their ship. They then press out into the universe to attack Jeronan shipping and help the war effort.

In this type of game, the characters touch base with their pirate roots. They live large, attack fast, and loot. The Privateer campaign is about bold actions and living on the fringe, about wild fights and daring adventures. This is typically the most uninhibited type of game.

Tone: The tone of the Privateer campaign is free-form and relaxed. They prey on targets of opportunity and take on big and outlandish endeavors. Privateers live fast and hard and the less ethical of them might turn to out-and-out piracy when things get tight. Privateers live hand to mouth and there are often lean times, but as long as they keep finding better stuff (ships, armor, weapons), the players shouldn't resent the hard times.

Players: Most players would enjoy a Privateer campaign. It's well suited to a roleplaying game, with characters expressing independence and initiative. It's fun and free and exciting. It's easy to crank up the difficulty of a Privateer campaign and easy to give them milk runs, allowing you to tune the metabolism of the game to your liking. This game is particularly suited to players who enjoy playing characters who refuse to conform (those that are wildly destructive for instance).

Characters: All character types find their way into privateering, but the groups as a whole has more than its share of misfits. Privateer groups are more likely to be lopsided, so this is perfect for groups that tend to unbalance in the profession selection (those that favor too many soldier-types, for instance).

FIRST ADVENTURE:

THE QUINTARAN BLOCKADE

Setup: A privateer personality, sort of a futuristic Harry Morgan, calls a meeting of privateers in a little-known system named Quintara. The characters hear the call and answer, knowing this character (a man named Jack Llewelyn) has the golden touch. They arrive at a secluded system with no inhabited worlds, but several good rocks.

They set down on one of these and meet in a pressurized field-pavilion. Here fifteen captains and their associated crews gather to discuss a major privateer action.

Complication: As the meeting gets into full swing, they see several flashes of light. Looking out, they see Llewelyn's portable point defense cannons blasting incoming warheads out of the sky. The point defense cannons won't last long, but they just give the characters time to get into their ships as a massive

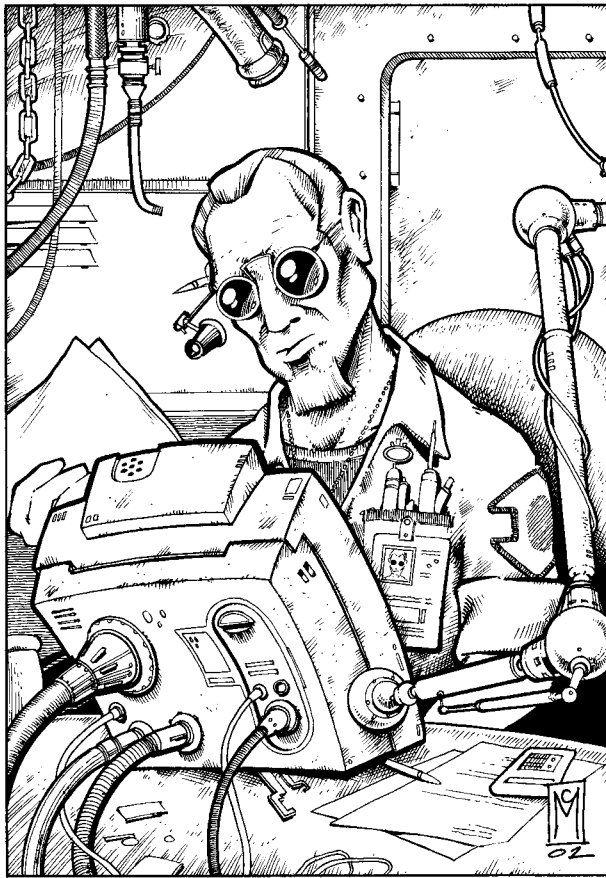
Jeronan ambush descends on them. They take off and find themselves flying into a major Jeronan fleet. The battle is joined and it seems like a blood bath, but the character's fight on, not sure what else to do.

Twist: As the battle seems to become hopeless, a malfunction on the enemy carrier disables it, throwing the enemy into disarray. With this turn the battle itself is just winnable, but at the end of it the enemy carrier still drifts, relatively undamaged. Llewelyn puts out a call for boarders, and hopefully the characters respond.

Reveal: It's only then the characters discover this was Llewelyn's plan all along. Having previously infiltrated a supply ship, Llewelyn managed to place the high-tech equivalent of an EMP charge in the engine room supplies for the carrier. He then gathered men and leaked this meeting to known Jeronan informers.

Climax: The characters assault the carrier, taking on countless troops but catching them off guard and without life support. With the only troops available to





the enemy those in space suits, the battle is desperate, but winnable. In the end, they take the ship and most of the escorts are destroyed or escape. They are too far behind enemy lines to get the carrier back for salvage so they loot the working equipment and escape.

Falling Action: Llewelyn has all ships and equipment repaired and any medical and death benefits paid out before they divvy loot. The characters can either take a healthy cash sum or gather several new guns for their ship. In the end, despite Llewelyn's deception, they make out well. Roleplay any final character moments and move on.

Follow Up Adventures: In the weeks that follow, allow the characters to spend their loot or try out their new weapons. A few relatively easy adventures (not too easy to be boring) will help cement the character's view that following Llewelyn's adventure hooks is a good thing. A couple chance meetings with the man in bars, perhaps with a good fight or two, will help set up future events with the man.

3.3 THE CRIMINAL CAMPAIGN

In the criminal campaign, we head off into different territory. While most games in the *Privateers* universe involve the war (it's the biggest source of conflict, after

all), there's still many other things going on in a nation the size of the ISC.

The Criminal Campaign is grittier and more skill-tension oriented. There's less combat (although still some, especially during the climax). The entire thing is more about the big score than the sooty battlefield.

This campaign is mostly a series of heist stories. The type you've seen forever, like *The Great Train Robbery* or *Sneakers* or *Ocean's Eleven*. Because most role players like a little combat, we've put a little in, but if your players aren't the combat types, feel free to substitute it for straight up heist tension.

Tone: The Criminal Campaign is about smart people doing smart things to obtain money that isn't rightfully theirs. It's about living the good life while hovering on the edge of society. People say crime doesn't pay. The Criminal Campaign proves them wrong. This type of story typically involves a contrast of high society and low contacts, where characters will move from a high-glamour fashion show straight into the backroom of the sleaziest fence. The tone is a veneer of the elite spread over the rotting underbelly of society.

Details matter in a Criminal Campaign. A pen left out of place can mean discovery. A guard with a stomach problem can cause an entire plan to crumble. The wrong brand of paper can lead to capture or death. It isn't for everybody, but when it works, it works like gangbusters.

Players: In a good heist story, players need to think on their feet. A proactive NPC can take care of much plotting in a Military or Privateer Campaign, because those stories rely on daring fights to carry the tension and to provide much of the entertainment. In those stories, a sudden reveal from an NPC can be amazing, but in a Criminal Campaign (at least one of the type we're describing here) the joy comes from springing the reveal yourself. In this type of game, the players know many of the secrets because they planned them and it's the marks and the cops in the dark. There's still room for surprises, (as Tim Powers would say, no one wants to read a story of a man changing a tire competently), but the players should be the one holding the big secrets, not their boss.

Characters: Obviously, a Criminal Campaign is going to have many criminal types, but others fit as well. A Psychic is invaluable in distracting security and can double as a doctor without raising questions about the campaign's realism (having a doctor in a criminal crew would be a bit odd). Every heist needs a tech guy and most need a wheelman (or hover man). A face man is usually necessary as well, and every crew seems to have at least some bit of muscle.

FIRST ADVENTURE: DATA HEIST

Setup: Sotheby's Auction house is one of the oldest and most respected financial organizations in the ISC. Dating back to precontact Helios, this auction house has handled some of the most notable antiquities and object d'art of all-time. They escaped just before the siege of Helios. The branches are ironclad against theft, with one of the most advanced and active security systems of all-time. Yet that doesn't mean that a person can't make illicit money from Sotheby's.

Sotheby's is steeped in tradition. There are only a few high-end auctioneers and one of them, a gentleman from Helios name Heathton, handles all the biggest auctions. Although Sotheby's conducts its auctions on the Sensenet these days, it refuses to conduct the bids electronically, both for security and for reason of tradition.

It's an age-old tradition to underbid a product; that is bid on a product that you don't want to buy to drive up the price. Because of this, many bid methods are secret, the buyer arranges them with Heathton in advance and the old man is far too honorable to tell.

But his memory isn't perfect. He keeps records.

If someone were able to steal the database from this man's house they could spot every underbidder. They could determine who bought what, hitting the buyer's car or home to steal. A person with a good bidding system could even influence the auction prices.

The person hiring the characters thinks that they are just that sort of person. But it needs to be discrete. If anyone knows that data was stolen, a few embarrassed Sensenet calls would cause it all to change, rendering it worthless.

The characters must find a time when Heathton isn't at home but his data is. They must break in and copy the data, then get away with no one the wiser. Heathton's house has minimal security. It seems like a cakewalk.

Complication: And it is. Heathton's high-tech apartment isn't that high-tech at all. Characters can foil security with remote datanet access, trick cameras, the works. The guards are lax enough the character can drug them or avoid them or just stun them into oblivion. The locks are foiled by simple security bypasses. Essentially, the character can beat everything quickly and easily, using nothing but minimal

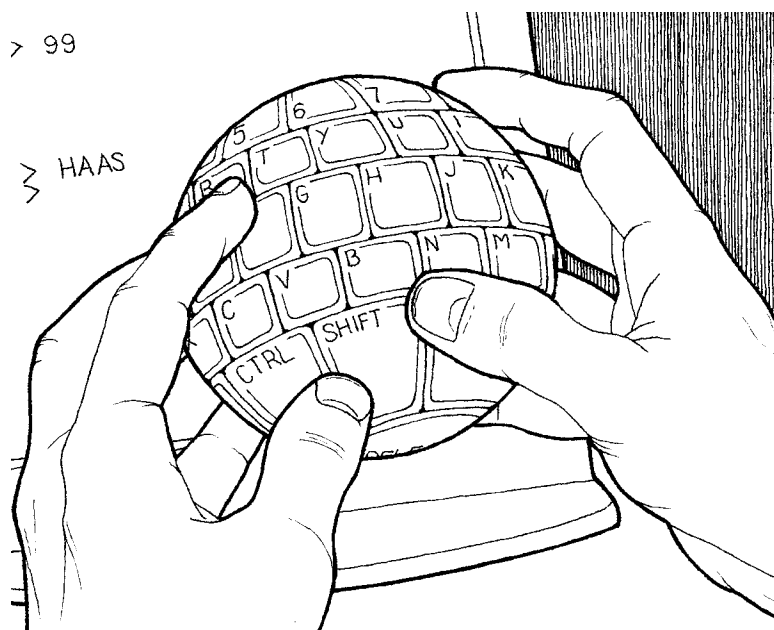
easy skill rolls, allowing them to feel like they are at the top of their game.

But when the access Heathton's datapad where he left it in his office, they find none of the data there. Computer Maneuvers reveal that he still has access commands built into the datapad, but they access remote data through a hard link. Heathton has the actual data on a secure server, one not online. He plugs his datapad into a docking station to access it and has Ministry-of-Defense-grade scrubbing programs that wipe all residual data from memory. The old man is more tech savvy than he looks.

If the party clones the entire datapad onto one of their own, this will make matters easier. If not, they'll have to come back later. Heathton, returning home early would put some nice time pressure on the group.

After escaping Heathton's apartment, hopefully undetected, the characters will need to research. Datamining public files shows he's rented office space in a high-security office, likely at the behest of Sotheby's or one of his clients. He conducts all his auctions from here now, with his datapad plugged into its station for easy reference. The crew will need to either break into his office with a cloned datapad so they can plug in and hack his server, or they'll need to somehow hijack his mind during an auction (to read the information directly). Since the latter seems unlikely without breaking in, they'll probably need to foil the office's security.

Twist: Heathton is a high-level Bystander and forcing him to do things psychically would be difficult, but a little psychic manipulation of those around him wouldn't be a bad idea. This new assault is difficult. The security here is intense and most of it can't be accessed remotely (at least not by starting level characters). The characters will



need to get on-site and patch in directly to perform most of their jobs. This will take savvy cons and quick thinking. Spatial puzzles should be a good part, such as figuring out how to get past sensors or trick guard patterns. Of course the sensors can all see through walls, so the characters will probably need to get encrypted friend or foe transmitters to even begin to move around.

This taxes the characters to their utmost and they should hit several minor disasters along the way, such as changing guard patterns or planned random system reboots to foil hackers. The characters get their cloned datapad into the docking station (hopefully they got one, because the hack should be almost impossible if the server thinks something's wrong with the docking). When they finally cut through the IC software and access the data, they should think they just weathered the climax.

It's then that an astute character will notice the tiny bomb under the chair. Someone's trying to kill Heathton, and if they succeed not only will the characters have stood by and done nothing, but the data will be worthless as well.

Reveal: The characters hopefully dismantle the bomb and take it with them. Through their shady underworld contacts they track it back to a small organized crime family. It seems that they've been trying to up their profit by blackmailing Heathton, but he's refused to play ball, even when they actually have something on him. They've moved up to assassination, but they want it just obvious enough that his successor will be more open-minded.

The characters will need to make a moral decision here. Are they willing to watch an innocent man die? If so, are they willing to lose all their profit on the deal (the data has to be confirmed before full payment, and he'll probably die before the next auction ends)?

Hopefully either morality or greed will drive them, likely a blending of both. The mob will move at the next auction. They'll need to stop it then.

Climax: The easiest way would be to completely replace security in the office, using psychic mind tweaks to make the guards think that another shift handled the problem. The guards aren't high-level anything, diligent or not. With the right hypnotic drugs or psychic tricks, even a low-level party should be able to work something out.

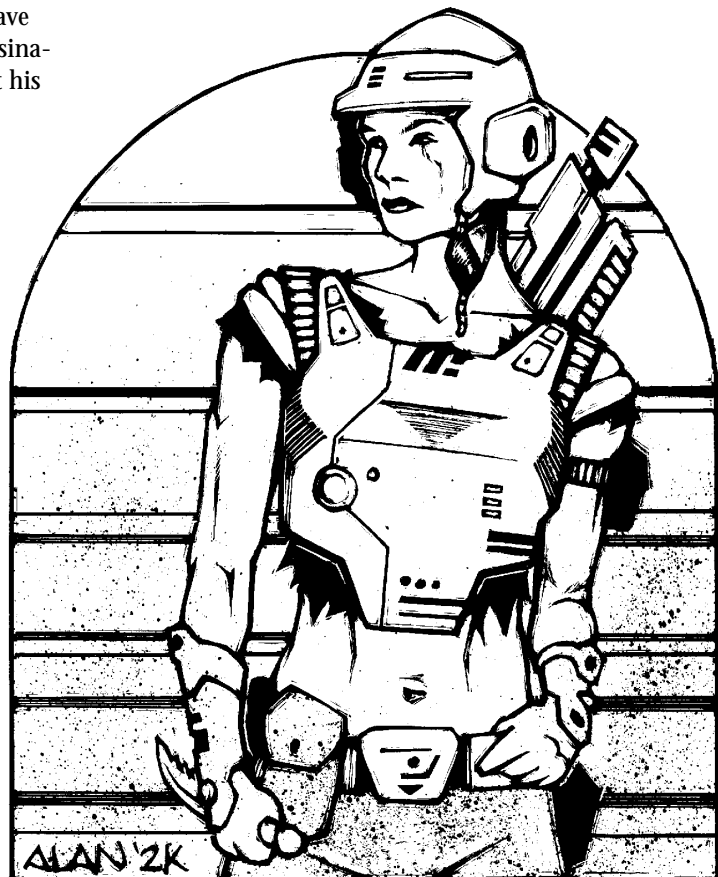
The final climax comes off like the climax of a Godfather movie (but with the characters as the heroes). As Heathton runs his auction a violent firefight breaks

out in the lobby, stairs, and elevators of his office building. As he does his work on the Sensenet, a strange ballet of violence circles, unknown, around him. The characters prevail and the security company guarding the office gets the credit. The characters withdraw and their data's confirmed at the auction by their client.

Falling Action: Alls well that ends well. The characters get a hefty finder's fee and it should pay for all the equipment and the wear and tear they suffered during the adventure, with a bit more to boot. They can upgrade their equipment and maybe their lifestyle. For a time, they'll live the high life.

But money doesn't last forever.

Follow Up Adventures: In the weeks that follow, the data from Heathton could be the source of many adventures. Targeted buyers could end up the victims of jewel heists, under bidders could be tracked down and robbed for their illicit money, and characters could hijack vans leaving Sotheby's, perhaps even make pickups for items they didn't buy, if they had the right data to fake the proper credentials. This should get the campaign through to the next installment, where the character's adventures will continue.



4.0 NPC: PARAXIS

Age: 42 **Eyes:** Brown. **Hair:** Black. **Build:** Imposing. **Height:** 182 cm. **Race/Sex:** Human. **Skin:** Fair. **Demeanor:** Strong, in charge, disciplined. **Dress:** Neatly tailored military uniform. **True Attitude:** Worried and beset. **Home:** Flagship *Terrible Fear*.

Hits: 175. **Melee:** 168 Dueling Sword. **Missile:** 170 Marrrif Tock Medium Plasma Pistol.

AT(DB): 1(27). **Shield:** Energy (117), Projectile (97), Melee (87), Missile (97)

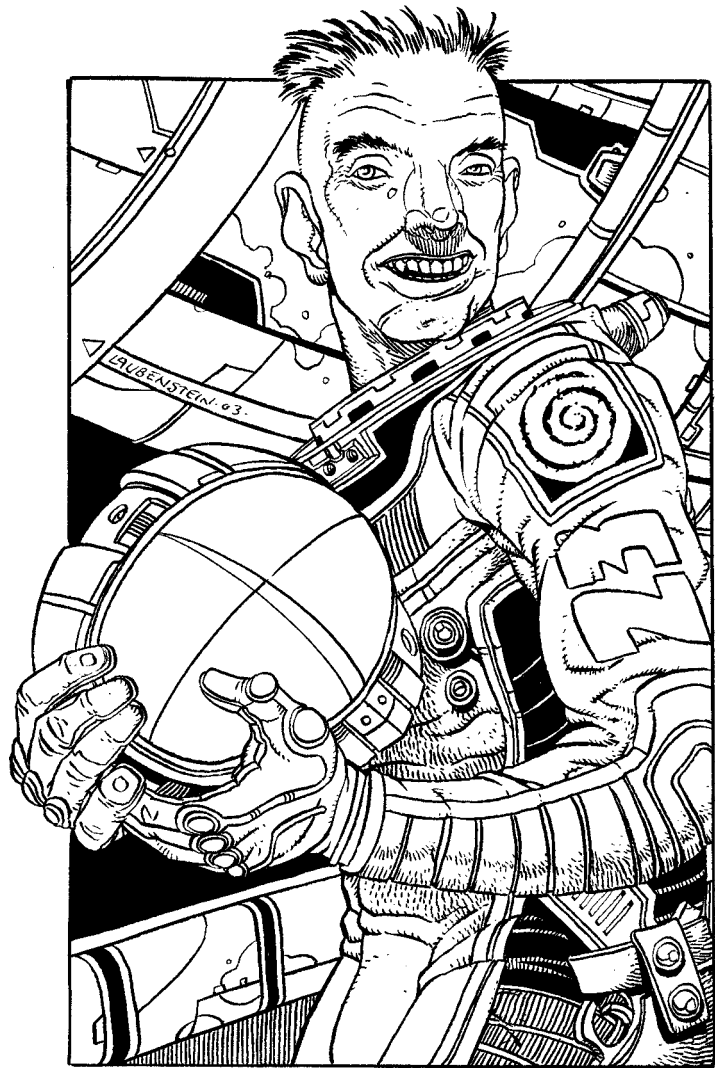
MP: 6.

Lvl: 50. **Profession:** Explorer. **Stats:** Ag-100(+12); Co-85 (+6); Me-91 (+7); Re-83(+5); SD-89(+6); Em-88(+6); In-70 (+3); Pr-100 (+12); Qu-94(+9); St-99(+11). AP: 79.

Skill Bonuses: ArmH 25 (ComArm 39, PowArm 39); ArmL 25 (BalArm 40); ArmM 25 (KinArm 39); ArtA 3; ArtP -6; AthB 1; AthE 11 (Dist4 48, Sprint 51, Swim 48); AthG 56 (Acrob 163, Climb 70); AwarP 9 (Alert 13, SenAmb 15); AwarSch 43 (LieP 119, Observe 95, Track 95); AwarSen 44 (Situational Awareness: Scouting 142, Situational Awareness: Space Combat 117); ComMan 31 (Zero G 147, ComPilot 149, SupprFire 137); Comm 28 (The Royal Tongue Spoken 8 Written 6, Imperial Human Spoken 6 Written 5); Cra 19; DP 3; In 53 (Dip 133, Dup 133, Int 136, Lead 185, Pub 133); LorA 18, LorG 30 (CultL 34); LorT 42 (VehL 114); MAsT 8; MASw 8; OutA 13; OutE 49 (Surv 127); SciAB 14 (BMath 22, Res 23); SciAE -3; SciAM -3; SciAS 12 (OrbMech 110); SciAT -3; SCon 49 (Stun 112); SpecA 23 (GunAmb 121); SpecD 0; SubA 3; SubM 0; SubS 50 (Hide 22, Stalk 23); TechGen 23 (SenA 98); TechG 60 (HEP 167, Miss 160, ProjGun 167); TechP 12 (MilitOrg: Ground 104, MilitOrg: Navy 104); TechVeh 82 (AFV 155, Atmo 164, FTL 117, Ground 155, Marine 112, Space 120); TechVoc 10 (Admin 104, Tactics 134); Urb 0; Weap1HE 64 (Plasma Pistol 98); Weap1HF 13; Weap1HM 63 (Dueling Sword 168); Weap2HE 14; Weap2HF 13; Weap2HM 13; WeapMT 13; WeapS 13.

Powers: Directed Powers OB: 0 (no power). None.

Paraxis was born to a noble human family of minor note. He lived his early life on Turan until he joined the military as a teenager. He earned his place in the cockpit by skill and a couple lucky duels against full-grown Falar. From then on, things were both incredibly difficult and unavoidable. Difficult in that



he had to prove and reprove himself constantly to gain and maintain the highest positions among pilots. Inevitable because there have been few humans better at the game.

When the war started, he commanded a third of the fighters attached to the *Terrible Fear*. In the early days of the war, his rise was meteoric. His use of tactics brought on repeated accusations of cowardice and these led to duels, both of the personal and promotion variety. By the end of the first wave, Paraxis commanded his entire flotilla, holding a rank equivalent to admiral.

His successes only increased from there and eventually he earned the trust of his subordinates. While they can't understand why he seems to run from some fights and not others, they finally came to the realization he was anything but a coward. Now his underlings handle the accusations of cowardice themselves.

Now Paraxis is Lord High Marshal of the Jeronan war machine. The ISC has fought him to a stop but while the ISC war machine is now hitting full production, the Jeronans will just keep getting and better as they retool captured ISC factories.

Paraxis is a driven man, a workaholic. He studies battles constantly, refining his tactical skills and spends time in the simulator every week. He spars constantly as well and spends time on the shooting range. Still, most of his skills apart from leadership haven't progressed a great deal since he gained his current position. He leads a war machine. That's all he does.

Paraxis is a man of tremendous honor. He refuses to bend, and although he considers military trickery a part of tactics there are lines he won't cross, such as storing weapons in hospitals and torturing prisoners (although some of that certainly goes on behind the scenes). He considers war the highest calling and he will not ever corrupt it by sullyng the symbols of peace.

Paraxis has no psychic abilities, in fact he has a tragic lack of ability in that area. He relies on his prodigious skills achieve most of his goals. He doesn't even seek out custom-made gear to increase his deadliness, still carrying a stock pistol and normal if ornate dueling sword. Paraxis has the Commanding Demeanor talent and some say even the Falar know fear when they've crossed him.

Using Paraxis in a game is up to the GM, but he probably shouldn't directly oppose the players. He great as a boogeyman and even better as a surprising ally if a matter of honor brings his interests in line with a party's. Paraxis is a solid and likable opponent and played right, the players will like him more than their allies.

He cuts an imposing figure with a large frame and fit build. He has black hair, just starting to salt and pepper with penetrating brown eyes. He dresses in fine uniforms and always carries a sword and pistol. He carries nothing else, not even a communicator, allowing his aides to handle such things.

5.0 BLACK MARKET TECH

The following data is hot off the most carefully concealed black market site. It is classified FOUO (For Office Use Only).

INTRUSION TECHNOLOGY

We know what it's like, kiddies. All the bad people are locking up your stuff, or at least stuff that *should* be yours. How dare they. They post security guards, set tactical scanners, and generally try to put all this technology between you and your things. The nerve.

Don't worry, kiddies. I'm here to help.

HYPNODRUGS

So let's start with the little bit of gear that's the *least* intrusion oriented. We know that sometimes, especially when data is concerned, you don't *want* anyone to know you were there. It's easy enough to stun all the guards and reprogram all the cameras, and hey, maybe you're good enough to not leave any fingerprints in the data. It could happen. I don't know any better.

But what about when those guards wake up? If you got a psychic insect, you can just tell them you ain't the 'droids they're looking for, but what if you're psychically challenged? Bribes? Babes? Bennies? Good ideas, but maybe they're rich, and female (and straight), and they got great employee's discounts all over town. Hell, maybe they're just *honest*.

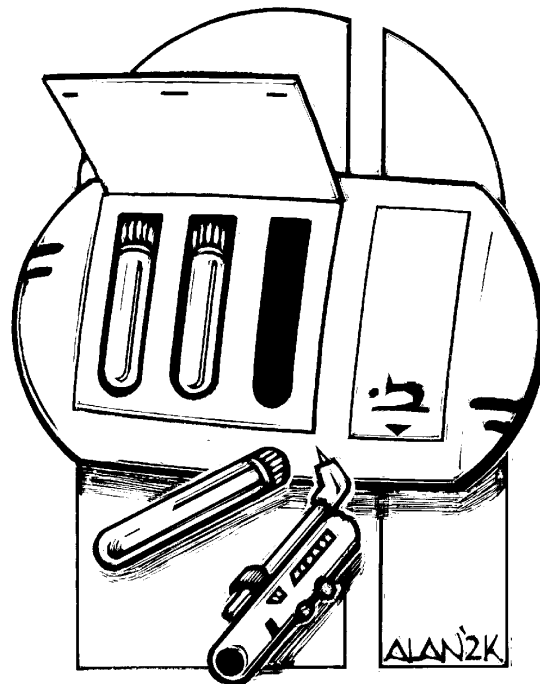
Well I'll tell you what my therapist does when I'm in the corner, deep in flashback, saying please stop, daddy, please stop.

He gives me hypnodrugs.

And you know, maybe I swiped a few on the way out of the office. Maybe I got a supplier. You don't need to know my back end. All I got to say is if you gots the skillz to use them, I gots the drugs for use.

Game Mechanics: *These drugs can be used to place a person quickly into a deep hypnosis. It takes one minute for these drugs to take effect. After that, another person can perform normal hypnotic tasks with Routine Hypnosis Maneuvers. The GM should feel free to adjudicate most of these however seems reasonable at the time, but we'll detail the two most common uses below.*

To use this effect the hypnotist can give a suggestion. The target must make an RR to resist vs. half the number of ranks the hypnotist has in his hypnosis skill, rounded up, plus five (so a character with one rank causes RRs against a 6th level poison.) The target must be able to understand the suggestion. The difficulty is dependent on the complexity of the suggestion. Placing a simple suggestion is Routine (you're hungry), a



slightly complex suggestion is Easy (you hate Bill and will sabotage his efforts to get a promotion), a very complex suggestion is Light (I want you to memorize this mail address. The next time you're at work you will feel compelled to e-mail me all the following data. . .), and an extremely complex suggestion is Medium, (enter the following building, walk forward fifteen steps to the guard station, tell the guard your name is Emily and show him these credentials, then tell him he's had a disaster at home, sit down, and enter the following password. . .). Something the character wouldn't normally do increases one step of difficulty. Something that they'd hate doing increases three. Something that's completely against their nature increases five. If the hypnotist fails, the suggestion fails, regardless of RR. The hypnotist usually won't know success or failure until the suggestion is triggered.

This drug also allows the hypnotist to alter the memories of the target. This can be used to change a memory slightly (a Routine Maneuver), erase a memory (a Medium Maneuver), change a memory greatly (a Very Hard Maneuver), or restore a memory (A Sheer Folly Maneuver). If the target wants to resist, the RR is determined as with suggestions above.

Base Cost: 1000 per dose.

DATAPAD CLONE

Hey, kiddie, I know datapads are great, but you know what's better than your datapad? Someone *else's* datapad. So what if you need their data but you don't have time to crack all their magic? Well, you copy the entire thing. It's quick, easy, and then you can spend months decrypting, if that's what it takes. This little baby has everything you need. It's a top of the line datapad, so you know it's got enough space. On top of that there's a tiny subprocessor and storage for holding the cloning software. Just plug this in and start it up. The subprocessor acts as a third-party, copying everything without interfering with the resulting image in the main storage and processor space. I know it sounds complex, but you just plug it in and it works. Unless theirs is protected from cloning, but that's easy to crack.

Game Mechanics: *This operates as a normal datapad and it can copy info from another in 1-15 minutes, depending on the data volume. Most datapads aren't protected against copying, even if they have security software, but if they do have copy protection, merely copying the data grants the hacker a +30 bonus over actually hacking the data.*

Base Cost: 10,100.

FRIEND OR FOE TRANSMITTERS

If you don't know what these are, kiddies, you watch too many crime dramas and not enough actual crime. It might be all fine and dandy to hack in or sneak in to a place, but tactical scanners can *see through walls*. Can't sneak around them. So how do those guards walk around? Well some really high-tech places do skeletal scans and have everyone on record, but if they ain't the military and they ain't a billion-dollar museum, they probably have little do-hickies that tell the sensors they're *supposed* to be there. How do you get you one of them?

I'm glad you asked.

Game Mechanics: *These tiny transmitters send a friend signal to local sensing equipment. The problem is programming one. Most guards don't take theirs home with them and every signal is unique. If the character can get close enough to record the ID transmission, he can recreate it with an Absurd Cryptography check (the signal is encrypted with a private key). It's up to the character then to figure out a way to not have two identical signals at the same time and even then they might set off an alarm if the sensors are programmed with schedule data, but those are story issues and a good character can usually find someone with round the clock clearance.*

