

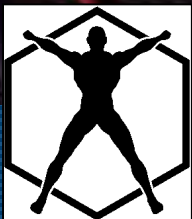
# DIGITAL HERO

# #36

APR 2006



杜克大师



In this issue:

- Sensors
- Spooks



- Aliens
- Tech
- Warps



- Sports
- Pygmies
- Rockers



# Table of Contents

## HERO HIGHWAY

### WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – *Worlds of Empire* and *The Ultimate Speedster*. 2

### HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – let's get crazy, with rules for Sanity Loss. 4

### YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

Screamin' Jay Hawkins was one of the weirdest figures in rock 'n' roll history. He'll put a spell on you. 7

### LEFTOVER HERO

The scientific effects of moving very near the speed of light were left out of *The Ultimate Speedster*. 15

## RESOURCE ROAD

### YOU GOTTA HAVE CULTURE – FLORES

A lost island of cannibal pygmies with deadly poison. And it's real! What more scenic locale could a gamer visit? 16

### EMPTY ROOMS AND VACANT WINDOWS

Haunted houses are staples of horror stories and folklore. But they're useful in more than just horror games. 18

## SPACE SECTOR

### THE WHOLE PACKAGE

These four alien races can be used in more than just science fiction campaigns, with just minor tweaking. 26

### CAPTAIN PULVER

This experienced Cybertank operator uses his cybernetic parts and extensive field experience to shut down rebellions. 30

### SENSORS? WHICH SENSORS?

This listing of *Terran Empire* and *Alien Wars* starship sensors provides game mechanics for dozens of abilities. 34

### TERRAN EMPIRE FUN AND GAMES

What do Terran Empire citizens do on the weekends? These sports, games of chance, and travel opportunities should help. 47

### TIME WARP

Science fiction provides many theories of time travel, which you can put to use in your games. 51

### THE WALLS HAVE EARS

The humanoids of Contrustratus have marvelous crystalline technology. Or does it have them? 57

## DIGITAL HERO

### Publisher

Hero Games

### Editor

Dave Mattingly

### Authors

D.T. Butchino  
Scott Gray  
Bob Greenwade  
Joshua Keezer  
Steven S. Long  
Patrick Pena  
Tom Rafalski  
Paul Stevenson  
Michael Surbrook  
Jason Walters

### Artists

D.T. Butchino  
David Duke  
Ig Guara  
Michael Surbrook

### Cover

David Duke

### Online

[herogames.com](http://herogames.com)

### To Subscribe

[herogames.com/digitalhero](http://herogames.com/digitalhero)

HERO System™ is DOJ, Inc.'s trademark for its roleplaying system.  
HERO System Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.  
Champions Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.  
Justice Inc., Danger International, Dark Champions, Fantasy Hero, and Star Hero Copyright © 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

No part of this electronic magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or computerization, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher: DOJ, Inc., 1 Haight Street, Suite A, San Francisco, California 94102.

Issue #36 (April 2006)



# When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

April's looking to be a pretty good month for Hero gamers, with two releases: our first *Star Hero* supplement, *Worlds Of Empire*, in several years; followed by our latest Ultimate book, *The Ultimate Speedster*!

## WORLDS UPON WORLDS

It's a big Galaxy out there. The Terran Empire alone stretches for thousands of light-years, and it's far from the only intergalactic entity. With so much territory to cover, a *Star Hero* GM or player may have trouble developing campaigns and characters in sufficient detail. That's why we had Allen Thomas, Jason Walters, Ben Seeman, Darren Watts, and Yours Truly write *Worlds Of Empire* for you! Featuring two dozen planets, ranging from the most significant worlds in the Empire to others are barely known to the average Imperial citizen, it's full of juicy details and adventure for your *Star Hero* campaign!

Chapter One, *Major Worlds*, covers eight planets: Emerald; Fexao; Halcyon; Hermetica; Rigel V; Tau Ceti; Trovatore; and Vaxandros Prime. As the title indicates, each of these worlds is a linchpin of the Empire in some way, or is a planet just about any character would have heard of or could come from.

Chapter Two, *Minor Worlds*, discusses ten planets that aren't necessarily so well-known: Adamant; Cybul III; H'rotha; New Alexandria; Polyphemus; Sigma Caeruleus III; Tetsuo; Toracta; Tridymite Beta; and Vinarcus. Though most of these worlds are more obscure than the ones in Chapter One, each of them is fascinating in its own way and offers plenty of opportunities for intrigue, action, and adventure.

Chapter Three, *Beyond The Empire*, steps outside the boundaries of the Terran Empire to look at five worlds belonging to other species or governments: Ackál; Dorvala; Mon'da; Ravanche; and Venwordien IV. The Empire's not the only place characters can have adventures, after all... and sometimes the most exciting adventures take place when your heroes aren't in familiar territory.

Chapter Four is for the GM's eyes only. It's the *GM's Vault*, containing secret information and/or plot seeds about each of the worlds described in Chapters One, Two, and Three. Additionally, it describes a few "hidden worlds": intriguing, and possibly dangerous, planets no one in the Empire knows about... yet.

Of course, just because we've chosen to describe planets from our *Terran Empire* setting doesn't make the book useless for campaigns set in other galaxies. Just like with many of our other books, we use one of our settings to give the book unity and focus, but the planets in question aren't so closely tied to the Milky Way of the Terran Empire that you can't "file off the serial numbers" and put a world into your own *Star Hero* universe. In many cases, all this requires is changing the planet's name, and perhaps the appearance of, and a basic fact or two about, its natives. So have no fear – whatever sort of *Star Hero* setting you use, *Worlds Of Empire* contains plenty of material you can use!

## THE NEED FOR SPEED

Hard on the heels of *The Ultimate Metamorph*, our *Ultimate* series of books gets another addition in the form of *The Ultimate Speedster* – our look at the rules for and uses of powers and abilities that involve movement, whether that movement's unusually swift or just unusual. It discusses and describes how to build, run, and campaign with characters for whom "movement" is, in some fashion, a central element, theme, or special effect. For the purposes of USP, a "speedster" is any character whose abilities and powers primarily focus on movement (usually movement at incredibly fast speeds), for whom movement-based abilities are a significant part of his design, or who simply possesses modes of movement uncommon in his genre or campaign setting. Despite the emphasis on "speed" in "speedster," sometimes all you need to define a speedster is a mode of movement that's out of the ordinary. For example, in a *Pulp Hero* campaign, the speedster might be the guy with a rocketpack that lets him fly. He doesn't necessarily fly at great speed – but the fact that he can fly at all means he's a "speedster," in that he has a movement ability that's unusual for the setting.

In addition to expanding the rules and rules options for speedster characters, *The Ultimate Speedster* provides players and GMs with guidance on designing more interesting and distinctive speedster characters and integrating speedsters smoothly into a campaign, regardless of genre. The information in this book can apply to superheroes who run at the speed of light, wizards who invoke magic to transport themselves across the world in the blink of an eye, jetpack-wearing space rangers, and winged characters.

Chapter One, *Speedster Characters*, discussed the major types of speedsters, with suggestions on how to build them. In addition to an extensive section on the Movement Powers (which lie at the heart of most speedster character concepts), it reviews the *HERO System*'s Skills, Talents, Powers, and other elements with regard to how they apply to or help speedsters. That segues into Chapter Two, *Speedster Powers*, which has over 300 pre-built powers and abilities for just about any speedster you can imagine (and most of those powers have one or more options, resulting in thousands of possible powers for your speedster characters). Some of these powers appear in *The UNTIL Superpowers Databases* or other *HERO System* products, but many are new, revised, or updated just for this book.

Chapter Three, *Speedsters Genre By Genre*, reviews how speedsters tend to function in various major genres, such as superheroes, Fantasy, and Pulp. While speedsters are most common in the Comic Book Superheroes genre (since it allows for incredibly high rates of speed, which in turn justifies other speedster abilities), as this chapter shows they can occur in just about any genre. It includes several sample characters for use as NPCs or pre-generated player characters in your campaigns.

Chapter Four, *The HERO System Movement Companion*, expands on the basic rules for movement in Chapter Two of the *5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Revised* core rulebook. It includes optional rules for Segmented Movement, information on Controlled and Uncontrolled Movement (and their ramifications), rules for racing, and a discussion about the physics of movement and how that's represented in game terms.

Chapter Five, *Adventure At Top Speed*, covers speedster campaigning. It discusses special ways speedsters interact with the combat rules, includes detailed information on how different types of movement work in *HERO System* terms, describes the "Speed Zone" (the "dimension" in which a speedster moves so fast that everyone and everything, sometimes even energy, seems to be frozen in time), and provides other resources for players and GMs.

So, get ready to shift into high gear with *The Ultimate Speedster!* Better move fast and make sure you get a copy....

— Steven S. Long  
HERO System Line Developer







# HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

## Insane in the Brain

### RULES FOR INSANITY, CORRUPTION, AND LOSS OF MENTAL STABILITY

Many RPGs, most famously *Call Of Cthulhu*, have rules for insanity, mental degradation, or loss of mental health by characters. Typically these rules reflect the effects of intense fear, alien or extradimensional influences, chaos, spiritual or mental corruption, or sorcery on characters. Some gamers enjoy these rules because of the roleplaying challenge they present. Others find them annoying because they tend to deprive the player of some control over his character, and even dictate his actions.

Since the *HERO System* emphasizes dramatic action and heroics, it's never had a core rule representing a character's loss of sanity or mental control (though of course there are abilities such as Mind Control or Presence Attacks that temporarily override a character's self-will). The old *Horror Hero* supplement dealt with the subject as part of its coverage of the Horror genre, but HH is long out of print. As a design experiment, let's take a look at some ways you could introduce a "loss of sanity" or "mental degradation" rule into your *HERO System* campaign. As always, the methods presented below are just suggestions – if you want to tinker with them, or have an idea for a similar rule that better suits your campaign, go right ahead.

### Presence Loss

Perhaps the simplest option for this sort of rule, one I've used myself in many games, is to gradually reduce a character's Presence during a scenario for the purposes of resisting certain types of Presence Attacks or like effects. At various intervals, or when the characters are exposed to specific creatures, events, or phenomena, they suffer an automatic loss of PRE as dictated by the GM. Characters with certain abilities, such as the *Fearless Talent* from *Fantasy Hero*, may be immune to the PRE reduction, or suffer it at a lesser effect.

Under this system, the fear or insanity effect makes characters more susceptible to related Presence Attacks by reducing the PRE they use to resist those attacks, but it doesn't necessarily dictate any character actions. (For purposes of this rule, characters can't use EGO to resist these attacks. EGO would work against other Presence Attacks, but not the type the reduction relates to.) For example, suppose the GM's running a Horror campaign in which the PCs investigate the activities of horrific

extradimensional entities and fight those entities when they manifest. The entities are so *alien* that just looking at them constitutes a Presence Attack: "run away in fear." As they investigate the activities of the entities and their human servants, the PCs typically see or experience terrible mutilations, blasphemous rituals, books of mind-twisting lore, political conventions, and other horrifying stuff. Each of these encounters reduces the PCs' PRE by 1-3 (or more) points, representing how edgy, afraid, and even insane they slowly become through exposure to such things. By the time they actually confront one of the entities at the end of the scenario, the odds of their being able to stand against it without running in fear are much slimmer.

The extent of a PRE reduction imposed by the GM depends on the intensity of fear, insanity, or related effect he wants the PCs to feel. A loss of 1 PRE every Hour would reflect a relatively gradual, low-intensity fear that builds slowly but surely over the course of a day; the same loss once every 6 Hours extends the effect over a week. On the other hands, a loss of 3-5 points every Hour means a much swifter descent into fearfulness, corruption, or insanity.

Not all PRE reductions have to occur on a per-time unit basis, nor do the losses have to occur in predictable amounts. Sometimes it's easier for the GM to just impose a PRE loss when the characters see or encounter specific things, and randomizing the loss slightly can represent how different characters react to the same situation differently. For instance, maybe every time the PCs encounter a dragon, they lose 1d6 PRE because dragons are so magnificently terrifying.

For example, suppose a group of *Fantasy Hero* characters is entering the ruins of a wizard's tower, hoping to find adventure and treasure within. Unbeknownst to them, the wizard was a demon worshipper and built his tower on a cliff where the gods imprisoned a powerful demon aeons ago. The wizard hoped to free the demon, but only partly succeeded. Now the demon's dark magics influence the whole area, creating feelings of dread and despair. To represent the fear they should feel, the GM periodically imposes PRE reductions on the PCs, and accompanies the loss with descriptions of how edgy and fearful the place makes them feel. They lose 1 PRE when they enter the tower, and another 1 PRE periodically when they explore chambers or caverns where the demon's influence is particularly strong. In the depths of the cliff they finally encounter the

half-freed demon, who can now Presence Attack them to greater effect because his “aura of fear” has been preying on their minds ever since they walked into the tower.

In a PRE reduction system, the reduction in PRE lasts as long as the GM wants it to. Typically the PRE all comes back at the end of the adventure after the characters have defeated the main enemy or learned to cope with the situation. In other scenarios, they may be able to use special spells, abilities, or items to restore lost PRE by bolstering their courage, sanity, or self-control. In some cases, such as Horror campaigns where fear is one of the governing factors of the setting, a PRE reduction may last for days or months after a scenario ends, or even be permanent. Usually there’s some way for characters to “regain their sanity” between adventures: rest and relaxation; psychotherapy; curative magics.

## PRESENCE LOSS II

You can also use a PRE reduction system in other ways. For instance, rather than having the loss of PRE make characters more susceptible to Presence Attacks, maybe it makes them acquire new Psychological Limitations that relate to the scenario. In this sort of system, typically a character acquires a Moderate Psychological Limitation after losing 25% (one-fourth) of his PRE, a Strong Psychological Limitation after losing 50% (half) of his PRE, and a Total Psychological Limitation after losing either 75% (three-fourths) or 100% of his PRE.

The Psychological Limitation acquired in this sort of situation could be randomly determined by the GM, but it usually has something to do with the events of the scenario and/or whoever or whatever causes the PRE loss. For example, if a character starts losing PRE due to seeing and fighting some demonic beetles, maybe he acquires Entomophobia (fear of insects). If the PRE loss represents some sort of corruption, the Psychological Limitation acquired is something like *Corrupt* or *Devoted To Evil* or *Fanatic Worshipper Of The Elder Gods*.

As with the PRE reduction system described above, the GM decides how long an acquired Psychological Limitation lasts. Some may fade when the adventure ends, others become permanent. You might even consider these rules equivalent to a Major Transform and let the character “heal back” from it at the same rate he’d Recover BODY damage, or some other rate.

## The Sanity Characteristic

Another possibility is to represent a character’s sanity or mental stability as a Characteristic of some sort. When he’s exposed to situations, encounters, and beings that might harm his sanity, he suffers “damage” much like losing STUN to a physical attack or END to the use of abilities. For purposes of this discussion, we’ll call this Characteristic *Sanity*, or SAN.

## CALCULATING SANITY

The first issue to consider is how to calculate SAN. Typically it’s a Figured Characteristic, analogous to STUN or END. In some campaigns GMs prefer to make SAN loss a rarer thing, so they set SAN up as a Primary Characteristic similar to BODY.

Assuming SAN is a Figured Characteristic, the GM has to decide how to determine its value. The higher a character’s amount of SAN, the longer he can resist horrific or corrupting effects, so the GM should take into account how resistant he wants the PCs to be to such attacks (and how often characters Recover SAN; see below). Typically the calculation includes PRE and/or EGO. Some possible formulae include:

- PRE + EGO
- (PRE/2) + (EGO/2)
- (PRE/5) + (EGO/5)
- ((PRE/2) + (EGO/2)) x 2
- PRE x 2
- EGO x 2

Obviously, the GM can substitute any multiplier or divisor he prefers for the common ones listed above.

The GM should also establish a Characteristic Point cost for SAN so characters can buy more if they want to, and so you can determine the effects of Adjustment Powers applied to SAN. The cost depends on how “robust” the GM wants characters’ sanity to be – the more SAN costs, the harder it is to Drain (or to buy more of); the cheaper it is, the quicker characters can lose or regain it from Adjustment Powers. In most campaigns a cost of 1 Character Point per point of SAN is a pretty good benchmark.

### **TAKING SANITY DAMAGE**

---

Characters take SAN damage from various horrifying or corrupting encounters, as described above. These abilities are built as Drain SAN attacks. Characters can defend against them by buying Power Defense (if appropriate, with a Limitation that it only protects against SAN attacks), but they must have the GM's approval to do so. SAN attacks are *supposed* to be difficult to resist; allowing characters to buy defenses against them may run contrary to the nature and spirit of the campaign.

If a character's SAN drops to 0, he becomes insane, corrupt, or the like; the exact effects depend on the campaign and what the GM's using the SAN rules to represent. The character may acquire Psychological Limitations (as described above), become an NPC under the GM's control, run away in terror, become irredeemably evil, or the like.

### **RECOVERING SANITY**

---

The GM also has to decide how characters can Recover lost SAN. In some games, they can't – SAN loss is permanent, representing a gradual but inevitable slide into madness and fear. In other games, characters Recover SAN by performing specific acts (usually acts of goodness, or involving the destruction of the evil causing the SAN loss), casting specific spells (or having the spells cast on them), or the like. In still other games, characters recover lost SAN using their REC, just as if it were STUN or END; in this case, SAN tends to represent the short-term fear characters feel during specific encounters, rather than any long-lasting mental degradation.





# You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

"Screamin' Jay Hawkins was the coolest ghoul, always. Jay and I maintained a friendship from... 1984 'til the day he left this world. Officially, that is; Jay was always in another world!"

— Rudi Protrudi, the Fuzztones

The crowd at the Apollo Theater honestly didn't know what to expect. The lights had been dimmed so far down that they tripped over one another in the darkness, the only point of reference provided by the soft orange glow of Pall Mall cigarettes in the gloom. The crowding and the dark made them anxious. The men uttered darkly about getting refunds. The women muttered even more darkly about the men sleeping on couches. In short, nobody was very happy.

The lights gradually rose, revealing a coffin set atop a funerary table. Ghostly smoke, illuminated from below by sickly green lights, billowed up from somewhere out of sight. Slowly, a melancholy tune echoed up from the orchestra pit, causing the muttering audience to fall silent. A long arm slowly raised the lid of the coffin. Its wrists were accented by flowing lace cuffs, its fingers decorated with silver skull rings. Stiffly, a lanky figure rose from the coffin to stare at the audience below. Shocking in his appearance, he wore a jeweled turban, a white Victorian cravat, and a cape held into place with silver skull broaches. His sideburns were cut like daggers driving directly toward his full mouth. But the most striking thing about the man in the coffin was his enormous, piercing eyes that seemed to glare directly into one's soul.

Without warning, the seemingly stiff, corpse like figure leapt from his coffin, flaring his arms wide as he rushed at the audience: half of whom ran directly for the Apollo Theater's doors. The other half ran straight for the stage. The music reached a certain crescendo. The man began to sing, his deep voice oddly compelling.

"I put a spell on you, because you're mine...."

Before the man in the cape could continue with his song, however, a clap

of thunder and a flash of light brought another figure onto the stage. Seemingly from thin air, a man dressed in a trench coat, fedora, and full face mask stood to one side of the shocking rock musician. Gesturing with a single accusing finger, he pointed backstage. Half of the remaining audience made for the doors, but the spooky singer didn't falter or even visibly respond to the apparition. He continued singing.

"I can't stand the things that you do. No, no, no, I ain't lyin'. No."

The figure in the mask snorted at the musician's nonchalance, crossed his arms, then vanished once again. With only the most determined members of his audience remaining, the musician finished his bizarre act. Later, with his work completed, he retreated to his dressing room with a wide-eyed young woman under either arm. The masked figure was waiting for him there, sitting casually on a makeup table with one booted leg draped over the side. The musician audibly sighed.

"I warned you about this sort of thing, Hawkins," the masked man's voice was stern, like a disapproving father's. "Let them go. You and I have some business to attend to."

Hawkins' shoulders slumped in resignation. He released the two wide-eyed young women, turning so that he was facing them. Then he snapped one of his ring encrusted fingers; once, twice in rapid succession. They blinked, staring at the two men in confusion.

"Thanks for helping me get back to my room, girls. That game leg of mine just gives out sometimes without warning."

Hawkins added a big smile like a punctuation mark. Still looking confused, the young women retreated through the dressing room's door, which he closed behind them. With a sigh, the musician wandered over to a tiny bar in the corner of the room, where he deftly constructed a martini. The masked figure remained seated, saying nothing, until he had finished.

"You drink too much, Jay," he offered.

"You lecture too much, Doc,"

## SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS QUOTES

"I elected to be different, to be strange. If you want to call it crazy, do it. It makes sense to me, though, 'cause I can go to the bank on it!"

"I mean I drank everything I could get my hands on in the Army, Air Force, and in civilian life. I drank a hundred and ninety proof grain alcohol, mixed with Black & White scotch, and a Jack Daniels for a chaser. And I went to bed like this, and I woke up like this."

"Constipation Blues? Well, most songs are sung directly from the heart. I think that was directly from the bowel, if you'll pardon the expression. Oh my goodness, I'm telling you, I'd never been that way in my life and I grew up and went into the service and came out and everything and then — boom!"

"I don't sing them. I destroy them."

"I wrote in my will to cremate me. Fly over the ocean and scatter the dust, so I can be little particles in everybody's eyes the rest of their lives."



## SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS PLOT SEEDS

**Framed!:** Things haven't been the same since Screamin' Jay arrived in Vibora Bay – grizzly murders in back alleys, mysterious shapes moving through the mists, young nuns disappearing from the convent school. All of the evidence points in one direction: the elderly rocker is really a vampire! Yet when the PCs confront him, Jalacy protests his innocence. Do they believe him or search for the real killer?

**Kidnapped!:** One by one, stars from the early days of Rock and Roll have been vanishing! Fearful for not only his own safety but also for that of his friends, many of whom are now quite elderly, Screamin' Jay enlists the PCs help in tracking down the kidnappers.

### Battle of the Shock

**Rockers:** The president of Metal Blade Records has offered an enormous cash prize for the most shocking rock act in America. Dozens of bizarre musicians, including Screamin' Jay and the PCs, converge on Detroit hoping to claim the prize. But can any of them face the awesome wrath of the Demon Robot Bikers?

Hawkins retorted. "You also have a nasty habit of not minding your own business. Why'd you have to come down here and try to ruin my gig, anyhow? Did Harlem run out of crime for the first time?"

The masked man snorted in amusement once again.

"Hardly. I don't believe that I ruined your performance, either. Most of your so-called fans probably thought I was part of the act."

"Maybe," Jay conceded. "But that still doesn't tell me why you're here."

The masked man opened his arms in an apologetic gesture.

"I know a great deal about the hidden world beyond normal man's senses: indeed, more than most mystics could ever hope to understand. Yet there are a great number of things I do not know. For some annoying reason the gods have seen fit to gift you, Jalacy Hawkins, with an inordinate number of occult gifts. You have squandered and misused them, yes; but you still have them. There have been several murders in Harlem this week. Gruesome, ugly killings that indicate the presence of evil from beyond the grave. I have limited experience with the restless dead, Hawkins. I may not be able to find the clues that will lead me to whomever – or whatever – is doing the killing. Or, even if I find them, I might not be able to recognize what they mean. Now, you, on the other hand..."

He left the sentence dangling. Jalacy sipped his drink for a moment.

"Why should I care," he finally retorted. "I'm a crooner, not a mystery man."

"If you and I don't care about what happens here, who will? No one else in New York cares about what happens down here. To us."

Hawkins thought about that for a moment. For several years he had suspected that Harlem's mysterious resident superhero, Doctor Twilight, was like himself an African American. This seemed to confirm it. He nodded his agreement.

"Look, doc, can we at least take a cab or something? Traveling by mojo isn't one of my favorite..."

The masked man touched his shoulder. The empty room echoed with the sound of a martini glass shattering as it hitting the floor.

One of the strangest performers in Rock and Roll's long, strange history, Jalacy "Screamin' Jay" Hawkins pioneered the entire subgenre of theatrical rock with his crazed voodoo antics and over-the-top appearance. His hit recording *I Put A Spell On You* has been covered an almost uncountable number of times, popping up in movies, television advertisements, and even Olympic ice-skating routines. Musicians that directly sight his influence include Alice Cooper, Marilyn Manson, George Clinton, and Ozzy Osborne. A performer who appeared in almost a dozen films, Screamin' Jay counted amongst his friends an enormous number of famous actors, musicians, and film directors.

Yet few of this grandfather-of-rock's fans know the entire truth of his life. Hawkins was an avid and capable boxer who won several middleweight championships at the tender age of 14. A double veteran, he served in both the Army and the Air Force during both WWII and the Korean War. He also fathered an estimated 75 illegitimate children during his lifetime.

**Screamin' Jay Hawkins**



**Screamin' DEMON**

**Hawkins:** Naturally, there is a great deal more to Screamin' Jay's infamous 1956 *I Put A Spell On You* recording session than anyone realizes! The inspired recording engineer was actually a DEMON Initiate looking to explore the magical ramifications of the energetic, new "satanic" musical form known as Rock and Roll. The recording studio complex was actually located in a Demonhome to facilitate his dark, evil experiments. Before inviting Jalacy Hawkins and the other musicians into the studio, the Initiate secretly inscribed the floor with mystical symbols, covering the incriminating evidence with a worn carpet. As part of his modified ritual, he then fed the unsuspecting artists whisky tainted with the blood of a demon, cigarettes laced with belladonna, and barbecued "pork" ribs that were actually taken from slaughtered virgin girls!

Then, when the session was in full swing, DEMON Brothers entered the room, bound Screamin' Jay to the spot on the floor where a pentagram was hidden, and performed a demon binding ceremony on the hapless

**Screamin' Jay Hawkins**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
18	CON	16	13-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
13	COM	2	12-	
7	PD	4		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 7 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
32	END	-2		
35	STUN	4		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 78**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Leaping: 3"/6"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
3	<i>Accomplished Alcoholic:</i> Life Support (Immunity to Alcohol)	0
17	<i>I Put A Spell on You:</i> Mind Control 6d6; Incantations (-1/4), Women Only (-1/2)	3
20	<i>Flash Powder:</i> Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex, +1/2); 6 Charges (-3/4), Gestures (-1/4), IIF (-1/4) [6]	
4	<i>Frightening Appearance:</i> +10 PRE; Only When Making PRE Attacks (-1), OIF (-1/2)	0
<b>Perks</b>		
12	Contact: Fan Base 8- (Institutions, Contacts, Useful, Organization)	
5	Money: Well Off	
2	Reputation: Completely Insane Voodoo Rock and Roll Musician (medium-sized group) 11-, +2/+2d6	
1	Reputation: Middleweight Boxing Champion (small to medium sized group) 8-, +1/+1d6	

**ALTERNATE SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS**

15	<i>Screamin' Magical Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 30-point Powers
8	1) <i>I Put a Spell On You:</i> Mind Control 6d6; Incantations (-1/4), Women Only (-1/2)
7	2) <i>Speakin' Skull:</i> Summon 150-point Loa in the form of Henry the Skull; Incantations (-1/4), OAF (-1)
12	3) <i>Quite a Show:</i> Sight and Hearing Groups Images Increased Size, 4" radius (+1/2), Personal Immunity (+1/4), Difficult to Dispel (+1/4), Variable Special Effects (Limited Group of SFX, +1/4), Conforming (+1/2); Incantations (-1/4)

**Talents**

- 3 *Professional Musician:* Perfect Pitch  
6 *Tough Guy:* Combat Luck

**Skills**

Martial Art: Boxing

Maneuver OCV DCV Notes

- |   |  |    |    |                                |
|---|--|----|----|--------------------------------|
| 4 | Block  | +2 | +2 | Block, Abort                   |
| 3 | Clinch   | -1 | -1 | Grab Two Limbs, 35 STR to Hold |
| 4 | Cross  | +0 | +2 | 7d6 Strike                     |
| 5 | Hook   | -2 | +1 | 9d6 Strike                     |
| 5 | Jab  | +1 | +3 | 5d6 Strike                     |
| 8 | +2 Damage Classes (added in)   |    |    |                                |
| 3 | +1 with Boxing   |    |    |                                |
| 3 | <i>Carny Tricks:</i> +1 with Mimicry, Sleight of Hand, and Ventriloquism |    |    |                                |
| 3 | <i>Stagecraft:</i> +1 with Acting, Oratory, and PS: Musician             |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Acting 12-   |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Conversation 12-   |    |    |                                |
| 4 | Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games) 11-                                    |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Language: French (Conversational, Literate)                              |    |    |                                |
| 7 | Mimicry 13-  |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Oratory 12-  |    |    |                                |
| 3 | PS: Musician 12-   |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Persuasion 12-   |    |    |                                |
| 7 | Seduction 14-  |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Sleight Of Hand 12-  |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Streetwise 12-   |    |    |                                |
| 2 | Survival (Urban) 11-   |    |    |                                |
| 5 | Ventriloquism 12-  |    |    |                                |
| 3 | Scholar  |    |    |                                |
| 2 | KS: African American Music 11-   |    |    |                                |
| 1 | KS: Boxing 11-   |    |    |                                |
| 2 | KS: Carny Tricks 11-   |    |    |                                |
| 2 | KS: The Occult 11-   |    |    |                                |
| 2 | KS: Stagecraft 11-   |    |    |                                |

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 173****Total Cost: 250****150+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Dependence: Alcoholic: -1 to Skill Rolls and related rolls per day (Very Common, Addiction)
- 15 Distinctive Features: Insane Looking Hoodoo Man (Concealable; Always Noticed and Causes Major Reaction; Detectable By Commonly-Used Senses)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Outrageous Self-Promoter (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Insatiable Appetite For Young Women (Common, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: Philanderer, 8- (Extreme)
- 35 Dependent NPC(s): Between 50 and 75 Illegitimate Children 8- (Incompetent; Group DNPC)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 250**

## Screamin' Jay Hawkins

**Background/History:** Jalacy Hawkins was born on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1929 in Cleveland, Ohio. His mother was a drifter, who typically dropped her infant children off at orphanages once they had been weaned. Abandoned at the tender age of 18 months, Jalacy was bounced from foster home to foster home until a Blackfoot Indian couple adopted him. Something of a progeny, Jalacy taught himself to box, sing, and play a variety of musical instruments. Raised in the healthy environment of rural Montana, he also grew to be unusually large at a young age, fooling recruiters into taking inducting him into the Army at 14.

While in the Army, he won the 1943 Golden Gloves championship. Hawkins then served in the Pacific Theater during the final years of World War II. Although he served exclusively in an entertainment unit, singing and playing the piano and tenor saxophone, Jalacy had the misfortune of getting captured, spending several months in a Japanese POW camp in 1945. Though he emerged from this experience without a scratch, his luck ran out two years later when a grenade landed in his foxhole during the Korean War. After recuperating at a military hospital, he joined the Air Force and was stationed in Alaska. Jalacy became that state's middleweight boxing champion in 1949.

Discharged in 1951, the 22-year-old Hawkins decided to hang up his gloves and pursue a career as an entertainer. He wandered the country for six months, earning his living as a carnival worker before hooking up with blues artist Tiny Grimes. Grimes, the man generally credited with recording the first Rock and Roll song (*Tiny's Boogie* in 1946), saw a great deal of raw potential in Hawkins. He used him as backup vocalist, pianist, chauffeur, and valet. Hawkins soon tired of working for Grimes, however, and went to work for Fats Domino's band as a saxophone player. Unfortunately, his tendency to appear onstage wearing a gold and leopardskin outfit with a turban greatly irritated Domino, who fired him for being excessively eccentric.

Undeterred, Hawkins became the protégé of the fantastically alcoholic bluesman Wynonie "Mr. Blues" Harris, who nevertheless managed to sober up long enough to record several hits including the aptly named *Who Threw the Whiskey in the Well* and *Good Rocking Tonight*. Harris was what was commonly called a blues "shouter," bluesmen notorious for a musical style that featured over-the-top vocals, crazed lyrics, and onstage antics. He helped the young musician land his first recording contract, and then assisted him in creating a series of occult themed songs such as (*She Put the Wamee* (*On*

*Me*), *Little Demon*, and his phenomenally successful *I Put A Spell On You*.

*I Put A Spell On You* is one of the most successful and influential Rock and Roll recordings of all time. It has been included in The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's "500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll" and has also found its way into innumerable movie soundtracks, including those for Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, David Lynch's *Lost Highway*, and Jim Jarmusch's highly influential *Stranger Than Paradise*. It has been used in television advertisements for Levi's Jeans and become a standard accompaniment for several Olympic ice skaters. The song has also been covered dozens of times, most notably by performers such as Creedence Clearwater Revival, Nick Cave, Nina Simone, Diamanda Galas, and Marilyn Manson. Yet none of these subsequent versions capture the original's frenzied, guttural desperation. Originally composed by Hawkins as a serious ballad to a lost love, an evening of heavy drinking, smoking, and spare rib consumption initiated by an inspired (if demented) recording engineer produced a bizarre version of the song that Hawkins didn't even remember recording.

"Before," he later commented, "I was just a normal blues singer. I was just Jay Hawkins. It all sort of just fell in place. I found out I could do more destroying a song and screaming it to death." In the quintessential version of the song, Jay sounds possessed and demented. He threatens wildly, groans, screams, and sounds utterly demonic, as he demands the return of his ladylove (after the song came out he got her back, and then dumped her). When released by the Collectables label as a single, it quickly rocketed into the Top 40, bringing Jay to the attention of Alan Freed and his "Rock and Roll Review." Freed helped the aspiring musician work out the theatrical aspects of his act to help capitalize on the "cannibalistic" sound of the song. He began wearing a long "Dracula" cape, a bone-decorated top hat or turban, and a witchdoctor-like tusk through his nose. Four pallbearers carried him in a coffin onto the stage so that he could rise out of it amidst smoke and fog to perform his first number. "I used to lose half the audience when I leapt out of my coffin," he later boasted. "They all rushed up the aisles screaming in terror." During his performances he would do small magic tricks using flash powder, handle snakes, and speak Hamlet-like to a cigarette-smoking skull named Henry.

While these antics proved enormously influential on later generations of "theatrical" Rock and Roll acts such as The Parliament Funkadelics, Alice Cooper, Ted Nugent, Black Sabbath, and Marilyn Manson, they were extremely controversial in the 1950s. The song was banned from many radio stations for being

musician... who continued to sing throughout the horrific experience! It is *this* performance that was captured on tape and released as a single, setting into motion a series of magical events that would lead to the creation of satanic speed metal in the 1980s. Oddly, at the time these experiments seemed to be a failure. The demon that was attracted to the Initiate's ceremony proved to be a uniquely quirky, uncontrollable, and eccentric imp, with no interest in his satanic organization but a great deal of interest in drinking, womanizing, and general mayhem. Thus, Screamin' Jay's powers do not come from carnival inspired, theatrical tricks but from his magical status as a Demon-Bound. He perished at age 70 because his physical form had become too aged to sustain the imp's passions.

**Screamin' houngan Hawkins:** Wynonie "Mr. Blues" Harris wasn't so much an alcoholic early rock pioneer as he was a pioneering alcoholic Voudon priest. After many attempts, he discovered that his drinking had left him too weak to perform the ceremonies necessary to summon the *loa* using music.



He then apprenticed the promising young Jalacy Hawkins into the Petra Voudon priesthood as a way of continuing his work. Thus, the entire musical genre of Rock and Roll is actually the result of voodoo experiments begun with the recording of *Good Rocking Tonight*. (*She Put the Wamee (On Me)* and *Little Demon* were early, failed attempts by the two *houngan* to create a *wanga* talisman for seducing women. They got it right with their frenzied recording of *I Put A Spell On You*, in which the two men trapped a *djab* (or devil) named Papa Henri in an old skull. Jay then used the power of the *djab* to lure back his ex-girlfriend, dumping her when the test was completed.

Abandoning his mentor to his miserable drunken fate, Screamin' Jay used his Voudon powers for decades to have a screaming good time, acquiring a modest level of wealth while seducing women of all sorts. He helped to propagate the religion of Voudon by converting promising young musicians like Keith Richards, Alice Cooper, and Ozzy Osborne to the faith. Eventually, though, the spirits always have their due.



“demented,” shows were shut down by local authorities for being “lewd,” and the National Casket Company banned him from renting caskets (he simply bought his own). All of the negative attention took a toll on Jay, who began drinking heavily. “I don’t want to be the black Vincent Price,” he complained to a friend. “I want to do goddamn opera. I want to sing Figaro.”

Unfortunately for such ambitions, by the mid-1960s Jay pretty much *was* the black Vincent Price. Although he never again enjoyed musical success on the level of *I Put A Spell On You*, he did go on to have a string of minor hits including *Constipation Blues*, *Orange Colored Sky*, and *Feast of the Mau Mau*. He also continued to be an outrageous performer, enjoying a fairly sizable cult following in the United States and Europe. A sought-after novelty act, he moved to France, but returned to the US to open for the Rolling Stones in Madison Square Garden in 1980.

Still, although his tours of Europe were profitable, the royalty checks for covers substantial, and his recording output prolific, Jay’s career foundered until director Jim Jarmusch featured *I Put A Spell On You* on the soundtrack of his 1983 film *Stranger Than Paradise*. With the critical success of that film, he gave Jay a bit part as a hotel night clerk in his film *Mystery Train*. This led to a series of roles for the aging bluesman, most notably in Bill Duke’s *A Rage In Harlem* and Zalman King’s *Two Moon Junction*. He joined noted punk band The Clash on a tour, then later opened for melancholy alternative rock musician Nick Cave. He also became a regular fixture at both European blues and film festivals.

Although he never again became a big name in the Rock and Roll world he helped to fashion, Jay continued composing and performing until the end of his life. Revered as a cult figure by a small but loyal community of theatrical rock musicians and fans, he kept looking for a way to gain the recognition he deserved as an early father of the genre. In 2000 at age 70, he collaborated with Greek director Nicholas Triandafyllidis on a documentary of his life entitled *Screaming Jay Hawkins: I Put a Spell On Me*. Unfortunately, before the film could be completed, Jay died in a suburban Paris hospital. In what would prove to be an ironic end for the man who composed *Constipation Blues*, he died of a hemorrhage after undergoing an operation for an obstructed bowel. As instructed by his will, Jay’s remains were cremated so that he would be free in death from the coffin he felt artistically shackled to in life.

**Personality/Motivation:** Although he’s an ambitious and reasonably capable performer, Screamin’ Jay Hawkins’ life has been largely shaped by his appetites for booze, fame, and women. Jay has a legendary ability to consume large quantities of hard liquor; he’s nearly died of alcohol poisoning several times in his life. When not drinking, Screamin’ Jay is possessed by a desire for musical fame that borders on the maniacal. Although a talented musician, he continually resorts to gimmickry, tricks, and controversy to promote his career. His behavior has caused many to view him as “trick” act rather than a serious artist, which in many ways has actually harmed his career rather than helped it.

When not drinking or scheming up bizarre ways to promote his act, Jay has an unquenchable appetite for the opposite sex. He’s quite charming too, with a certain style that many women find irresistible: Screamin’ Jay is the father of a veritable army of an estimated 50 to 75 illegitimate children spread across three continents.

In spite of all his mania, drinking, and irresponsibility, Jay is basically a fun, good-natured guy with a deep (if melodramatic) passion for American music. He tends to form lasting friendships with anyone that has a deep interest in the history of rock and roll. Music journalists, theatrical musicians, and actors all seem to enjoy the energetic bluesman’s company; in fact, they comprise a sizable (and valuable) portion of his fan base.

**Quote:** “I came into this world black, naked, and ugly. And no matter how much I accumulate here, it’s a short journey. I will go out of this world black, naked, and ugly. So I enjoy life.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Varied life experiences make for versatile people. With professions as varied as soldier, pro boxer, musician, stage performer, and actor, few men are as versatile as Jalacy Hawkins. Screamin’ Jay is an outstanding boxer, with all of the associated martial skills one would expect from a former Golden Gloves champion. He also has a decent working knowledge of the sorts of tricks that carnies and stage magicians use in their shows. This includes a profound understanding of hypnosis that Jay uses in combination with his singing abilities and considerable personal charisma to sway the minds of women for brief periods of time. It is also the primary reason why he has fathered a small army of illegitimate children.

If he is confronted with a combat situation, Screamin’ Jay will first use a charge of the flash powder he keeps concealed on his person as part of his act to blind his opponent. He will then use his considerable boxing abilities to knock him unconscious as quickly as possible. If confronted



with a female adversary, Screamin' Jay will lock eyes with her before using his *I Put A Spell On You* mind control power to neutralize her as a threat. In situations where his martial and hypnotic abilities are inadequate, he will attempt to frighten opponents away with his bizarre "voodoo" appearance. If none of these options seems reasonable, Jay will retreat and let others handle the situation. He may use morbid occult imagery as part of his act, but he's not actually suicidal!

Screamin' Jay has a phenomenal ability to consume alcohol. He is also an alcoholic. Although he is immune to the negative effects of drinking, he must still consume at least a little booze every day to remain competent.

**Campaign Use:** The heroic stage magician, who uses his slight-of-hand and detective abilities to fight crime, has been a staple of comic books since their Golden Age in the 1940s. Characters like Mandrake the Magician and Zatara applied all of their stagecraft skills to the problem of solving mysteries or crimes. These characters often didn't rely on flashy magical abilities (although they had them), instead using their detailed knowledge of the occult to triumph over opponents whom often misused supernatural powers for evil.

When re-envisioned as a *HERO System* character, Screamin' Jay Hawkins is essentially an entertaining variation on this theme. While the real life Screamin' Jay was neither hero or a villain, he could easily be used as either one by an enterprising GM. A self proclaimed expert on the occult whose performances take him from town to town, he might show up just in time to help the PCs confront an enigmatic supernatural force. Or he might be a satanically inspired con man who wanders across the country seducing women for the explicit purpose of parting them from their fortunes. Either way, his back-story as a musician will allow the GM to move him in-and-out of the campaign as quickly as he desires. The sidebar *Alternate Screamin' Jays* points out three possible paranormal backgrounds under which he might have actual, rather than fabricated, occult powers; yet there are certainly more possibilities. For example, Jay might be a genuine vampire, whose goal is to acquire as many vampire brides as possible using his musical act as a cover for the spreading of his paranormal plague.

Alternately, Screamin' Jay's motivations may derive from one of his alternate origin stories (again, see the sidebar). Maybe he is walking the earth in search of a way to reverse the Demon Binding process he was subjected to in 1956. As a *bokur* or *shaman*, he might be attracted to a particular location by forces the PCs don't entirely understand, performing

entertaining rituals that, while initially seeming superfluous to the plot of their adventure, ultimately give it spiritual significance. He might also have access to "occult knowledge" that the PCs lack but desperately need to complete their adventure.

Finally, with a few modifications, Screamin' Jay could be used as an example of a funky PC crime fighter, part of team of vampire, werewolf, and zombie "shock" rock heroes that circle the globe in the 1990s. Other members could include Marilyn Manson, Jay's significantly less talented top hat wearing British imitator Screaming Lord Sutch, and Alice Cooper. Or he could be the supernatural expert on a team of 1970s Blaxploitation superheroes that includes The Dolomite (martial arts), Shaft (brick), and Cleopatra Jones (espionage). To make Screamin' Jay less powerful, remove mind control and his boxing martial arts. Replace them with *+10 PRE, Only Usable On Women* and *Boxing: +2HA*. To make him more powerful, add a 50 point Gadgeteering VPP for useful stage gimmicks.

**Genre By Genre:** There will always be a place in our world for showmen. While Screamin' Jay Hawkins is intended to be an interesting background character in a *Champions* campaign, there's no reason why he wouldn't turn up elsewhere. He's right at home in a *Horror Hero* game; especially one in which the players have an appreciation for camp. In a *Dark Champions* game Hawkins might be playing a seedy Hudson City club that the vigilante PCs frequent. As a fairly low powered "supers" character, Hawkins could make a particularly good advisor (or adversary) for a "gothic" *Teen Champions* character. For a *Pulp Hero* game, simply transplant him whole cloth as vaudeville entertainer, bizarre voodoo villain, or demented bluesman sidekick.

Screamin' Jay could also be used in the following different ways:

**Fantasy Hero:** He's a sinister traveling troubadour who lures away unsuspecting village girls that are never heard from again.

**Star Hero:** He's an immortal vampire rock star pirate that travels the places between stars, eternally avoiding all sunlight.

**Post Apocalyptic Hero:** He's the mad leader of an almost all female voodoo cult of former strippers that controls New Orleans' French Quarter.

**Western Hero:** He's a gambling voodoo musician mercenary from Hattie that is working both sides of a Nebraska cattle baron war.

**Ninja Hero:** Screamin' Jay shocks the villainous New York triads' kung fu thugs with his powerful pugilism when he comes to the PCs' rescue in a bar fight.

Finding Jay weakened and sick after an operation, Papa Henri stole away his *Gros Bon Ange*, triggering his "soul" death, but leaving body "undead."

Fortunately, mystical wards placed upon his bedpan by Richards alerted the Rolling Stones to their friend's supernatural fate. After paying a few quick bribes to French public health officials, they burned his remains, and then snorted the ashes in an elaborate chaos magic ritual.

**Screamin' Shaman Hawkins:** Jalacy's adopted parents were wandering shamans, dispatched from their nation by the powerful ghost of the dead medicine man Grass-Pak-Zhe to gather up newborn children who possessed the souls of Blackfoot Indians slain in the wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Guided by a spirit contained in the skull of a warrior ancestor, they located Jalacy along with some 40 other unwanted soul-children, and then transported them back to their Montana reservation. Trained from an early age in the arts of physical and mystical combat, Jalacy set on his shamanistic spirit quest by joining the military, where he survived a nearly

dismembering injury that propelled his soul temporarily from his body into the spiritual world.

Screamin' Jay returned from the spirit world with a special understanding of the relation between the living and the dead. He also came back largely insane. Unable to reconcile our imperfect world with the heavenly world of the spirits, he gravitated to music as a way of healing his fractured psyche. His 1956 recording of *I Put A Spell On You* was his shamanistic attempt to immanentize the eschaton, thus healing the entire fallen physical universe. While this effort failed, it did temporarily open a dimensional rift, allowing the spirit of the ancient medicine man Kah-Re-Tah-Ke to cohabite his body, giving him special powers over the symbols of the dead. When (as all men do) Jalacy Hawkins became old and perished, both he and his spirit double ascended to the heavens. Periodically they appear to shock rocker Marilyn Manson in the form of confusing nightmares.

**Appearance:** A tall, good-looking black man with a boxer's bulky physique, Screamin' Jay Hawkins dresses like a cross between Liberace, Cab Calloway, a witch doctor, and Count Dracula. His outfits are the outrageous stuff of legend: turbans and top hats, leopardskin and gold lamé, black opera capes and African dashikis. He generally wears skull rings on every finger, a bone through his nose, and carries a "hoodoo" stick or a skull with him. Though nearly any outrageous "voodoo" costume is possible, Screamin' Jay is particularly fond of shirts whose sleeves end in enormous lace cravats. He also has the notorious ability to make a variety of bizarre, frightening faces by "bugging" out his eyes, contorting his features, and scowling.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Magazines

- "Repeating Echoes with Screamin' Jay Hawkins," *Now Dig This*, Issue 203 (February 2000) p. 26-29, Stuart Colman
- "Screamin' Jay Hawkins: R&B Freak," *Goodbye!*, Issue 20 (March-June 1999), Steve Miller

### Websites

- [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/641003.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/641003.stm)
- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screamin'\\_Jay\\_Hawkins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screamin'_Jay_Hawkins)
- [www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:sz91z8hajyvj](http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:sz91z8hajyvj)

### Discography (some live recordings excluded)

- I Put a Spell on You* [Collectables release] (1957)
- At Home with Screamin' Jay Hawkins* (1958)
- What That Is!* (1969)
- Screamin' Jay Hawkins* (1970)
- I Put a Spell on You* [Unidisk release] (1977)
- Live & Crazy* (1989)
- Black Music for White People* (1991)
- Stone Crazy* (1993)
- I Shake My Stick at You* (1994)
- Rated X* (1994)
- Somethin' Funny Goin On* (1995)
- At Last* (1998)
- Screamin' the Blues* (1998)
- Live at the Olympia, Paris* (1999)

### Filmography (non-pornographic only)

- Mister Rock and Roll* (1957)
- American Hot Wax* (1978)
- Joey* (1986)
- Two Moon Junction* (1988)
- Mystery Train* (1989)
- A Rage in Harlem* (1991)
- Perdita Durango* (Mexico; 1997)
- Peut-etre* (France; 1999)
- Screamin' Jay Hawkins: I Put a Spell on Me* (Greece; 2001)



# Leftover Hero by Scott Gray

## REAL PHYSICS FROM THE ULTIMATE SPEEDSTER

Some people might like to know how moving close to the speed of light will affect their character. The formulas are actually quite simple... really!

First, you need to define the speed of light. The equation uses both the speed of an object and the speed of light. It doesn't matter one bit what units you use, so long as you use the same units for both. If, for example, using the information in an earlier chapter, you find the speed of your character in miles per hour, plug that in to the equation, but be sure to use the speed of light in miles per hour, since that was what was used for the character speed.

The speed of light is:

- 299,792,458 meters per second\*
- 186,282.397 miles per second
- 670,616,629.4 miles per hour

The basic way to figure the changes in mass, time rate, and length of an object – as seen by a 'stationary' observer – all involve the use of a single simple equation to derive a factor used to multiply or divide things like mass and time flow. This is usually called the *tau* factor.

The *tau* factor is:

- $1 / \sqrt{1 - v^2 / c^2}$

(One divided by the square root of [1 minus v squared over c squared]), where v is the velocity, and c is the speed of light.

Note that until you get *very* close to the speed of light, the changes are very small, but they begin to get big quickly in the last few percent of near-light-speed. For example:

Traveling at half the speed of light produces a factor of 1.15.

At .9 times the speed of light, the factor becomes 2.29, .99 gives the factor 7.09, and .999 yields 22.37. As you can see, a change from .5 to .9 (a change of .4) only increases the factor from 1.15 to 2.29, or about double; a change from .9 to .99 (a change of .09) increases it from 2.29 to 7.09 and moving from .99 to .999 (a change of .009) increases it from 7.09 to 22.37 – in other words, very close to the speed of light, small changes in speed make a big difference in the *tau* factor.

\* note that in most cases rounding to 300,000,000 meters per second is quite acceptable and is usually shortened even more to  $3.00 \times 10^8$  m/s.

So, what do you use the *tau* factor for, once you've got it?

- 1) Mass increases. Relativistic mass = rest mass (mass when not moving) x *tau*.
- 2) The object's length decreases, or is said to undergo a Lorentz Contraction. Relativistic length = rest length (length when not moving) / *tau*.
- 3) Time slows. The character's time rate =  $1 / \tau$ .

Here's a simple example. Let's say a character is traveling at 90% the speed of light (.9c), which gives a *tau* factor of 2.29

*As seen by the outside universe*, the character would undergo the following changes:

- 1) His mass is multiplied by 2.29; in *HERO System* terms, a character with a mass of 100kg would seem to have a mass of 229 kg.
- 2) His length *in his direction of travel* is divided by 2.29; assuming he's flying (and thus stretched out horizontally) a 6' tall character would appear to be 2'7.4" tall.
- 3) He'd appear to be moving very slowly by the standards of the outside universe; he'd appear to be moving at  $(1/2.29)$  or about .44 times as fast as normal. In other words, while a day (24 hours) passed in the universe, he'd only think 10.5 hours had passed. So while it *is* possible to use moving close to lightspeed as a means of getting to the future without aging much (somewhat akin to suspended animation) you'd have to be moving *very* close indeed to the speed of light to make it worth doing.

Keep in mind these changes in the character are what an outside observer would see; to the character himself, his mass and length remain unchanged, and it would seem to him that the rest of the universe was going into fast-forward, time-wise.

**Note:** Does this mean that a character that moves fast enough will collapse into a black hole, since his apparent mass is going up and his size (length) is shrinking? No, and for a very simple reason. To an observer stationary with respect to him (that is, moving as fast as he is) the character would seem to have his normal mass and length; since those won't be enough to collapse the average character into a black hole in that frame of reference, he can't be a black hole in any other frame of reference, either.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Scott "Dr. Anomaly" Gray sometimes does a "hard science review" on what Hero Games publishes.

This review came a bit too late to make it into the book, so even though it's not technically a leftover, it still makes for a handy article.

# You Gotta Have Culture by Joshua Keezer

## The Strange Inhabitants of Flores

The British colony of Flores in the Eastern Indies has been described as a lost world. During the last ice age, Flores was one of few landmasses that had no land bridge connected to it. This isolation from the rest of the world allowed some unique and mysterious wildlife to evolve. Komodo dragons are among the better known of the strange wildlife of the island. Some of the lesser-known wildlife includes the giant rats, pygmy elephants, and the monitor lizard.

Strange wildlife isn't the only thing to be found on Flores. The natives tell strange stories of the Ebu Gogo who kidnap their children and steal their crops. There are also rumors of the Liang Bua, a small yet intelligent tribe of cannibals. What makes these tribal people so unique is that both the Ebu Gogo and the Liang Bua stand only a meter tall.

Recently, a British Colonial Explorer discovered the remains of what is believed to be one of the Liang Bua. The discovery of the Homo Floresiensis has sparked interest in other explorers to come to the island. Unfortunately, not all explorers have been so lucky. Those seeking out the Liang Bua have either given up in futility or never returned. However, explorers investigating the existence of the Ebu Gogo have had the opposite luck and wish to forget the experience.

The Liang Bua are a small, xenophobic tribe of pygmy cannibals. Back during the ice age, they crossed in land bridge into Indonesia and built small rafts to sail to the island of Flores. They have remained undisturbed in the Liang Bua caves from which they get their name. The tribe has a hundred to two hundred members. Hunting groups of a dozen men regularly patrol the area for game. A truly successful hunt for the tribe is when the hunters return with a Komodo dragon. They consider the Komodo dragon a gift from the gods. However the tribe will not turn down a successful hunt of giant rats and wild boars.

The Liang Bua hunters know their area well. They use their height to their advantage and will stealthily follow their prey until they are ready to strike. When the time to strike comes, the leader opens a special sack filled with poison. The poison is a combination of Komodo Dragon fang extract and a mixture of local fungi. The hunters will coat the tips of their spears with the toxin. They attack with their poisoned spears and follow the prey until

it falls, unable to lift itself. Once the target has succumbed to the poison, they carry it back to their caves where the prey is cooked alive.

The Liang Bua are extremely superstitious. When the Liang Bua believe the gods are angry, they seek out to appease the gods. They believe that if they prepare a proper sacrifice, one of the gods will appear in the form of a Komodo dragon. To prepare for such a sacrifice they will capture a live animal, usually a boar and bleed it enough to get the scent into the air. Unfortunately for the unknowing explorers, the Liang Bua view outsiders as a more favorable sacrifice. If they capture an outsider in their hunting grounds, they will keep him or her drugged and covered in boar blood until the gods arrive to consume the sacrifice.

**Liang Bua Komodo Extract:** Drain STUN 3d6, Delayed Return Rate (5 per Hour, +1), NND (Defense is LS: Bacterial Infections, +1) (90 Active Points); 1 Charge (-2), OAF(-1), Linked (HKA, -1/4), HKA Must Do BODY (-1/2), Extra Time (Onset Time of 5 Minutes, -2/4), Gradual Effect (1 Hours, 1d6/20 Minutes, -1). Total Cost: 11 points

### EBU GOGO

Cost	Ebu Gogo
0	Replace "Psychological Limitation: Superstitious (Uncommon, Total)" with "Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with Human Culture (Uncommon, Total)"
-6	Reduce INT to 6.
7	<i>Sharp Teeth:</i> 1/2d6 HKA; No Knockback (-1/4), Reduced Penetration (-1/4)

**Total Cost: +1**

**Description:** The Ebu Gogo are merely distant cousins of the Liang Bua. They are far less intelligent, making them more dangerous. Folklore states that the Ebu Gogo will eat anything, and frequently try to steal items from civilized human culture at nearly any cost.

**Liang Bua "Hobbit"**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [2]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4(6)
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
12	INT	2	11-	PER Roll: 11-
8	EGO	-4	11-	ECV: 3
8	PRE	-2	11-	PRE Attack: 1½d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
24	END	0		
20	STUN	-1		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 7**

**Movement:** Running: 5"/10"  
 Leaping: 2"/4"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
3	LS (Immunity: Bacterial Infections)	0
10	<i>Small Size</i> : +2 with DCV	0
3	<i>Small Size</i> : +2 with Concealment; Self Only (-½)	0
4	<i>Small Size</i> : +2 with Stealth	0
-2	<i>Small Size</i> : Running -1" (5" Total)	1

**Skills**

2	AK: Hunting Grounds	11-
3	Climbing	12-
3	Concealment	11-/13-
2	KS: Komodo Dragons	11-
3	Shadowing	11-
2	Survival (Tropical Forests)	11-
3	Tracking	11-
2	WF: Javelins and Thrown Spears, Polearms and Spears	

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 38****Total Cost: 45****25+ Disadvantages**

5	Physical Limitation: Small Size (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
10	Psychological Limitation: Cannibalistic Killer (Uncommon, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Superstitious (Uncommon, Total)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 55****SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dmg	STUNx	Shots	Notes
Short Spear	+0	—	1d6+1	1d6-1	1	8 STR Min, Can be Thrown, May be Poisoned

**Armor**

None

**Gear**

Tied off pouch containing some of their spear poison

**Clothing (Hunting)**

Covering of mud to blend in with the jungle surroundings

**Clothing (not Hunting)**

Lizard skins or wild boar hides, with a decorative skull necklace





# Haunted Houses by Michael Surbrook

## Empty Rooms and Vacant Windows

Haunted: inhabited by or as if by apparitions; “a haunted house”

### USING A HAUNTED HOUSE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This article takes a look at that old Halloween favorite – the haunted house, and discusses how it can be used as more than just a deserted, dusty mansion on the edge of town, the sole purpose of which is to frighten small children, provide shelter for transients, and create the perfect hideout of (delinquent) teenagers.

### What is a Haunted House?

The classic haunted house is usually just that – a former residence fallen into disrepair. The building is often old; an abandoned derelict slowly succumbing to the elements and burying a dark history, be it murder of the former residents, madness among the same, or even occult rituals carried on in the basement. In typical Gothic horror fashion, the home isn’t some extended single-story rancher either, but instead a multilevel Victorian-era mansion, with tall windows, towers on the corners, and an unfinished wine-cellar just waiting to have someone buried in it (if they aren’t already!). Inside, the house is often full of furniture, left (or abandoned) by the former owners, covered in white sheets, along with plenty of dust, cobwebs, mold, mildew, and rot. Time has jammed the windows and doors shut, the floor creaks alarmingly, and things scurry about within the walls. At night strange sounds issue from empty rooms, lights are seen in otherwise vacant windows, and filmy figures flit through the halls (or across the grounds). Only the most brave (or foolhardy) individuals will even consider spending the night in such a place.

There you have it, the classic haunted house. In fact, you might even call it a clichéd haunted house, what with the lights, apparent ghosts, and what not. In truth, there is no reason why your haunted house has to be a house at all. You can easily make it a large mansion (the bigger the better), a castle (ditto), an empty hospital (either medical or mental), a motel/hotel, or even something more esoteric, like a space station or starship. All you really need to be concerned with is the core aspect of any haunted location – emptiness.

## Where Do You Find a Haunted House?

The classic location for any haunted house is usually “outside of town.” Going back to our Gothic horror origins, sitting out on a deserted windswept moor is the standard locale as it helps compound the general feeling of loneliness associated with such structures. Other popular locations include placing it on an isolated hill (overlooking the town), on a cliff (overlooking the sea, river, or lake), in the so-called “bad” part of town (where it might not look all that different from another run-down and/or low-income residence), or on the edge of town, near some sort of industry (the ever-popular “last house on the left” right next to the train yards or some such).

If we start to expand our definition of “house” to include any structure (as mentioned in Part I), then the location expands as well. A mansion may be in the center of town after all, just set back from the road and isolated from its neighbors by a tall wall and a lot of overgrown shrubbery. A castle, of course, can be found just about anywhere and is a natural for all those hilltop and cliffside locations (not to mention deserted moors and tangled forests). Hospitals can be found anywhere as well, although abandoned ones seem to end up next to equally empty industrial zones, in which everything is full of rubbish, rats, and rust. Hotels are also easy to drop in where ever you want, with the added bonus that if you don’t feel the need to have the entire building haunted, you can restrict it to just a single suite or floor (maybe there’s a reason other than tradition the hotel doesn’t have a 13<sup>th</sup> floor?). Motels are often found on otherwise empty highways, and in the grand tradition of the Bates Motel, may only *look* like they are in operation. Finally, space stations and starships are found in the most empty location of all – deep space.

There are also genre conventions to consider when deciding on what to use as a haunted residence. While you could have a haunted fisherman’s hut in a fantasy game, there’s not much to it, thus castles, manor houses, and feast halls are more like it (of course, if your fantasy setting is in a small lakeside village, then the fisherman’s hut might be perfect after all). In modern “urban fantasy” just about any home will do, as well as the aforementioned hotels and hospitals. In horror games, anything goes, as nearly anything you can think of can be haunted, up to and including vehicles (such as the famous



*Flying Dutchman*). The same also goes for *Champions* games, as ghosts in superhero comics usually have far more free will than those in other genres. If playing in a *Ninja Hero* setting, any abandoned Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine is virtually required to be haunted by beautiful female ghosts and horrific hopping vampires (among other things). Pulp adventures can use entire cities instead of a single house, especially if the city belonged to a long-dead pre-human civilization. Finally, *Star Hero* characters can encounter alien ships (either wrecked on a planet's surface or drifting in space), deserted colonies on distant worlds, or in a worse case scenario, the *entire planet* can be haunted!

## Common Elements of the Haunted House

When creating the classic haunted house one has to consider the classic elements as well. Of course, some of these elements won't quite work in structures other than a home, but modifying them shouldn't be that great a problem. The list is as follows:

**Any Staircase:** Virtually any staircase should creak and groan as if it is going to fall down at any time. In fact, characters who weigh more than normal (either due to size, increased density, or just carrying a lot of armor and gear) might break a riser or two, resulting in a stuck leg at the very least. Of course, once the characters know what the creaky stairs sound like, don't forget to have something walk up them while the PCs are in another part of the house!

**Attic:** Attics (and their companions, the basement) are a GM's dream location. They are often hard to get to, offer cramped spaces to move around in, and usually have few to no windows. They are the perfect place to squirrel away all sorts of things – such as cursed mirrors, locked trunks filled with occult papers, paintings with treasure maps hidden in the backing, dried corpses tucked in a dark corner – and far more mundane things, like old furniture, clothing, photos, and other bric-a-brac. The attic is also the traditional place for hiding that unwanted relation – such as crazy uncles, insane grandmothers, or the child born out of wedlock. Sometimes a still-living relation is the reason the house is said to be haunted, other times it's the relation's ghost....

**Basement:** Basements are the other great place to store stuff, ranging from the mundane (tools, broken furniture, wine) to the horrific (such as bodies – with out without a coffin!). Depending on the location, a basement may range from a fairly clean expanse of cinderblock and concrete to the far more traditional layout of brick walls and plain dirt floor. In either case, a popular trick is to make the basement smaller than the house plan, often leading to the question

of “What's behind that wall?” In most horror settings, the answer is not a pleasant one. Of course, simply getting into the basement can be a trick. The stairs are usually more rickety and unstable than the haunted house norm, usually due to the ever-present dampness so common to basements. Missing stairs can present an even bigger problem – such as how to get back up once you're down there. Windows are normally nonexistent, or very small, leading to dim light (at best), and since the haunted house no longer has power, there are no electric lights either. Having a dirt floor means the basement can be full of bugs and small animals, not to mention mud and pools of stagnant water. And if your haunted house has any resident zombies or vampires, odds are they are going to rise up out of the basement's dirt floor!

**Garden and Grounds:** GMs can easily set the proper feel for their haunted house simply by preparing the grounds around the building. Obviously the lawn (if there is one) shouldn't have been tended in years and should be rank with weeds and other growth. The trees are either huge and overgrown, or dead, or both. If storms have blown any over, then they are still down, and might have damaged any nearby structures. If there was a garden, it's long gone to seed, often with huge untended plants. Anything with flowers has usually gone rot, and huge rose bushes are a common feature (said flowers having an unusual smell and tending to nod in nonexistent nighttime breezes is an added bonus). Don't forget the obligatory garden statues nearly lost amid all the growth, as well as such features as wells overgrown with creepers, benches buried under vines, and the ever popular rotting gazebo.

**Kitchen:** The normally mundane kitchen can quickly develop a realm of menace simply because it is the one place in the house overloaded with sharp implements. While a truly old house might not have a refrigerator or dishwasher, odds are it still has a stove of some sort – and who knows what's inside? Even worse, there will be a sink, complete with a drain, and that drain is a dark hole leading to...? Any silverware and kitchen knives become instant poltergeist ammunition while all those cabinet doors may hide any number of surprises.

**Study/Library:** Often one and the same, this room is characterized by having a large desk and numerous shelves filled with books. If your haunted house contains some sort of information the PCs need, odds are this is where they will find it. The desk may have a hidden compartment or a drawer with a false bottom, while the bookcases may swing out to reveal a hidden room. In games slanted to dealing with occult matters, a forbidden book (or two) may be secreted among the more normal volumes.

## Inhabitants

Now that you have your haunted house laid out, what do you put in it? No haunted house, even a fake one, is really empty. However, regardless of what kind of haunted house you've envisioned, odds are it's going to have some of the following: cobwebs, dust, mice, rats, and spiders. Face it, just about any abandoned structure is going to accumulate debris, and a thick layer of dust and filmy cobwebs should quickly tell any intrepid explorer that things have been empty for a long time. By the same token, dust can also be the GM's friend, as it allows disturbances (such as footprints, fingerprints, of evidence of objects having been moved or removed) to show up easily. Small animals can also be used for those "shock" scenes, where a cabinet door is opened to reveal a nest of mice or an apparently undisturbed cloth is pulled aside to expose a horde of beetles, centipedes, and other creepy-crawlies.

Of course, there's more than dust and diminutive mammals to consider. Any abandoned building quickly becomes a shelter for transients (a.k.a. "bums," "derelicts," or "hobos"), and the detritus they bring (empty bottles, food cartons, cans of sterno, discarded newspapers, and used mattresses). Most of the time such people only want to be left alone and will avoid trouble, but you never can tell when one of them has a dark secret, with said secret ranging from being a wanted criminal, to psychopathic killer, to possibly being some sort of undead being. Speaking of the undead, if the haunted house really is haunted (in the classic sense) then one can surely expect a ghost or two, although in more extreme cases you may run into ghouls, vampires, or zombies (all of whom tend to hide in the basement during the day). Finally, let's not forget the good old mad scientist – his residence is often just one step above a haunted house, and usually shares many of the common features with one (isolated locale, rundown appearance, strange noises, lights, and smells, and so on).

## Variations on a Theme

Depending on your setting, your haunted house may be more than just a simple house. This section will look at some additional ideas to allow GMs to expand further in the basic theme.

**Haunted Vehicle:** As stated before, there is no reason the haunted house has to be a house. It could easily be a plane, train, automobile, ship, or even a spacecraft. Of these, spacecraft end up the most "house-like," as they can be isolated drifting derelicts empty of all life (or so the PCs presume). They don't even need to be able to move. The other vehicles, however, should be able to move in some fashion, since otherwise

they are just abandoned wrecks (although a haunted shipwreck does have possibilities). Now, this doesn't mean the vehicles move under their *own* power, just that they can still be operated as vehicles. Then again, there is nothing stopping you from having a haunted vehicle in which the vehicle itself is the source of the haunting, as opposed to some sort of resident spirit or ghost.

Haunted vehicles normally aren't as rundown or aged as buildings. In fact, they can be virtually new. The haunting aspect often takes the form of ghostly occurrences – the driver looks into the review mirror and sees someone in the back seat, for example. Other such occurrences could be radios that change stations on their own, doors that open or close by themselves, lights coming on, switches thrown when no one is near, voices and other sound heard from an empty area, and so on. Depending on the source of the haunting, the ghosts may even be benevolent; making sure the vehicle is operating properly and activating safety features when needed. More malevolent ghosts may try and make the vehicle crash, in the hopes of being joined by new spirits in the afterlife.

**Haunted Planet:** Possibly the creepiest form of haunting is one where an entire city, space station, or planet is the source of all the spookiness. Often, the location was the site of some horrific incident in which most everyone was killed nearly at once, meaning the city or planet is haunted by not just one ghosts, but the shades of the entire population! Even more frightening is the idea of the semi-sentient world, in which all the strange happenings are the result of the planet's own actions. In cases like this, the planet often has an ulterior motive for its actions, ranging from simply driving unwanted visitors away to drawing the PCs inwards in order to complete some needed task.

**Spatial Awareness:** The building in question is larger on the inside than the outside. In some cases this is a very subtle setup and only careful measurements will show the difference. In others it is far more obvious, with doors that open into impossibly large rooms and hallways, usually with even more rooms attached. In a case such as this, the building may become a campaign arc in of itself, in which the PCs must seek out either an object, room, or living being within the endless halls and rooms, or simply try and find their way back out again. Doors may lead to alternate dimensions, alien worlds, or different times, while time itself may become rather nebulous while inside the house. The extra-dimensional nature of the house may extend to its inhabitants, with bizarre Lovecraftian beings haunting the various chambers.

**Fake Haunted House:** This is the favored solution of those meddling teenaged detectives and their Great Dane. When all is said and done, all the hauntings can be traced back to someone in a rubber mask equipped with various pieces of special effects gear (such as smoke machines, video projectors, and sound equipment). The reasons behind the charade usually involve some crime scheme or another, with the hauntings used to keep anyone from wanting to investigate what is really going on. Of course, as GM you can have great fun with this, and with a little care can present the house in such a way the PCs can never be sure if it's haunted or not until the very end.

## Haunted Houses in Popular Fiction

**Alien:** This classic science fiction horror film from 1979 features not one, but *two* haunted space ships. The first is the wrecked alien craft found on barren planetoid LV-426, the second is the *Nostromo* itself, after the Xenomorph hatches and escapes into the bowels of the ship. In the case of the former ship, the haunting is passive in nature – the ship idea “dead” with only the corpse of the presumed pilot and the thousands (millions?) of eggs in storage. As for the *Nostromo*, the alien is an active predator, pursuing the crew in order to use them to create more Xenomorphs like itself. Add in the sense of isolation (the ship is far from anywhere), the claustrophobic confines of the ship itself, and a totally unknown form of enemy, and sense of fear becomes palatable.

**Doom, Doom II, and Doom III:** Here the haunted location is no mere house, but an entire military complex! The plot is simple – an experiment goes awry and a gate is opened into the depths of Hell, allowing legions of demons to pour through. The few defenders are quickly overrun – with the corpses of dead soldiers being brought back to fight as zombies, while the invading demons begin warping reality to make the base (and eventually Earth) more like their infernal home. Ambient sound and lighting effects are used to ratchet up the fear factor, with *Doom 3* presenting the player with a frightening choice: you can explore the hallways with a weapon or with a flashlight, but not both.

**House of Leaves:** In this novel, written by Mark Z. Danielewski, Will Navidson discovers a door in his home that leads into a long hallway and then a seemingly endless series of rooms, corridors, and even stairs. While this apparently extradimensional space *seems* empty, it may be inhabited (*i.e.* haunted) by a large predator of some sort. Explorations of this labyrinth end in disaster, with several characters either dead or insane. The format of the book itself helps create

a feeling of unease, as the text often follows the flow of the exploration – going in circles as the characters go down the spiral staircase, or being compressed into a tight space as the characters deal with progressively smaller rooms.

**Psycho:** Taken from the 1958 novel by Robert Bloch, *Psycho* gives us the now infamous Bates Motel, run by apparently mid-mannered Norman Bates. Although the motel itself isn't haunted, the house behind it is, with the spirit of Norman's mother, whose body inhabits the basement while her personality lives on in Norman's mind. The house contains many classic haunted house elements, such as a tall staircase, a body in the basement, heavy cobwebs, dust, and all those stuffed animals on the walls. Norman himself is a psychopathic killer, and possible the first movie “slasher.”

**‘Salem’s Lot:** The Marsten House sits high on a hill overlooking Jerusalem’s Lot. It is old, abandoned, and has a history of murder and suicide, is it any wonder everyone thinks it's haunted? To make matters worse, the mysterious and reclusive Mr. Barlow buys the house – he's never seen, but his assistant Mr. Straker is. And what's with all the heavy packing crates brought into the basement of the Marsten House? *‘Salem’s Lot* was only Stephen King's second book, and possibly his best, and certainly one of the best vampire novels yet written. The Marsten House is a classic haunted house, between its location, age, history, and contents – the vampires are just an added bonus.

**Scooby Doo:** Scooby Doo and the gang (Fred “Freddie” Jones, Daphne Blake, Velma Dinkley, and Norville “Shaggy” Rogers) have been fighting crime and busting ghosts for over 35 years. They have become (in)famous as “those meddling kids” and invariably discover the supposed haunted house is anything but. Only in the extended movies is the supernatural something other than a man in a rubber mask, otherwise, all the scares have been provided by mundane special effects.

## The Old Skinner Place

**Description:** The Old Skinner Place sits on the outskirts of town, near the river. It is obviously abandoned, and has been for years, ever since old man Skinner took his own life in '36. Since then the two story house has sat alone and vacant. It has been sold several times, but the prospective buyers have usually left after spending just one night in the place (if they are seen again at all). Town legend says the place is haunted by the ghost of Skinner himself, and people have reported hearing screams, gunshots, and the sounds of running feet coming from the house on moonless nights. A “ghost-busting” team tried to spend the night there and fled before dawn, the team’s driver wrecking the group’s van in their haste to get out. Another team left an automated camera in the house and picked it up a month later. Although no official statement was made about what the camera caught on film, it is said the camera itself wasn’t in the same room it started in, and the footage it took proved no one had physically moved it.

**Campaign Use:** The Old Skinner Place represents the classic haunted house. Only in this case, the house is doing the haunting. Player Characters expecting to find ghosts and the like may be in for a bit of a rude surprise when they realize the house itself is against them! Not only can it push objects around (like doors and furniture), it can create a wide variety of noises, smells, and icy cold spots at will. And if that isn’t enough to cause any would-be intruders to flee, the house can call forth four walking corpses from the basement to permanently deal with any trespassers. Note: the house can Summon no more than four zombies, but can Summon the zombies more than once a day (the zombies have to return to the basement for the Charge to be recovered). However, if any one of the zombies is destroyed, the house cannot replace it.

**The GM’s Vault:** The town rumors *are* true. The Skinner place is haunted, but not by the ghost of old man Skinner! Unbeknownst to the townspeople, Damon Skinner was a psychopath, who made a habit of luring transients to his home with the promise of a hot meal and a bath in exchange for basic field labor. After working them all day and then feeding them dinner, he’d wait for his victim to fall asleep, and then kill him. Afterwards, the body would end up buried in the basement. After nearly a decade of such behavior (and an unknown number of victims), Skinner, convinced his kills were coming back to life and clawing their way up the basement stairs, took his own life.

## MAP KEY

**1. Front Hall.** The stairs lead up to the second floor. There is a small closet under the stairs next to the door to the kitchen.

**2. Dining Room.** There is a fireplace on the outside wall.

**3. Drawing Room.** There is a fireplace on the outside wall, double doors leading to the dining room, and another set of double doors leading outside to the back porch.

**4. Kitchen.** A wood-fired stove is on the wall next to the door to the pantry. Another door leads outside, while a third open onto the basement stairs, which are under the stairs to the second floor.

**5: Scullery/Mudroom.** Contains a sink, coal bin, and cold storage. A door in the far corner leads to ground floor bathroom.

**6: Bathroom.** Contains a sink and toilet.

**7-9, 11, 13. Bedrooms.** Each has its own fireplace. 8 is the master bedroom.

**10. Bathroom.** Contains a sink and a tub.

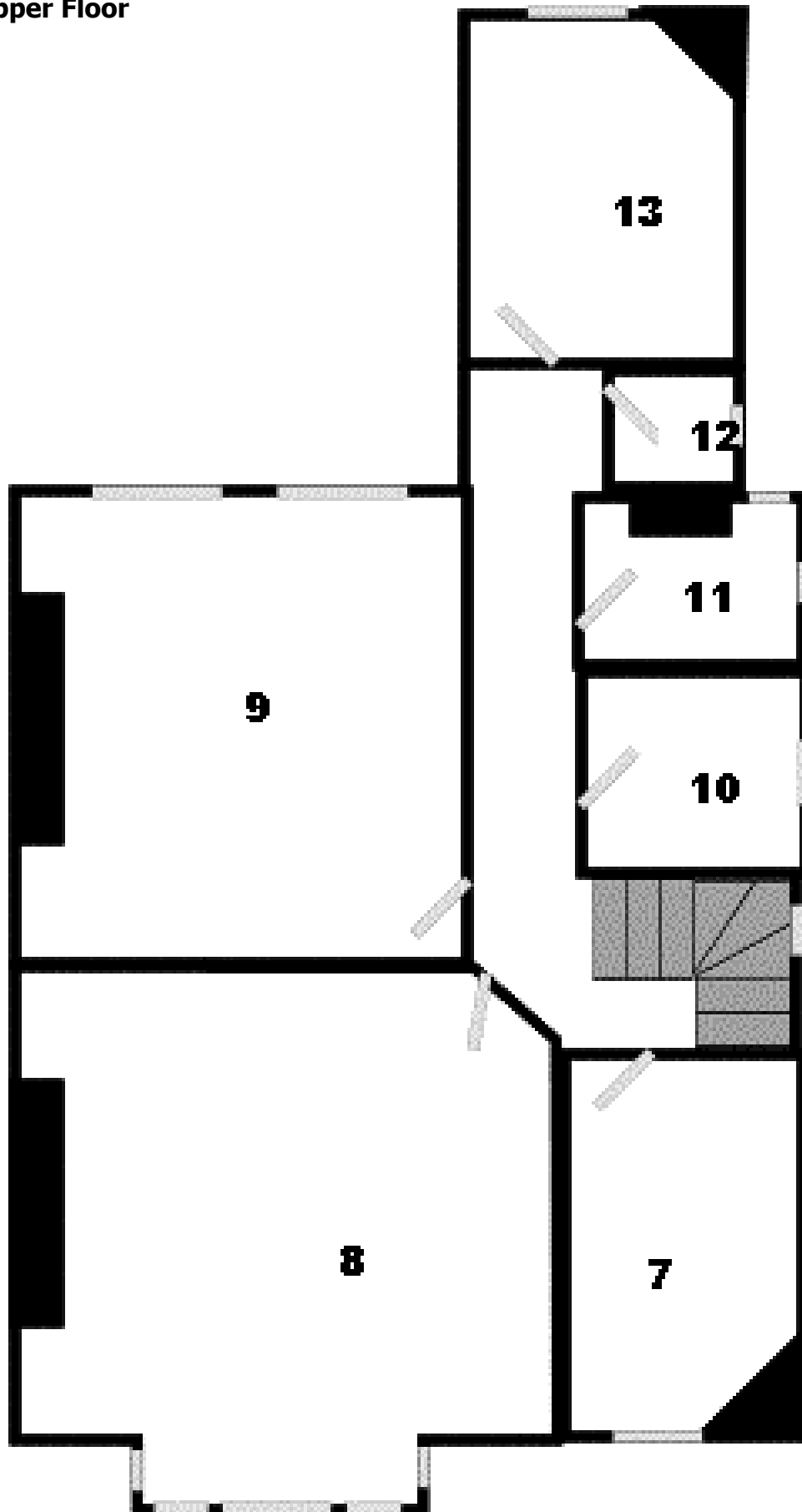
**12. Toilet.**

**14. Basement.** Has a dirt floor and brick walls.

Ground Floor



Upper Floor





**The Old Skinner Place**

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
7	SIZE	14	200 hexes, -8 DCV
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
8	BODY	6	
10	INT	0	PER Roll 11-
18	EGO	24	ECV: 6
8	DEF	22	Invisible to Sight Group (+½)
3	SPD	5	Phases: 4, 8, 12

**Total Characteristics Cost: 86****Cost Attributes**

- 5 Location: Suburb

**Powers****END**

- 35 *Mysterious Noises and Smells*: Hearing and Smell/Taste Group Images, -5 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (2" Radius, +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only Within the House (-¼) 0
- 13 *Bodies in the Basement*: Summon 178-point zombie (HSB127), Slavishly Devoted (+1); Arrives Under Own Power (-½), 4 Recoverable Charges, Charges Do Not Recover (-2½), Extra Time (1 Turn, -1¼) [4]
- 80 *Poltergeist Effect I*: TK (20 STR), Area Of Effect (3" Radius, +1), BOECV (+1), Invisible to Sight Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Affects Whole Object (-¼), Only Within the House (-¼) 0
- 50 *Poltergeist Effect II*: TK (10 STR), Fine Manipulation, BOECV (+1), Invisible To Sight Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Affects Whole Object (-¼), Only Within the House (-¼) 0
- 17 *Automatic Writing*: Cosmetic Transform 3d6 (blank wall to wall with writing), Invisible to Sight Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Only Within the House (-¼) 0
- 40 *Its Evil Gives It Strength*: Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Does Not Work versus Magic Attacks (-½)
- 8 *Single-Minded*: Mental Defense (12 points) 0
- 13 *Create Cold Spots*: Change Environment 1" Radius, -3 Temperature Levels, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only Within the House (-¼) 0
- 32 *Fearful Presence*: Change Environment 4" Radius, -5 PRE Roll for Resisting Effects of the House's Presence, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only Within the House (-¼) 0

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 293****Total Cost: 379****324+ Disadvantages**

- 20 *Distinctive Features*: General Aura of Creepiness and Being Watched (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Detectable by Most People)
- 20 *Psychological Limitation*: Despises Intruders (Common, Total)
- 15 *Reputation*: Former Crime Scene, Haunted, 14- (Extreme, Townspeople Only)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 55****Total Cost: 324/5 = 65**

# The Whole Package III by D. T. Butchino

Fantasy and science fiction worlds are commonly populated with a plethora of species that range from human variations to the strange and unique. Though it's commonly not visualized as such, many races from science fiction or fantasy could easily be used to spice up any campaign. By taking a species from one genre and using it another, GMs have a way to add new aliens and change the genre conventions a bit.

Below is a quartet of species packages. Each has some notes on using them in either fantasy or science fiction... but please, don't let that limit them to just those campaigns. The species below could easily be incorporated in a *Champions*, *Dark Champions* and even a *Ninja Hero* campaign with a bit of minor tweaking.

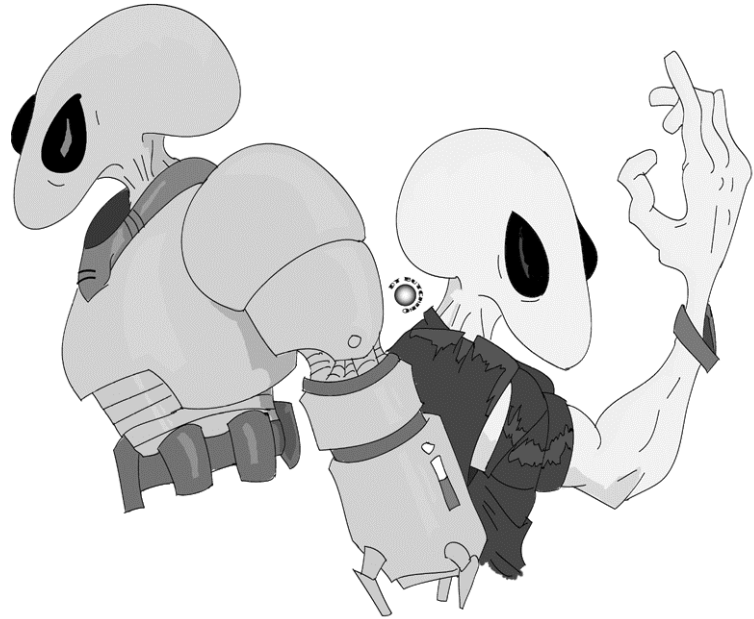
## Centaurians

Commonly called "Grays" among popular, modern fiction, the Centaurs are roughly human-sized and humanoid in shape. With bulbous, bald heads and large pools of darkness for eyes, these odd beings can appear both frightening and fascinating at the same time. Akin to humanity, Centaurs have some variation among them, though the variation is mild. Most have a grayish colored skin, though the hue may be slightly different than others. They also have multi-jointed digits, usually numbering four (including the thumb) but there are deviations there as well.

**Fantasy:** Though commonly seen in science fiction settings, Centaurs would make a great alternative to the stereotypical elves that appear in common fantasy games. An elder race, perhaps these strange visitors are native to the world and it's humanity that is alien... or better yet, perhaps they're the next evolutionary jump for humanity (or elves for that matter).

Because of the physical frailties, Centaurs are rarely warriors, opting for more cerebral professions instead. If sciences exist in your fantasy world, it's very possible that a Centaurian is involved in them, whether it is alchemy or more fringe science for the time.

**Science Fiction:** Natural to the science fiction genre, the Centaurs have studied Earth for quite some time, waiting for its inhabitants'



eventual maturity. In an odd twist, like the fantasy example above, perhaps they could prove to be the progenitors to humans that were once the fabled Atlanteans.

Unlike in fantasy, in science fiction there are few boundaries the Centaurs can't defeat. With their intelligence and the technology available, these frail beings could easily be scientists or fighter pilots... doctors or armor-clad mercenaries. The possibilities are endless.

### CENTAURIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Ability
-2	-2 STR
-4	-2 CON
5	+5 INT
6	+3 EGO
11	Telepathic: Telepathy 4d6; No Range (-1/2), Communication Only (-1/4)
16	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Options</b>
37	<i>Psi-Sniffer:</i> Detect Psionics 11- (Unusual Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Range, Sense, Targeting, Tracking
12	<i>Telekinetic:</i> Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation; Concentration (1/2 DCV Throughout, -1/2), Gestures (Throughout, -1/2)

## Figgs

Though generally mistaken for fey folk, Figgs are actually a small species roughly 6" to 12" tall that almost look completely like humans. With green-hued skin, these tiny beings easily blend into their natural territory, making them both excellent hunters and elusive infiltrators. Breathing through their skin, Figgs do not appear to have any respiratory exhaust like a human's nose, nor do they vary in eye color, as all Figgs have solid, black eyes.

**Fantasy:** Within the worlds of fantasy, Figgs stick to their woodlands and are often referred to as "savage fey" (much like how some sects of elves are occasionally seen). This is a common belief because they like the flight and magic of faeries and work with more primitive weapons like spears, nets, and makeshift knives.

Within Figg society there is a multitude of occupations available. They have their own clergy, as well as several warrior types. Like most species, they have their rogues, merchants and entertainers as well... but they do steer clear of magic. This revulsion of magic seems more like a cultural decision rather than a fear, as most Figgs have no desire to increase their comparison to fey folk.

**Science Fiction:** In stellar campaigns, where one explores many worlds, it's possible to use the Figgs in a manner to mirror the Lilliputians of Gulliver's Travels. Maybe an explorer (or team of explorers even) run across the small beings and are met with hostility. Or, perhaps in a post-apocalyptic game, the Figgs are a mutated sect of humanity or plant that has taken over a small section of a forest or garden.

Similar to their fantasy counterpart, the science fiction variant of Figgs should be a slightly lower tech level than most species in the campaign. This is mostly due to the size of the Figgs, as their small stature makes it hard to find technology that's useable (beyond developing their own).

### FIGG PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Ability
-8	-8 STR
12	+4 DEX
-2	-2 PRE
10	+1 SPD
13	<i>Blending:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group; Only in Grassland/Forest (-½)
6	<i>Keen Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups
<b>31</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Disadvantages</b>
-15	Physical Limitation: Minuscule



## Kludge

Often mistaken for grand sculptures when standing still, the tall and enigmatic Kludge have thick hides usually composed of either rock or metal. In appearance, they could pass for a giant from a distance but, up close, their apathetic expression and large, oval carving where an eye should be separate them from most other species. Though the Kludge do not appear to have any sensory organs, while awake a glowing orb burns near the huge carving in their heads, providing both a means for sensing their surrounding and telepathically communing with others.

**Fantasy:** In common fantasy realms, a Kludge could serve as an elder race, either as the ancestors of some giants or as the creation of an even older species. Their psionic nature makes them in tune with the mind and, as such, makes them useful to a GM wanting to break the stereotype of the hulking monstrosity.

When playing a Kludge, a player has many options. Because of their formidable strength and stony exterior, Kludges could easily be depicted as warriors. Also, because of their psionic nature, they could also work well in most cerebral occupations or even as merchants. While there are many options open for them, the one class of careers that seem most unlikely is that of thieves. Because of their slow nature, these large beings make it almost impossible to sneak around.

**Science Fiction:** Unlike fantasy, the science fiction genre has more potential for diverse cultures and species. This is likely where the Kludge would fit in. A natural psi, these stony beings could easily be attached to corporations, military, or politics. Perhaps, like in fantasy, the Kludge are an elder species of the universe that serves as negotiators and ambassadors to warring worlds. Or, in an odd turn of events, maybe these

giant creatures are the opposition, destroying anyone who's weaker than they.

In a science fiction game, a Kludge PC could be almost anything. In fact, like in fantasy, the only thing that's an unlikely profession for them is something that requires a lot of movement. Fighter Jock, for example, requires some dexterity, so, unless the ship has psionic access, it's highly unlikely that the Kludge would be able to pilot it efficiently.

### KLUDGE PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
9	-3 DEX
4	+2 CON
6	+3 BODY
5	+5 EGO
2	+2 PRE
27	<i>Psionic Eye:</i> Spatial Awareness (Unusual Group), Discriminatory
15	<i>Stony Skin:</i> Armor (5 PD/5 ED)
16	<i>Telepathic:</i> Telepathy 4d6; Communication Only (-¼)
-6	<i>Slow:</i> -3" Running
<b>81</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
-5	Physical Limitation: Large
<b>Options</b>	
16	<i>Psionic Eye Blast:</i> Ego Attack 2d6; Concentration (½ DCV, -¼)
30	<i>Steel Body:</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED)



## Newhon

There are few races as feared as the Newhon. With nothing more than an ornate mask for a face, these beings have become synonymous with words like doom and death. Though they tend to dress in normal attire, their ghost-like stature is unseen by most eyes, both natural and supernatural. Though each wears a unique mask, their true faces are images that inspire fear and dread upon all who look upon it.

**Fantasy:** Mistaken for undead in most fantasy campaigns, the Newhon could easily be depicted as a fringe species that guard a hidden artifact of power (whether good or evil is up to the GM). As an odd turn of events, maybe the Newhon are dead... a species long ago wiped out by some ancient evil. Now they've returned in hopes of stopping the evil at any cost. After all, what do they have to lose? They're already dead.

If allowed as PCs, the Newhon usually gravitate towards mages, warriors, or a combination of the two. Though they aren't as strong as other species, these shadowy beings are a bit more durable and very intimidating, allowing them to bully their strength up a bit and to take a few hits if they fail. A rare few Newhon have branched out into thievery and use their racial abilities to sneak around places where others can't.

**Science Fiction:** Though seemingly a fantasy species in nature, Newhon can also easily fit into a science fiction campaign as well. When used as a "shadow race" or a race that few know of and fewer have seen, these beings could be used by espionage agencies, crime families, or even corporations. Like the events above, perhaps the

Newhon are the dead who have returned to stop something from happening.

Unlike the fantasy roles, in science fiction, most Newhon would most likely take on occupations like spy, corporate infiltrator, or even a bodyguard for a crime lord or someone of that nature. In some campaigns, a Newhon could easily be a crime lord bent on revealing an ancient evil to the world.

### NEWHON PACKAGE DEAL

#### Cost Ability

- 2 -2 STR
- 4 +2 CON
- 6 +3 EGO
- 5 +5 PRE

17 *Fogging the Eye:* Change Environment 1" Radius, -5 to Sight Group PER Rolls

8 *True Face:* +15 PRE; When Looking at Face without Mask (-1/2), Fear Only (-1/4)

#### 38 Total

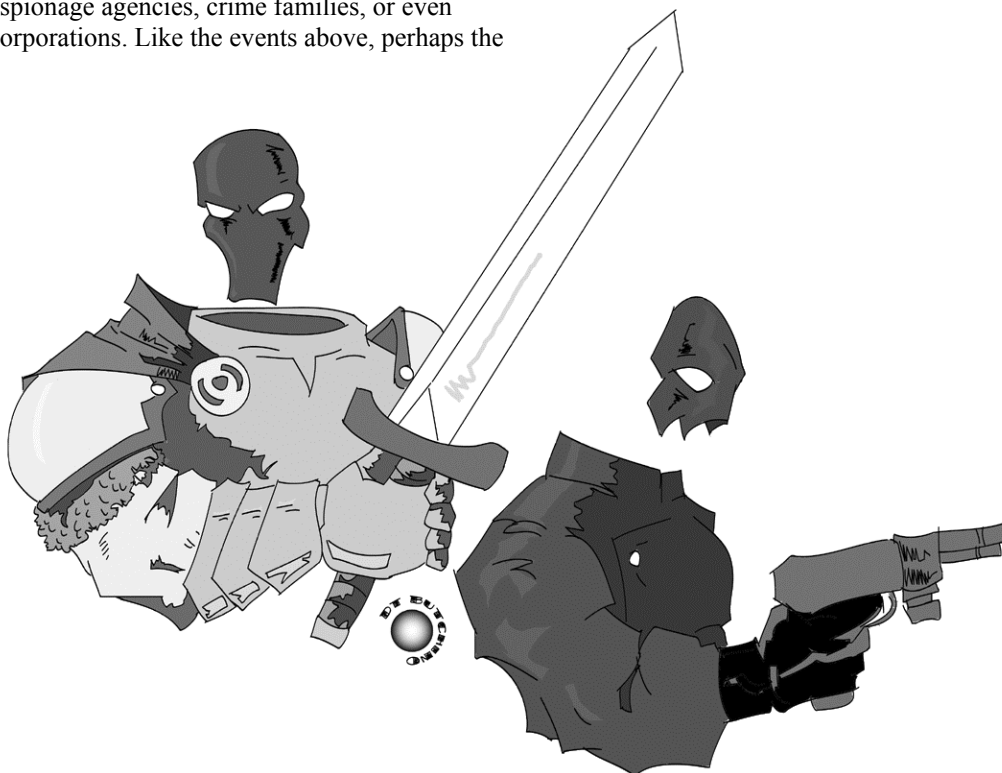
#### Disadvantages

-10 Reputation: Harbingers of Death (Ext) 8-

#### Options

5 *Darkness is Their Ally:* Nightvision

15 *True Face (Variant):* Minor Transform 3d6 (Sane Man into Insane Man, Psychotherapy or the Like); Must See True Face (-1)





# Captain Maxwell Pulver by Paul Stevenson

## Captain Maxwell Pulver

**Background/History:** Maxwell Pulver is a man that has been duty-bound his entire life. At only age sixteen an excited Maxwell signed up with his classmates into the System Cadet Core. His corporate working parents were proud of him for taking such a responsible step in his young life. He soon became immersed in all aspects of the military, but was especially drawn to ground actions and tactics. Pulver was always near the top of his squad in the demanding exercises and training while in the Cadet Core. He remained in the Core for two years while many of his friends went on to other jobs and schooling. At eighteen Maxwell enlisted with the United System Army and went through intense training to become an elite Flak Trooper. His love of military life grew as he steadily climbed the ranks in the army.

The first Martian rebellion was where Maxwell saw his first real military action. In a bid for better working conditions and increased independence almost the entire mining and terraforming personnel on Mars declared separation from the System Corporations and shut operations down. Violent insurrection had broken out all across the colonies on Mars and the Army was called in to quell the dissidents and crush the rebellion quickly. The prestigious drop soldiers of the Flak Troopers were extensively used in lightning raids across the face of the red planet. During the three month campaign on Mars Maxwell made many connections and friends in various branches of the System military. It was here that he earned various medals and commendations for the deadly and successful missions he played a part in as a sergeant in the Flak Troopers.

Towards the end of the conflict, Maxwell was terribly wounded at an ore processing station where a group of desperate rebels were holed up. Once more the Flak Troopers were called to drop in from Griffon Dropships and take the station while eliminating all resistance. It was something that Pulver had gotten coldly used to. The sweep and clear operation was going smoothly when suddenly everything went horribly wrong. A wild-eyed rebel ran into the Flak Trooper's position with explosives strapped to his body. The intent was clear and the result would be too much to pay. Maxwell raced up and intercepted the rebel, shooting out his legs with careful aim and forcing the fanatic to the ground. But in that brief moment Maxwell's life changed forever. The screaming rebel detonated the explosives wrapped around his body and Pulver was caught in the explosion. Maxwell had saved the lives of his fellow troopers, but in doing so ended his career as a Flak Trooper

forever. The next week an unconditional surrender was accepted from the rebels and Mars was back in control of the System Corporations.

Maxwell spent several months recovering at Waypoint Orbital Station healing from wounds that almost took his life. He had lost his arm, his eye and was dreadfully scarred on the left side of his body. Maxwell took little comfort in the colleagues and family that came to his bedside and fell into despair that his life in the System Military was over. During a particularly agonizing rehab session, Pulver was met by a group of officers from the Army. They presented him with yet more medals for his valor and courage, but they also brought Maxwell a chance at a new life. During a series of classified meetings Maxwell was informed of a new armored division being created back on Earth. A division where men directly interfaced with the fighting vehicles they alone commanded. The Cybertanks would be the ultimate in ground control and command. The Army wanted Maxwell Pulver to become a ranking tank commander in that division. Pulver accepted on the spot and his life of duty continued.

During the following months, Maxwell was fitted with various cyber-systems to help overcome his wounds and link him directly with a Cybertank. He was one in just a handful of men that undertook the medical experiments. Soon after training and education on the various Cybertank systems began in earnest. It became readily apparent that the instant reaction of the commander combined with the advanced operations of the Cybertank would produce a fighting vehicle that could dominate the battlefield. This was soon put to the test when a cartel of Mexican mass farm manufacturers went rogue and hired a private army of mercenaries to protect their "interests" independent from the System Corporations. The military decided this was a perfect stage to give the Cybertanks their first live action. Just three colossal Cybertanks were deployed, and Maxwell was put in command of the entire mission to retake the mass farms and remove all hostiles. In less than two hours the battle across the gigantic mass farms was over. Fourteen conventional armored vehicles were destroyed and hundreds of mercenaries neutralized. The farms were secured and not one Cybertank was significantly damaged. Maxwell Pulver's legacy in the United System Military was born.



**Personality/Motivation:** Captain Pulver is a seasoned soldier put into very dangerous situations and through it all remains cool under fire. His men realize he would never command them to do something he himself would not do. Pulver is an officer never afraid to lead from the front if such a tactic will aid in a successful mission. He knows that the current rebellion on Mars (the third in his lifetime) is just another test of his duty to the Army. While many attempts have been made on his life during the protracted conflict on Mars, he has never flinched at his tasks or the actions he must take to secure victory.

Pulver is a man rarely caught off-guard and when he is, he's fast to recover and respond. He is quiet and thoughtful until the time is right for him to reply as only a Cybertank can. In his rare off duty time, Pulver can be found relaxing in his quarters, smoking a fine cigar, and reading a book on military history. He enjoys classical, calm music and quiet introspection. Maxwell's only companion in non-military life is Duke, his Great Dane

**Quote:** "There is no negotiating with a Cybertank." "Damn it! Keep firing until the barrels are red hot!" "Hold your ground. We have range, they don't."

**Powers/Tactics:** With the considerable might of a Cybertank at his command, Maxwell has a boggling selection of weapons to bring to bear. Pulver must initiate a neural interface with the tank, a process that takes three to five minutes once he is inside the vehicle. His cyber systems will remotely attune to the tank and the man and machine become as one. If Maxwell leaves the vehicle he loses his neural interface and access to the advanced optics of the Cybertank. As he switches through the various optic systems, one will fade to allow another to activate. If two optic systems are being used they combine in a fixed overlay that he sees through his cyber-eye.

Maxwell Pulver has faced countless enemies over the years as a Cybertank Commander and is never without some experience in a dangerous situation. He is never quick to rush in and is ruthless once the battle turns his way.

**Campaign Use:** As an ally, Maxwell can be the "heavy support" that arrives to help the PCs out of tight situations. Just when things look hopeless, the Cybertanks arrive! He could be the commander of a military operation in an area the PCs are playing in and assigns the missions for the game. If the campaign involves a call for heavy armor (and mecha), well there's Pulver just waiting to get in the thick of it. Also the players could come to Maxwell for a number of reasons to gain his experience and insights to the military or strategy. He could become an ongoing fountain of advice for the PCs in a military campaign.

As an enemy, Maxwell could be a mid-ranged villain who isn't necessarily evil, but very duty-oriented. If the PCs are rebels fighting against an oppressive institution they will no doubt run into Maxwell if their operations are threatening enough. Pulver sees the reasons why the PCs are standing against him, but in his mind once the Cybertanks are called in the situation is already beyond a common ground. He could be torn between the outright destruction of the PCs and trying to overcome his years of indoctrination to come to terms with the PCs goals and aims.

**Appearance:** Maxwell Pulver is a man approaching retirement. His face shows all the years of conflict he has been involved in. He is heavy-set as his once powerful musculature slowly erodes into old age and his blonde hair is almost stark white now. A gruff, silent exterior hides a powerful mind always at work. His cyber-systems (his left arm and the left side of his face) are state of the art and always well maintained.

Captain Maxwell Pulver



杜克  
大偉

**Captain Maxwell Pulver**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10/20	STR	0	11-/13-	Lift 100 kg/400 kg; 2d6/4d6 [2/4]
11	DEX	3	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
15	CON	20	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
8	EGO	-4	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
2	PD	0		Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	9		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
30	END	0		
23	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 40**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 2"/4"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
15	<i>Cyberlink Optics and Communications:</i> Multipower, 30-point Reserve, Does Not Work When Not Cyberlinked to the Tank (-1)	0
1u	1) Infrared Perception (Sight Group), Increased Arc of Perception (360°); Does Not Work When Not Cyberlinked to the Tank (-1)	0
1u	2) N-Ray Perception (Sight Group), Increased Arc of Perception (360°); Does Not Work When Not Cyberlinked to the Tank (-1), Does Not Work in Intense Heat (-0)	0
1u	3) Radio Perception, Transmit; Does Not Work When Not Cyberlinked to the Tank (-1)	0
1u	4) Radar (Radio Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360°), Tracking; Does Not Work When Not Cyberlinked to the Tank (-1)	0
1u	5) Find Weakness 13- with Cybertank weaponry; Does Not Work When Not Cyberlinked to the Tank (-1)	0
6	<i>Cyberarm:</i> +10 STR; No Figured Characteristics (-½), Only One Arm (-¼)	2
<b>Perks</b>		
4	Fringe Benefit: Captain	
3	Money: Well Off	
1	Reputation: Skilled and Dedicated Officer (The System Military) 8-, +1/+1d6	

**Talents**

5 Eidetic Memory (Cybernetic)

**Skills**

6 +3 vs. Range Modifier with Cyber-Tank Weapon Systems

5 AK: Mars 14-  
 3 Combat Driving 11-  
 3 Computer Programming 13-  
 3 Deduction 13-  
 3 Demolitions 13-  
 3 Electronics 13-  
 3 Language: Mandarin Chinese (Fluent)  
 3 Mechanics 13-  
 2 Navigation (Land) 13-  
 3 Paramedics 13-  
 3 PS: Military Science 12-  
 3 PS: Soldier 12-  
 5 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic Plains, Desert, Urban) 13-  
 7 Tactics 15-  
 3 Teamwork (with other Cybertanks) 11-  
 3 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Personal Use Spacecraft, Tracked Military Vehicles, Wheeled Military Vehicles  
 10 WF: Beam Weapons, Emplaced Weapons, Energy Weapons, Small Arms, Shoulder-Fired Weapons, Vehicle Weapons

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 110****Total Cost: 150****75+ Disadvantages**

10 Age: 60+  
 10 Distinctive Features: Cybernetics (Concealable)  
 15 Hunted: Martian Rebels 8- (As Pow, Very Easy to Find, Kill)  
 5 Rivalry: Professional (Other Officer in the Armor Divisions on Mars)  
 25 Social Limitation: Duty to the System Military (Very Frequently, Severe)  
 10 Vulnerability: 2x STUN from Electrical Attacks (Uncommon)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 75**

## THE ANALYZE SKILL IN PRACTICE

Obviously, the *Analyze* Skill as shown here is not used by all sensor operators, since it doesn't appear in the Package Deals for United Earth Navy Science and Sensors (*Alien Wars*, page 94), Imperial Navy Science and Sensors (*Terran Empire*, page 116), or other professions for which it might be appropriate. This is because those books were written quite some time before this article made its usefulness apparent.

Even if this rule becomes official, the Skill will probably not be included in those Package Deals. Those Packages show the minimum that a sensor operator could have; only individuals with career intentions would have the *Analyze* Skill. New recruits and those just "passing the time" through their tour of duty wouldn't have the Skill; nor would those whose fields of specialty keep them in the laboratory more than at the sensor console.



# Sensors? Which Sensors? by Bob Greenwade

In HERO Games' science-fiction settings (*Terran Empire* and *Alien Wars*), starship sensors are represented using a Variable Power Pool. As mentioned in *The Ultimate Vehicle* (page 159) and *Star Hero* (pages 200-202), this is the most practical way of building the systems in many science fiction settings; otherwise the builder would have to think of every possible sensor for his ship, then build – and buy – each sensor separately.

For those intimately familiar with the *HERO System* – especially the *Enhanced Senses* suite of Powers – this isn't too much of a challenge. Whenever something needs to be detected, an appropriate Detect can be built on the fly, complete with any necessary Modifiers.

However, not all *HERO System* players are so fortunate as to have such a familiarity with the system. Some are new to the system; some just aren't quite so good at quickly building things with game mechanics; others may be able but understandably unwilling to go to the trouble. For such players, this list of common possibilities should help.

But first, a couple of minor rules expansions should make the listings more usable (and in some cases more intelligible).

## Operating the Sensor Pool

Changing (or "reconfiguring") the sensors in a Sensor Pool works just as with any other VPP, taking between 1 Turn and 1 Minute in a noncombat situation with no requirement for a Skill Roll (as described on pages 209-210 of the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*).

To change the Sensor Pool in combat, the GM may allow characters to take a new Skill, *Combat Sensor Operations* (essentially a form of the *Power* Skill, though it may be treated as a Skill in its own right).

## COMBAT SENSOR OPERATIONS

This Intellect Skill works specifically to operate the Sensor Pool under combat conditions. With a successful Combat Sensor Operations Roll, the character can change the Powers in the Sensor Pool as a Full Phase action, in accordance with the rules for such actions on pages 209-210 of the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*.

At the GM's option, Combat Sensor Operations may be "broken down" into categories in a manner similar to Systems Operation (*Star Hero*, page 47). The only corresponding 2-point categories would be Communication Systems and Sensor Systems – Medical Sensors would go into the latter category. In the Hero Universe systems are also broken up by civilization (such as Terran

Communication Systems or Mon'dabi Sensor Systems) so there would still be plenty of opportunities for expansion.

## OTHER POSSIBLE USES OF COMBAT SENSOR OPERATIONS

The GM may also allow a character with this Skill to overcome certain penalties for sensor use in combat, obtain a sensor lock, or perform certain other tasks in combat.

According to the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (page 229), the GM may apply certain Skill Roll Modifiers (on page 28 of the same book) to PER Rolls, including a penalty of -1 to -3 for combat conditions. With a successful Combat Sensor Operations roll, the character can overcome some or all of this penalty. Combat Sensor Operations can be handled just like a complementary Skill, but only to overcome penalties for using sensors in combat – it should never be easier to use equipment in combat than out. The GM may also apply this bonus in similar fashion to other penalties.

The existing rules for obtaining a sensor lock (see *Star Hero*, page 216) only require that the character be able to make a normal PER Roll using a ship's sensor equipment. A character with this Skill may use it instead. The GM may decide to require that Combat Sensor Operations be used instead of a normal PER Roll, but this isn't required; the Skill still has the advantage of having Skill Levels and sometimes even Combat Skill Levels available, options not available with a straight PER Roll.

The GM may also find other useful applications for Combat Sensor Operations. For example, it may be a complementary Skill for Systems Operation when trying to use the sensors in combat conditions (again, only to overcome penalties for using them in combat), for Find Weakness, or for certain combat applications of *Analyze*.

## Existing Skills

Besides Combat Sensor Operations, a few existing Skills can serve a sensor operator well.

## ANALYZE

Though most of the sensors here have the *Analyze* Adder, they also have the option of being activated without it. An operator with the right form of the *Analyze* Skill can examine the raw information himself, overcoming this lack, treating any sensor with Discriminatory but not *Analyze* as though it does have *Analyze*.

The most common form of the Skill for sensor operators is *Analyze Sensor Data*. This allows the character to analyze any type of

sensor data. When using this Skill, the character takes the same Active Point penalty that he would take for trying to activate the sensor using Combat Sensor Operation (see the listings). The normal time for analyzing the data is one minute for systems with a 20 Active Point penalty, one hour for those with a 10 point penalty, or one day for those with a 5 point penalty. Modifiers for taking more or less time (see page 28 of the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*) apply; the GM may also treat the PER Roll for the Detect as a complementary Skill.

The sensor's PER roll should usually be complementary to the character's Analyze roll.

If the character has Analyze for a particular type of sensor data – for example, *Analyze Bio-Scans* or *Analyze Gravity Scans* – the Active Point penalty is not applied, but otherwise the procedure is exactly the same. Such a Skill also gives the character a Familiarity (8- roll) with the corresponding Science Skill for no additional cost (though see below).

A character with multiple forms of Analyze related to sensor data analysis can buy Skill Levels with all sensor-related *Analyze* Skills for 3 points each, even if he has more than three such Skills.

### BUGGING

This Skill can be handy when trying to eavesdrop on transmissions, or use Active sensors without being detected. The normal Active Point penalty (-1 per 10 Active Points) applies in both cases, though any amount of the *Concealed* Adder also applies for secretly using Active sensors.

### INVENTOR

A sensor operator may need this Skill to devise a sensor for something he hasn't ever encountered before. Electronics may be a complementary Skill for this, as may an appropriate *Analyze* Skill (above) if he has one.

The GM should *only* require use of this Skill for phenomena that the character hasn't encountered before, or at least for which no sensor currently exists (and remember that the list given here isn't exhaustive). The character (not necessarily the player) would need to understand the physics behind the phenomenon before the new sensor could be built.

### SCIENCE SKILLS

Science Skills are important for sensor operators, so they can understand and interpret some of the more complex and advanced data they see.

If a character has the *Analyze Sensor Data* Skill or one of its sub-forms, an appropriate Science Skill can act as complementary. If he does not, the Science Skill may take the place of

the equivalent sub-form, though with the given Active Point penalty and a time requirement one step down the Time Chart.

As noted above, any sub-form of *Analyze Sensor Data* automatically gives the character an 8- Familiarity with a corresponding Science Skill. However, that Familiarity cannot act as a complementary Skill, either for that *Analyze* or for any other Skill.

### SYSTEMS OPERATION

Most (but not all) of the sensors listed here use some form of the Limitation *Requires a Systems Operation Roll*. This represents not the ability to get the sensor to operate as desired, but rather the ability to interpret the information shown by the sensor's display. Straightforward sensors, such as most communications systems, do not have this Limitation; the more complex the system display, the greater the system's Active Point penalty, and the greater the Limitation value.

Using this approach, a failed roll doesn't necessarily mean that the character failed to get the sensor to work properly. This may be the case, but by the time of mankind's journeys into interstellar space the user interfaces of sensor systems is simple enough that presumably anyone could use them. Instead, a failed roll would mean a failure to correctly interpret the data, or even a complete misinterpretation. The character could still redeem himself later by more closely examining the sensor log (normally a part of the ship's computer), or allowing someone else to do so.

Naturally, the character must have the appropriate category of the *Systems Operation* Skill (see *Star Hero*, page 47) to operate a given sensor. Subject to the GM's discretion, this may be true even if it doesn't have the *Requires a Systems Operation Roll* Limitation.

### TRACKING

As with *Analyze* (above), this Skill can be used to track using a sensor without the *Tracking* Adder. Generally the sensor should have the Adder available as an option but just not active at the moment, though the GM may allow exceptions. The rules governing this are mostly the same as for *Analyze*, except that there are no "sub-forms" of Tracking.

### TRACKING IN SPACE

Generally speaking, any tracking in space – whether with the *Tracking* Skill or the *Tracking Sense* Adder – will take a -1 per step down the Time Chart that's passed since the thing being tracked passed by (starting at -1 for 1 Turn), but a +1 for every 10 Active Points in the thing being tracked. The bonus only applies to the specific Power that the sensor is designed to detect; for example, tracking a starship through the spatial disruption of its Type 12 Displacement Drive would get a +4 bonus.

## ALREADY LISTED?

Some of these sensors may be already listed in *The Ultimate Vehicle*, *Star Hero*, or some other existing *HERO System* book. They are given here to adapt them to use in starships during the Hero Universe's third millennium, and to save the reader from flipping through multiple tomes to find the right sensor.

On the flip side, this list should not by any means be treated as exhaustive. Should PCs come across something unusual they want to examine, the GM should allow the sensor operator to develop any kind of sensor that seems reasonable (using the *Inventor Skill*, as described earlier). The sensors shown here can be used as templates for such situations.

## LEVELED OPTIONS

Most of the sensors listed here have one or more options with "Levels." Only the first two levels of improvement over the basic configuration are given, but the GM should allow a player to add more levels as long as it's within reason and within the physical capabilities (in game terms) of the ship's sensor package.

## General Considerations

The following list gives several examples of what a starship might have in its sensor package. All sensors in this list should be considered equally valid for ATRI 9-11, unless some note is given to the contrary. Generally, the GM can (using the Sensor Systems on page 169 or *Star Hero*) treat Sensor Package I as ATRI 9, Sensor Package II as ATRI 10, and Sensor Package III as ATRI 11.

All sensors also have the Limitations *Costs Endurance* (-½) and *OIF Bulky* (-1). These are requirements of the VPP, as written for every starship in the galaxy (that is, every starship in *Terran Empire*, *Alien Wars*, and *Spacer's Toolkit*, as well as the *Spacer's Toolkit Online*).

Each sensor's description is divided into five parts. First, the *Description* gives a general overview of what the sensor can do. Second, *Penalty* shows two numbers: first the penalty for switching the sensor using Combat Sensor Operations (other Skills such as Analyze Sensor Data, Bugging, and so forth), and then the penalty (if any) for use with Systems Operation where that's a Required Skill. Third, *END Cost* shows the END drawn from the ship's power systems to use the sensor. Fourth, *Game Information* gives a write-up in *HERO System* terms. Finally, *Options* (when it appears – it's not present in all write-ups) shows different ways the sensor can be configured for various purposes; these options should not be considered mutually exclusive unless the *HERO System* rules make them obviously so.

Utilizing options can serve either of two purposes. Options involving Adders, Advantages, or other increases obviously make the sensor more powerful. Options involving Limitations or other reductions in ability make more room in the Sensor Pool for other sensors, reduce power usage, reduce penalties for Combat Sensor Operation and Systems Operation, and allow for use with the package's long-range scanners (see below). The sensor operator should determine carefully what abilities he needs at any given moment, particularly in a combat situation.

MegaScale is not included in any of these packages because it is already available as a naked Advantage in sensor packages. Note, however, that long-range scanners using MegaScale are limited in the number of Active Points the sensor can have (30 for Package I, 40 for Package II, and 50 for Package III).

All sensors built here using the *Detect* Power are Passive, unless they have Transmit or are specifically described as being Active. However, a sensor operator can just as easily rework them to be Active if he needs to.

While the sensors are grouped into various categories, there's little reason that a creative

sensor operator couldn't use a sensor shown in one category for a purpose falling into another. For example, a geological scanner could be attuned to detect when a ship lands or takes off (a good tactical use), or a quantum energy tracer could help in a survey of solar flares. A bit of imagination could reveal many more such uses.

## NORMAL CONFIGURATION

By default, most starships in the Terran Empire use these sensor configurations when something else isn't needed. Ships belonging to other major powers use slightly different defaults, and private ships often have their own protocols.

### Sensor Package I:

- 7 Hyperspace Communicator
- 21 Meteorological Scanner, General Analysis, Level 2 Accuracy, Level 4 Range
- 23 Spatial Disruption Detector, Level 3 Accuracy, Level 2 Range
- 8 Infrared Filter, Level 3 Resolution Enhancement
- 1 Unused

### Sensor Package II:

- 7 Hyperspace Communicator
- 28 Meteorological Scanner, Level 3 Accuracy, Level 4 Range, Level 1 Acceleration
- 29 Spatial Disruption Detector, Level 5 Accuracy, Level 2 Range
- 8 Infrared Filter, Level 3 Resolution Enhancement
- 8 Sensor Protection, Level 2 Protection

### Sensor Package III:

- 7 Hyperspace Communicator
- 28 Meteorological Scanner, Level 3 Accuracy, Level 4 Range, Level 1 Acceleration
- 29 Spatial Disruption Detector, Level 5 Accuracy, Level 2 Range
- 8 Infrared Filter, Level 3 Resolution Enhancement
- 13 Temporal Distortion Scanner, Level 3 Accuracy
- 8 Sensor Protection, Level 2 Protection
- 3 Unused



## Audio Sensors

Most ships capable of entering atmospheres (mostly smaller ships) are equipped with audio sensors. Though infrequently used, their utility is enough to justify their presence.

Vessels with the Physical Limitation *Cannot Enter Atmospheres* do not have external audio sensors.

### DIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

**Description:** The ship's audio sensors can be set to focus on a particular distant location. At its base level, a location up to a kilometer away can be heard as though it were right next to the ship.

**Penalty:** -3/-0

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Telescopic (+20 versus Range Modifier) for Hearing Sense Group (30 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 12 points.*

**Options:**

1) **Level 2 Magnification:** Base distance is increased to 1,000 kilometers. Increase Telescopic to +40 versus Range Modifier. 60 Active Points; total cost 24 points.

2) **Level 3 Magnification:** Base distance is increased to 1,000,000 kilometers. (Magnification beyond this level is almost never called for.) Increase Telescopic to +60 versus Range Modifier. 90 Active Points; total cost 36 points.

### PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

**Description:** The audio sensors are treated as speakers, to amplify the operator's voice.

**Penalty:** -2/-0

**END Cost:** 2

**Game Information:** *Hearing Group Images, +5 to PER Rolls, 1" radius (20 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), No Range (-½), Set Effect (only amplifies what's said into it; -1). Total cost: 6 points.*

**Options:**

1) **Level 2 Volume:** Increase to +10 to PER Rolls. 35 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

2) **Level 3 Volume:** Increase to +15 to PER Rolls. 50 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

### SONAR

**Description:** Though usually associated with underwater sensing, for which it was originally developed, sonar is also very usable in air (at least, it's good enough for bats).

**Penalty:** -2/-0

**END Cost:** 2

**Game Information:** *Active Sonar (Hearing Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Bulky OIF (-1). Total cost: 8 points.*

**Options:**

1) **Increased Resolution:** Add Discriminatory. 25 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

2) **Level 2 Range:** Add Telescopic (+6 versus Range Modifier). 26 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

3) **Level 3 Range:** Add Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier). 32 Active Points; total cost 13 points.

4) **Level 1 Concealment:** Add -6 Concealment. 26 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

5) **Level 2 Concealment:** Add -12 Concealment. 32 Active Points; total cost 13 points.

### ULTRASONIC SENSOR

**Description:** Extending the range of the ship's audio sensors to include the range of sound above normal human hearing is a simple matter.

**Penalty:** -0/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group) (3 Active Points); Costs END (-½), Bulky OIF (-1). Total cost: 1 point.*

## Battle/Tactical Sensors

These sensors either are designed originally for use in battle, or have applications primarily useful in a tactical setting.

### PSI-DETECTOR

**Description:** A larger version of the handheld device of the same name (see the sidebar on page 130 of *Terran Empire*), this can detect the presence of persons with psionic abilities, or the use of such abilities. Though rarely deployed except by Mind Police, it's useful for encounters with Varanyi, rogue telepaths, or similar foes. It's available only on ships with ATRI 10 or later.

**Penalty:** -4/-8

**END Cost:** 4

**Game Information:** *Detect Psionic Powers 16- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (39 Active Points); Affected As Mental As Well As Radio Sense Group (-¼), Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.*

**Options:**

1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Psionic Powers 19-. 45 Active Points; total cost 12 points.

2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Psionic Powers 22-. 51 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 47 Active Points; total cost 13 points.

4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 55 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

## IMAGES IN THE SENSOR ARRAY?

The Variable Power Pools used by starship sensor arrays in the *Terran Empire* and *Alien Wars* settings all have the *Costs Endurance* Limitation. Yet the public address system here, and the spotlights later in this article, use the *Images Power* – which already costs *Endurance*.

Based on this, most GMs may disallow these two pieces of equipment for a Sensor Pool. In most cases they won't be missed, and if the ship's owner really wants them they can be purchased separately.

The GM may also "hand-wave" the conflict, saying the systems don't need to take the Limitation because they already have it (the solution assumed here); or treat the Limitation as though it were Increased Endurance Cost (×2 END, -½), which costs the same.

5) **Limited Detection:** The sensor is calibrated only to detect either the presence of psionic powers, or their actual use, but not both. Change to either Detect Psionic Mind or Detect Use Of Psionic Powers. 34 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

### QUANTUM ENERGY TRACER

**Description:** When any sort of energy weapon is fired, it leaves behind a unique “trace” at the quantum level. This trace can be used to identify the weapon by its make and model, and even make comparisons similar to ballistics tests with firearms (and with approximately the same level of accuracy).

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Detect Quantum Trace 16- (Radio Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier), Increased Arc of Perception (360 Degrees) (32 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 9 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Quantum Trace 19-. 38 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Quantum Trace 22-. 44 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 40 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 48 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 5) **Intermediate Scanning:** The scanner can only identify the type, make, and model of the weapon, but cannot identify a specific weapon. Remove Analyze. 27 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 6) **Basic Scanning:** The scanner can only identify the type and general power level of a weapon. Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 22 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 7) **Directional Scan:** Remove Increased Arc of Perception. 27 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 8) **Quantum Tracking:** Add Tracking. 37 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

### RADAR

**Description:** With all of the other possibilities for sensors, situations in space where simple radar is called for are few and far between. They do occur, however, and configuring a ship’s sensors to meet that need is a relatively simple matter.

As with any other radar in the *HERO System*, this Sense is Active.

**Penalty:** -2/-0

**END Cost:** 2

**Game Information:** *Radar (Radio Sense Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 8 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Resolution Enhancement:** Add +6 to PER. 26 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Resolution Enhancement:** Add +12 to PER. 32 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Add Telescopic (+8 versus Range Modifier). 28 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Add Telescopic (+16 versus Range Modifier). 36 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 5) **Narrow Range Of Focus:** Remove Increased Arc Of Perception. 15 Active Points; total cost 6 points.

### SPATIAL DISRUPTION DETECTOR

**Description:** The sensor is set to detect any ships arriving at (or leaving) the area with any faster-than-light drive, including Displacement, Hyperdrive, or Warp (even the relatively primitive ATRI 9 sensors can detect Warp events). The user can easily discriminate among the three types of drive and also, with a successful Systems Operation roll, gather such information as the specific drive type, species of manufacture, and any damage the drive has suffered recently.

**Penalty:** -4/-0

**END Cost:** 4

**Game Information:** *Detect Spatial Events (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier), Increased Arc of Perception (360 Degrees) (39 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 16 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Spatial Events 19-. 45 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Spatial Events 22-. 51 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 47 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 55 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 5) **Single Drive Type:** The sensor is set to detect usage of only one type of drive. Change to Detect Displacement Events, Detect Hyperspace Events, or Detect Warp Events. 37 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 6) **General Scanning:** The sensor can recognize one type of drive from another, but nothing more

specific than that. Remove Analyze. 34 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

7) **Focus Mode:** The sensor is set to scan in one general direction only. Remove Increased Arc Of Perception. 34 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

8) **Ambush Mode:** The sensor is tied to the ship's targeting computer so weapons can be immediately fired upon an arriving ship when it enters normal space. Add Targeting. 49 Active Points; total cost 20 points.

9) **Tracking Mode:** The sensor is set to follow a ship which has departed using any of the three drive types. Add Tracking. 44 Active Points; total cost 18 points.

### TARGETING SENSOR

**Description:** This device seeks out weak points in the opposition's force fields and armor, and helps the gunner to target those points.

**Penalty:** -3/-1

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Find Weakness 13- with all Starship Ranged Weapons (30 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total cost: 11 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Find Weakness 15-. 40 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Find Weakness 17-. 50 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 3) **Shield Targeting:** Add Only Versus Force Fields (-1). Total cost: 8 points.
- 4) **Hull Targeting:** Add Only Versus Vehicle/Base DEF (-1). Total cost: 8 points.
- 5) **Laser Targeting:** Change all Starship Ranged Weapons to Starship Lasers. 20 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 6) **Plasma Targeting:** Change all Starship Ranged Weapons to Starship Plasma Weapons. 20 Active Points; total cost 7 points.

### Communication Systems

Whether ship-to-ship, ship-to-station, ship-to-surface, or at interstellar distances, communications fall under the purview of a sensor operator. Several options are available for this, the best choice depending on the circumstances.

### BATTLENET

**Description:** Some ships, particularly those operated by military bodies, have highly advanced communications systems. Known colloquially as Battlenets (or more formally as Tactical Communications Networks, or TCNs) these allow for the rapid transmission of extensive amounts of data, giving commanders a "real time" picture of what's occurring on the battlefield.

**Penalty:** -6/-0

**END Cost:** 6

**Game Information:** *Mind Link, specific group of up to any 64 minds, no LOS needed, Difficult To Dispel (×2 Active Points; +1/4) (62 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Only With Other Vehicles Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-1/2). Total cost: 15 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Small Battle Group:** Reduce to specific group of up to any 16 minds. 50 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 2) **Battle Wing:** Reduce to specific group of up to any 4 minds. 37 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 3) **Large Battle Group:** Increase to specific group of up to any 256 minds. 75 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 4) **Battle Fleet:** Increase to specific group of up to any 1,048 minds. 87 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 5) **Level 2 Security:** Increase Difficult To Dispel to ×4 Active Points (+1/2). 75 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 6) **Level 3 Security:** Increase Difficult To Dispel to ×8 Active Points (+3/4). 82 Active Points; total cost 20 points.

### COMMUNICATOR

**Description:** Introduced at ATRI 10, this is the ship's version of the orbital communicator (see *Terran Empire*, page 150). It's generally tied to the ship's long-range sensor adapter (the naked *MegaScale* Advantage) and "scaled back" to allow communication within a system. The system is also useful for ship-to-ship communications within several light-years.

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); Bulky OIF (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-1/2). Total cost: 5 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Reception:** Add +6 to Perception. 18 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Reception:** Add +12 to Perception. 24 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 3) **Level 1 Concealment:** Add -6 Concealment. 18 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 4) **Level 2 Concealment:** Add -12 Concealment. 24 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 5) **Targeting Communications:** The sensor can use the target's transmission to get a targeting lock. While this can be used to allow a weapons officer to locate and attack the target (thus the existence of the Concealment options above), it can also be used to locate and rescue a lost individual. Add Targeting. 22 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

## TRANSLATORS

Though universal translators, an ATRI 9 development, are available as portable devices as of the Terran Empire era (see page 150 of *Terran Empire*), aboard starships the chore is handled by the ship's computer (see pages 167-169 of the same book, or pages 114-116 of *Alien Wars*). Thus the device isn't included in this list of equipment.

## HYPERSPACE COMMUNICATOR

**Description:** This device is used to send and receive messages via one of the Hyperspace relay networks (see *Terran Empire*, page 92).

Throughout the Imperial period sensor operators often were given the choice between keeping hyperspace communicators active during combat, using up vital sensor resources, or switching them out for tactical sensors, creating a risk of missing a vital interstellar communication. In the early 2680s, after the final rebellion against the Empire was well established, Allen Traynor had hyperspace communicators hard-wired into all rebel ships (in game terms, installed outside the Sensor VPP) so sensor operators wouldn't have to face this decision. This decision was later credited as one of several key factors in the rebellion's success.

**Penalty:** -3/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *High Range Radio Perception (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Sense Affected As More Than One Sense Sight And Hearing Groups As Well As Radio Group (-1/2) (total cost 4 points) plus Clairsentience (Radio Group), Single Dimension (Hyperspace) (30 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), No Range (-1/2) (total cost 12 points. Total cost: 16 points.*

## SECURE LASER COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

**Description:** This short-range communication device, using both laser and radio, allows for a high level of coordination between two ships. Though easily cut off by intervening obstacles or electronic warfare, it uses up far fewer resources than a Battlenet (above).

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Mind Link, any willing target (15 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Only With Other Vehicles Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-1/2), Must Maintain LOS (-1/2). Total cost: 3 points.*

## General Sensor Systems

These systems are not sensors in themselves, but improve, protect, or otherwise enhance the performance of other sensors.

## PENETRATING SCANNER

**Description:** This mode of scanning allows the ship's sensors (at least, those operating within the Radio Sense Group) to penetrate nearly any material. However, it can still be blocked by force fields, high radiation fields, ion storms, and similar phenomena. It also makes any Senses used through it into Active Senses, making them detectable by other scanners.

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *N-Ray Perception (Radio Group) (blocked by force fields and similar phenomena) (10 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 4 points.*

**Options:**

1) **Level 1 Concealment:** Add -6 Concealment. 16 Active Points; total cost 6 points.

2) **Level 2 Concealment:** Add -12 Concealment. 22 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

## SENSOR MAGNIFIER

**Description:** The ship's sensors can focus on a small, distant area to examine something in greater detail than would normally be possible even with standard Range increments. This is most often used for examining a ship at range, or for searching a region of a planet for something specific.

The benefits of using this magnifier over the standard Range increments of individual sensors are twofold. First, it affects all Radio Sense Group sensors simultaneously. Second, it does not increase (nor even require on its own) penalties to the *Systems Operation* Skill for interpreting sensor data. On the other hand, if only one type of scanner is needed at a given moment, simply increasing the range on that scanner alone will use less power, and is easier to operate in a combat situation.

Each level of magnification increases the apparent size of the targeted area by 1,000.

**Penalty:** -3/-0

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Telescopic (+20 versus Range Modifier) for Radio Sense Group (30 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 12 points.*

**Options:**

1) **Level 2 Magnification:** Magnification is up to 1 million times normal size. Increase Telescopic to +40 versus Range Modifier. 60 Active Points; total cost 22 points.

2) **Level 3 Magnification:** Magnification is up to 1 billion times normal size. Increase Telescopic to +60 versus Range Modifier. 90 Active Points; total cost 33 points.

## SENSOR PROTECTION

**Description:** This system protects the sensors from overloads, whether from natural phenomena or electronic warfare attacks.

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Radio Group Flash Defense (5 points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1) (total cost: 2 points) plus Power Defense (5 points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF*

## DIGITAL HERO #36

*Bulky (-1) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 4 points.*

### Options:

1) **Level 2 Protection:** Increase to Radio Group Flash Defense (10 points) and Power Defense (10 points).  $10 + 10 = 20$  Active Points; total cost  $4 + 4 = 8$  points.

2) **Level 3 Protection:** Increase to Radio Group Flash Defense (15 points) and Power Defense (15 points).  $15 + 15 = 30$  Active Points; total cost  $6 + 6 = 12$  points.

## Navigation Aids

These sensors are, each in its own way, useful for short- or long-range navigation.

### GEIGER SCANNER

**Description:** A descendant of the Geiger counter, this device measures all types of radiation. A skilled user can identify any radiation by type (including Alpha, Beta, Gamma, cosmic, X-ray, electromagnetic, and other types), by source type (elemental decay, atomic fission, electronic generation, or other means), or by level.

By far the most important use for this is in interstellar navigation. Using pulsars as beacons, a character with the appropriate *Systems Operation Skill* (using Navigation as a complementary Skill) can determine the ship's exact position to within a small fraction of a light-year. Given the inherent inaccuracy of both Hyperdrives and Displacer Drives (see pages 158-160 of *Terran Empire*), this can be an extremely important navigation aid.

**Penalty:** -4/-4

**END Cost:** 4

**Game Information:** *Detect Radiation 16- (Radio Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (39 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1/2). Total cost: 13 points.*

### Options:

1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Radiation 19-. 45 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Radiation 22-. 51 Active Points; total cost 17 points.

3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 47 Active Points; total cost 16 points.

4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 56 Active Points; total cost 18 points.

5) **Typed Radiation Scanner:** The sensor is limited to detecting only a single type of radiation. Change to Detect [Radiation Type]. 34 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

6) **General Radiation Detection:** The sensor is set to detect radiation from all directions. Add

Increased Arc Of Perception 360 Degrees). 44 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

7) **Intermediate Detection:** The sensor can only determine the general type and approximate level of radiation, but not its source type nor any real specifics. Remove Analyze. 34 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

8) **Basic Detection:** The sensor can only determine the location and general level of radiation. Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

9) **Radiation Tracks:** If the source of radiation has been moved, the sensor can track its movements. Add Tracking. 44 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

### GRAVITATIONAL FIELD DETECTOR

**Description:** This sensor is an important tool for detecting gravitational distortions from black holes, the "safety threshold" for using Displacement drives and Hyperdrives, the gravitational environment of a planet, artificially-generated gravity, and other phenomena. At its full sensitivity a skilled user can determine the strength, direction, point of origin, and nature of any gravitational field.

**Penalty:** -3/-2

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Detect Gravity 16- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (34 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total Cost: 12 points.*

### Options:

1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Gravity 19-. 40 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Gravity 22-. 46 Active Points; total cost 17 points.

3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 42 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 50 Active Points; total cost 18 points.

5) **Intermediate Sensitivity:** The sensor is only able to determine the strength and direction of a gravitational field (though logic and a little skill can usually determine its point of origin). Remove Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

6) **Basic Sensitivity:** The sensor only detects the presence and general strength of a gravitational field. Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 24 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

7) **Targeting Scan:** The sensor is tied to the ship's weapon systems, allowing the weapons operator to target the source of a gravitational field. 44 Active Points; total cost 16 points.

## Scientific Sensors

When any object is encountered in space, whether it's a ship, station, planet, moon, or something else, it's usually a good idea to know its properties before getting too close. These sensors help ensure the safety of a ship's crew before the ship closes in on an object, and before the crew sets foot in a new environment.

### ATMOSPHERIC ANALYZER

**Description:** This scanner can analyze the composition, pressure, temperature, and other characteristics of a planet's atmosphere, the air supply on a ship or space station, or any other gaseous body. It differs from a meteorological scanner (below) in that it provides more chemical data, such as would be needed to determine survivability, and less electromagnetic and other energy-related data such as winds, lightning, and so forth.

**Penalty:** -4/-2

**END Cost:** 4

**Game Information:** *Detect Atmospheric Conditions 16- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (39 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total cost: 14 points.*

#### Options:

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Atmospheric Conditions 19-. 45 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Atmospheric Conditions 22-. 51 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 47 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 55 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 5) **Intermediate Scanner:** The scanner can only give a vague idea as to the atmosphere's status. Remove Analyze. 34 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 6) **Basic Scanner:** The scanner can only detect the presence of a gaseous body, and very general information about it. Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 7) **Accelerated Scan:** The sensor is given extra resources to gather its data more quickly. Add Rapid ( $\times 100$ ). 45 Active Points; total cost 16 points.

## BIOLOGICAL SCANNER

**Description:** This scanner detects life-forms by detecting the electrical fields created by all living things. It can identify any specific being either by species or as an individual. All species, sentient or otherwise, are detectable using this, though smaller life-forms are naturally harder to detect (use Size modifiers) and sentient life-forms are discernable as such. This can be very helpful in determining the contingent of a ship, the population of a planet, and similar data.

**Penalty:** -4/-2

**END Cost:** 4

**Game Information:** *Detect Life-Forms 16- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (39 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total cost: 14 points.*

#### Options:

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Life-Forms 19-. 45 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Life-Forms 22-. 51 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 47 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 55 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 5) **Species Scan:** The sensor can only discriminate by species, but not discern individuals. Remove Analyze. 34 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 6) **Species Detection:** The sensor is set to only detect members of a specific species. This can be useful for finding individuals whose species is known, but whose personal data isn't available to detect as individuals. Change to Detect [Species]. 34 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 7) **Personal Scan:** The sensor is set to detect a specific person for whom the scanner has individualized data (usually an electric field image, infrared pattern, DNA, or something similarly unique). Change to Detect Specific Individual. 32 Active points; total cost 12 points.
- 8) **Life-Signs Scan:** The sensor can only determine the presence and location of life-forms, but can't discern species. This is a good setting for an initial scan of an unknown planetary body. Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 9) **Targeting Bio-Scan:** The sensor is connected to the ship's targeting systems so one or more weapons or other systems can be "locked on" to a specific individual. Add Targeting. 49 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 10) **Accelerated Scan:** The sensor is given extra resources to gather its data more quickly. Add Rapid ( $\times 100$ ). 45 Active Points; total cost 16 points.



**ENERGY SCANNER**

**Description:** The sensor is set to scan energy readings such as those given off by artificial power sources, energy-based weapons, force field generators, normal-space propulsion, electronic gear, gravity plating, and similar devices. It can distinguish electrical, atomic, fusion, or (as of ATRI 10) antimatter-generated power – a skilled user can even detect fire. This can be very useful in determining the level of civilization on a planet, or the amount of power a potential enemy (or ally) has on his ship.

**Penalty:** -4/-2

**END Cost:** 4

**Game Information:** *Detect Energy Fields, (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (39 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total cost: 14 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Energy Fields 19-. 45 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Energy Fields 22-. 51 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 47 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 55 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 5) **Specified Device:** A skilled user can set the sensor to only pick up a specific type of device. Change to Detect [Device Type]. 34 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 6) **General Device Scan:** Remove Analyze. 34 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 7) **Energy Presence Scan:** Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 8) **Targeting Scan:** The scanner is tied to the ship's weapon systems. This allows the weapons officer to target specific systems on an enemy ship (such as weapons or engines), or a specific type of device on a planet's surface (such as power plants or force field generators) with less risk of collateral damage. Add Targeting. 49 Active Points; total cost 18 points.

**GEOLOGIC SCANNER**

**Description:** The scanner detects the electromagnetic properties of the minerals and metals in the soil, showing the user the planet's content from its core to its crust. The user can also use the scanner to detect deposits of precious metals and minerals, and the purity and usefulness thereof; detect and even map out cave or tunnel complexes; or determine the seismic, tectonic, and volcanic status and history of a planet to determine how likely and/or imminent an earthquake or volcanic eruption might be in a

given area. At long-range (MegaScale level), the scanner can also determine the number and nature of planets and other bodies in a star system.

**Penalty:** -3/-2

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Detect Geological Data 16- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (34 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total Cost: 12 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Geological Data 19-. 40 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Geological Data 22-. 46 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 42 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 50 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 5) **General Content Scan:** The sensor is not set to determine purity, geologic history, and such characteristics, but only the general content of the planet or region. Remove Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 6) **Accelerated Scan:** The sensor is given extra resources to gather its data more quickly. Add Rapid (×100). 40 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

**MAGNETOMETER**

**Description:** This device can detect magnetic fields, and the magnetic properties of materials, distinguishing them by strength, polarity, and type of source. Its uses, even in interstellar travel, are manifold: determining the strength and placement of a planet's magnetic field, detecting recently-disturbed ground, locating lost metallic objects in deep space, and numerous other simple chores. Its PER Rolls can even be used as a complementary roll for other sensors, especially the geologic scanner and meteorological scanner.

**Penalty:** -3/-2

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Detect Magnetism 16- (Radio Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (32 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -1/4). Total cost: 12 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Magnetism 19-. 38 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Magnetism 22-. 44 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 40 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 48 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 5) **Intermediate Sensitivity:** The scanner can only tell the polarity and approximate strength of the magnetic field. Remove Analyze. 27 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 6) **Basic Sensitivity:** The scanner can only tell the approximate polarity (within 30 degrees or so) and give a general idea as to the strength of the magnetic field. Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 22 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 7) **Wide-Range Scan:** The scanner watches in all directions. Add Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees). 37 Active Points; total cost 13 points.

### **METEOROLOGICAL SCANNER**

**Description:** The sensor can detect and determine the weather conditions on a planet overall, or in a particular region. A skilled user can determine not only the current weather in a given area but also the general climatic conditions, normal weather patterns, and similar information. At long-range (MegaScale level), the scanner can also detect spatial disturbances such as ion storms, solar flares, and normally invisible nebulae.

**Penalty:** -3/-3

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Detect Weather 16- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) (34 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-½). Total Cost: 11 points.*

#### **Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Weather 19-. 40 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Weather 22-. 46 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 42 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 5) **Level 1 Acceleration:** The sensor is given extra resources to gather its data more quickly. Add Rapid (×100). 40 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 6) **Level 2 Acceleration:** Add Rapid (×10,000). 46 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

- 7) **General Analysis:** The sensor is set only to determine the current weather conditions, without the prevailing weather patterns. Remove Analyze. 29 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

### **TEMPORAL DISTORTION SCANNER**

**Description:** Even though time travel is still centuries away, by the end of the Xenovore War humans had enough encounters with temporal distortions that by the outset of Operation Future Peace they'd learned to detect them at a distance. However, even by the end of the Terran Empire such encounters had been infrequent enough that, despite the extensive data gathered on them, relatively little was known about their nature. A sensor operator can determine the general nature and effect of a temporal distortion, but not its cause.

Temporal distortions include time-passage phenomena (where time passes more quickly or more slowly than the rest of the universe), temporal wormholes, time loops, and a variety of other events. The category can also include the time dilation and "event horizon" of a black hole. For reasons never fully explored, the greatest number of temporal distortions occur in the Heartworlds region around Earth, while the most dangerous and bizarre are in the so-called "Xi Expanse" rimward and antispinward of Mon'dabi space.

**Penalty:** -3/-6

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Detect Temporal Distortion 16- (Radio Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier), Increased Arc of Perception (360 Degrees) (32 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), OIF Bulky (-1), Requires a Systems Operation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 9 points.*

#### **Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Temporal Distortion 19-. 38 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Accuracy:** Increase to Detect Temporal Distortion 22-. 44 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 3) **Level 2 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +20 versus Range Modifier. 40 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 4) **Level 3 Range:** Increase Telescopic to +28 versus Range Modifier. 48 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 5) **Intermediate Scanning:** Remove Analyze. 27 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 6) **Basic Scanning:** Remove Discriminatory and Analyze. 22 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 7) **Directional Scan:** Remove Increased Arc of Perception. 27 Active Points; total cost 8 points.

## Visual Enhancers

Despite all the radio-frequency and other sensors available, often the best way to evaluate something is to just look at it. These sensors enhance a viewer's ability to see an object outside the ship.

### INFRARED FILTER

**Description:** This sensor is essentially a setting for the ship's visual sensors to detect light in the infrared portion of the spectrum.

The ability to see into the infrared range of light can have several uses in space, many of which would otherwise involve sensors requiring much more in the way of resources in the ship's sensor package. These include scanning a ship for life or life-support activity, observing the weather patterns on a planet, watching a sun for flares and other phenomena, and many other functions.

While more advanced systems would be needed to obtain more detailed information – and such systems are usually employed once a phenomenon is detected – a simple infrared filter can be a tremendous help for initial scans.

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Infrared Perception (Sight Group) (5 Active Points); Affected As Radio As Well As Sight Sense Group (-1/4), Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 2 points.*

#### Options:

- 1) **Level 2 Resolution Enhancement:** Add +6 to PER. 11 Active Points; total cost 4 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Resolution Enhancement:** Add +12 to PER. 17 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 3) **Infrared Tracking:** Add Tracking. 10 Active points; total cost 4 points.
- 4) **Electronic-Level Infrared Scan:** Though Infrared Perception normally applies to the sight, this sensor can be configured to detect infrared radiation via the same electromagnetic sensitivity common to other sensors in this list. Change Sight Group to Radio Group, and remove Affected As Radio As Well As Sight Sense Group (-1/4). Total cost: 2 points. (The cost difference starts to become notable at Level 3 Resolution Enhancement and higher.)

### SPOTLIGHTS

**Description:** Though lighting is rarely of any use in deep space, in some close, dark situations it can be a lifesaver.

**Penalty:** -3/-0

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Sight Group Images, +5 to PER Rolls, Increased Radius (4" Radius; +1/2) (37 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Only to Create Light (-1). Total cost: 12 points.*

#### Options:

- 1) **Level 2 Diameter:** Increase Radius to 16" (+1). 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 3) **Level 3 Diameter:** Increase Radius to 64" (+1 1/2). 62 Active Points; total cost 21 points.
- 4) **Level 2 Projection:** Add Increased Maximum Range (925"; +1/4). 44 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 5) **Level 3 Projection:** Add Increased Maximum Range (4625"; +1/2). 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 6) **Beacon Mode:** Remove Increased Radius (+1/2), and add MegaScale (1" = 1 km; +1/4) and No Range (-1/2). 31 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

### ULTRAVIOLET FILTER

**Description:** This sensor is essentially a setting for the ship's visual sensors to detect light in the infrared portion of the spectrum. This usually has no purpose beyond scientific interest, other than noting the amount of ultraviolet light (including the potentially harmful UV-B range) reaching a planet's surface. However, nearly every veteran sensor operator has at least one story about how his ship's ultraviolet filter served a tactical purpose.

**Penalty:** -1/-0

**END Cost:** 1

**Game Information:** *Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group) (5 Active Points); Affected As Radio As Well As Sight Sense Group (-1/4), Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 2 points.*

#### Options:

- 1) **Level 2 Resolution Enhancement:** Add +6 to PER. 11 Active Points; total cost 4 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Resolution Enhancement:** Add +12 to PER. 17 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 3) **Ultraviolet Tracking:** Add Tracking. 10 Active points; total cost 4 points.
- 4) **Electronic-Level Ultraviolet Scan:** Though Ultraviolet Perception normally applies to the sight, this sensor can be configured to detect ultraviolet light via the same electromagnetic sensitivity common to other sensors in this list. Change Sight Group to Radio Group, and remove Affected As Radio As Well As Sight Sense Group (-1/4). Total cost: 2 points. (The cost difference starts to become notable at Level 3 Resolution Enhancement and higher.)

### VISUAL MAGNIFIER

**Description:** The ship's sensors can magnify a visual image up to 1,000 times its normal size. This is useful primarily for viewing potentially hazardous or suspicious objects, such as enemy ships emitting a distress beacon, at a distance.

**Penalty:** -3/-0

**END Cost:** 3

**Game Information:** *Telescopic (+20 versus Range Modifier) for Sight Sense Group (30 Active Points); Affected As Radio As Well As Sight Sense Group (-1/4), Costs Endurance (-1/2), OIF Bulky (-1). Total cost: 11 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Level 2 Magnification:** Magnification is up to 1 million times normal size. Increase Telescopic to +40 versus Range Modifier. 60 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 2) **Level 3 Magnification:** Magnification is up to 1 billion times normal size. Increase Telescopic to +60 versus Range Modifier. 90 Active Points; total cost 33 points.
- 3) **Limited Spectrum Magnification:** Change to Telescopic for Normal Sight. 20 Active Points; total cost 7 points.



# Terran Empire Fun and Games by Tom Rafalski

## SOME LIGHTEARTED IDEAS FOR WHEN PLAYERS WANT TO BE SILLY

Trillions of inhabitants of the Terran Empire face a daily struggle against boredom. When the basic requirements for survival are no longer a concern, intelligent creatures will devise means of creating diversions ranging from the sublime to the outright absurd. Here's a small sample of what you can do, should you get a break from chasing space pirates, saving an entire planet from cataclysmic destruction, or having to fill out Imperial Police Form A-92135423 (Expense Report for Collateral Damage Compensation) in triplicate.

## Sports

### FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

As the human species expanded out past their own world, it was inevitable that they would bring along their most cherished culture such as philosophy, music, the visual arts, and a particularly popular social rite in which a small spherical object is kicked past an opponent who is attempting to guard a very large net while thousands of drunken spectators threaten (and occasionally perform) violent acts upon other spectators, players, referees, innocent bystanders, and entire ecosystems. During the Terran Empire, football (soccer) is played in both the original format and in a wide variety of derivations. The two most popular are Chaos Ball and Zero Gravity Football.

### CHAOS BALL

Any fan from the early 21st century would feel right at home watching Chaos Ball once he becomes used to sitting next to someone who looks like his pet cat, and the person who looks like his pet cat sitting next to something that the cat coughed up. The field is slightly larger (125% of current dimensions on each side), there are 15 players on each side, and there are new standardized rules regarding non-humanoid players. As a matter of fact, the winner of the last Combined Interstellar Chaos Ball Cup was Manchester United (Fully owned by China Football, Inc., a subsidiary of Centaur Stage Studios)

The major difference between Chaos Ball and football lies in the sphere itself. Numerous sensors and internal mechanisms detect the impact from a player's kick and randomly shift both the center of gravity of the ball and elasticity of the surface. Players frequently knock themselves out or find the ball almost stuck to their skull when attempting to "head" the football, and quite a number of fans argue that

the ball's elasticity reduces to that of a beanbag more often than should happen with true randomness. The ball also has built-in light sensors which activate luminescent materials on alternate panels and allow the game to be played in a "night field" mode along with glowing field lines and goalposts.

In order to keep the game legitimate, the species which manufactures the official professional Chaos Balls and act as referees in all games are strictly prohibited from any financial gain other than equipment sales and a percentage of ticket receipts. Rumors of frequent fund transfers from suspected Clone Mob and Hzeel bank accounts to referee bank accounts have never been substantiated by any governmental agency or organization and are, of course, pure speculation. (Psst... My buddy the ref told me that Mars is going to take the cup this year. He said that while we were cruising in his new LuxaCruise Personal Space Yacht.)

### ZERO GRAVITY SOCCER

Heavily inspired by the classical Ancient American novel *Ender's Game*, Zero-G Soccer games take place inside of huge spacecraft which travels from star system to star system much in the same way as traveling circuses of old. The playing volume is a cube of 500 feet on a side, and the participants use small jet packs or innate natural abilities to move around the field of play. There can be as many as four teams competing in the same game, with each goal occupying its own corner.

The goals are large hollow half-spheres 10 m in diameter. At the beginning of play, each goal is set into a slow rotation which it keeps during the entire duration of the game (when players or the ball impact the goal, small force fields realign it.) The lip of the goal is ringed with numerous sensors, and a goal is scored when at least one half of the ball breaks the entry plane.

Players may hit the ball with any part of their body, including their hands. At no time may any player other than the goalies bring the ball to a complete stop or in any way clutch, scoop, or hold the sphere. Unlike the current game, zero gravity football has a two minute shot clock and penalty boxes for incidents of unnecessary roughness.

### BEAT POET PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING

In Beat Poet Professional Wrestling, insanely pumped up athletes wearing spandex and black berets attempt to out wrestle each other using various locks, smashes, grabs, and

pins while continually spouting philosophical diatribes about the futile and meaningless mess that is modern society. Bouts take place inside of rings located in very large coffee shops and the combatants' managers play bongo drums. The commentators generally have Ph.D.'s in Destructive Poetical Aesthetics.

The wrestlers must wear black berets at all times (both inside and outside of the ring), they must consume at least 250 mL of espresso before every match, and they must pass a psychological screening for severe depression. Wrestlers are allowed to use "medicines" to induce severe depression, should they not have a natural inclination toward it. Training in the sport takes years of physical workout and countless hours of reviewing the old masters such as Blue Boy Bruiser, The Disheartened Demon, and of course, The Angstinator (Made immortal by pounding The Miserable Mauler with a red wheelbarrow [see poem by William Carlos Williams] that "just happened to be there" and thus winning the First Interstellar BPPW Title Pen Match.) Most have master's degrees in creative poetry. The average therapy time for a retired wrestler is 20 years.

During a match, everything the wrestlers say must rhyme. Sharp writing implements such as pens or pencils are not allowed in the ring; however the use of thick hardcover tomes of poetry and scalding hot cups of Mocha as weapons is acceptable and even encouraged. The contestant may lose a match by being pinned for three seconds, or failing to rhyme three times during the match. Use of the K'tonorange language is strictly prohibited, since every word in it rhymes with "orange."

### TELEPATHIC FOOSBALL

Players don helmets that read their thoughts and direct small force field generators in this redux of the classic tavern game. Certain models of telepathic foosball reshape the petals to whatever a players thinks they should look like, and players are advised to focus completely on the game and play *before* imbibing alcoholic beverages or other similar substances. Special safeguards prevent against harmful feedback to the players.

The only physical components of the game are the ball, the board, and the goals. This means that incredible speeds are sometimes reached between players of considerable skill, and while bystander injuries are not unheard of, it is best to check the integrity of the safety fields before each game. The design of the force field generators limits the screens to areas on the playing field.

### TOTAL IMMERSION VIRTUAL REALITY

The highest-paid and most popular celebrities in a galaxy are TIVR actors. Many of these actors are virtual constructs built by multimedia conglomerates and based upon amalgams of real-life performers (As in the movie *S1m0ne* from New Line Cinema, 2002). Not surprisingly, the most popular environments in TIVR are medieval fantasy settings in which magic exists, and life is relatively simple. Cases of users losing touch with reality are more common in some species and cultural subgroups than in others.

### Games of Chance

#### QUANTUM ROULETTE

Quantum roulette involves the use of scientific apparatus similar to scanning tunneling microscopes and a quickly rotating disk of superconductive material. An electrical charge is pulsed into the disk and bets are made on the final approximate location of the largest amount of charge. Quantum Roulette is best played at fully accredited establishments (Although there are skeptics who denounce all of the games as a swindle and that the "solution" to the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle is nothing but a crock.)

#### 92 DECK TERRAN 18 CARD STUD

92 Cards have replaced the traditional 52 card poker deck and hands have increased to 18 cards. The percentage of clueless players who THINK they know what they're doing has remained constant while the entire population of humanity has grown considerably; this is much to the benefit of those who actually know what they're doing. The best place to play (ie. Loose money) at 18 Card Stud is New Las Vegas.

#### HZEEL POKER

Everyone knows that a Hzeel will cheat and use marked cards. Hzeel Poker is played with a deck of cards which are officially marked, and every player can see what cards are in the other player's hands. This is perfectly normal.

The difficulty in playing Hzeel Poker lies in the fact that there are 4,127 unique cards in a deck, a hand consists of 25 cards, and there are more than 30,000 possible hands along seven different lines of priority which crisscross each other multiple times. Certain species (most notably Androids) are prohibited from playing Hzeel Poker since they are spoilsports. The use of computational aides is strictly prohibited and the rule is generally enforced via violent means.

The English version of the Complete and Unabridged Book of Rules and Hands of Hzeel Poker in printed form using 1/2" margins and 9 point font on letter-sized paper is more than 6,125 pages and capable of stopping most



modern firearm rounds, which makes this the second largest gaming book in the Terran Empire (The largest is, of course, *The Complete DOJ HERO* which has been known to protect readers from tactical nukes.) All major and most minor interstellar passenger carriers require customers who wish to take the printed version to buy an additional ticket per copy due to cargo limitations since the ship's FTL drive has to account for the additional mass.

### Extreme Sports

#### ASTEROID DEMOLITION DERBY

---

Take two small asteroids, several pieced together rocket motors, a lot of alcohol, and even more paint, put them all together, and you get asteroid demolition Derby. The Imperial Navy has had considerable difficulty enforcing regulation of this sport, and it is advisable to maintain a distance of at least .75 AU from the point of impact and to keep fields at maximum power for up to 1.5 AU for several months after a competition. Several defense manufacturers sponsor their own teams and use the competitions as test beds for new shield technologies.

#### REENTRY SKYSURFING

---

This is the third most dangerous sport in the Terran Empire and the most dangerous one with an official organization. Most betting on skysurfing matches are "ghoul pools."

Participants leave the confines of a nice, safe spaceship and proceed to reenter a planet the hard way. Wearing exoskeleton-enhanced spacesuits designed to protect them from the extreme heat and pressure fluctuations of reentry, surfers ride on extremely large transparent delta wing "boards." The athletes perform most of the acrobatic maneuvers during the initial entry stage (usually involving "bouncing" off the upper atmosphere) and after the most extreme stage of reentry.

#### BLACK HOLE SLINGSHOT

---

Anyone found competing in this sport can be declared legally insane in all but a handful of stellar systems.

Ships protected by powerful anti-gravity shields use the pull of a singularity to propel themselves to incredible near light velocities. The rules are very simple and there are two possible winners: the ship that gets the closest to the event horizon without being destroyed, and the ship that accelerates to the highest relative speed in normal space without being destroyed. Given that quantum fluctuations occur on massive scales around black holes, 'matches' with no winner occur frequently. Black Hole Slingshot is the only known sports in the

universe in which participants who survive sometimes arrive home from a contest before it begins or a century after they left that morning.

### Additional Sports

#### SPACE ELEVATOR BUNGEE JUMPING

---

One small step outside, one giant bounce of fun!

#### SUPERNOVA YACHT RACES

---

Not you're father's solar sailing!

### Places of Interest

#### THE NATURAL SPACE ELEVATOR-ARCH OF MARANTON IV

---

The most bizarre and the largest known natural crystal formation in the known galaxy, the spectacular arch reaches from the planets smallest moon to the surface. The bridge is aligned at both ends of the magnetic poles of both the planet and the moon. The most widely accepted theory is that the moon was initially much larger than it currently is and that the "arms" of the arch "grew" from the moon itself; this is supported by analysis which places the composition of the moon and the arches as nearly identical. The dynamics of the star Maranton are one of the most studied and best predicted since large solar flares can cause spectacular light shows which draw in even more tourists than normal (The Great Flare Years of 2501-2503 being the most memorable.)

#### JUPITER'S GREAT RED SPOT

---

This mysterious weather pattern on the Jovian planets still defies all investigation. Countless probes and manned vessels have been lost in this great storm while attempting to discover what, if anything, lies at the heart of it. Even attempt extremely powerful long-range sensors failed to bring back conclusive evidence. Rumors abound of ancient floating cities with fabulous treasures, but all who have returned from within the storm register such high neural disruptions due to extreme magnetic forces that few take them seriously.

#### THE ORION NEBULA

---

Newlyweds of old couples are the most frequent visitors on this weeklong tour (The most popular honeymoon baby name to this day remains "Orion" for boys and "Nebula" for girls.) Most visitors do not realize the violent and cataclysmic forces which shape and mold these beautiful stellar formations.

There have been several attempts to introduce artificial structures to increase the number of tourists (such as gambling casinos, large personal estate statios, and even gargantuan billboards.) All have been destroyed within a

week or two of completion by interplanetary eco-terrorists, and the pay scale for working security in the area is now so high that even multi-stellar interests have all but given up on the concept.

### THE ARTIFICIAL RINGS OF BROCHDARN VII

During the first big surge of interstellar colonization, a small group of extremely hard-working, wealthy, and innovative individuals settled Brochdarn VII. By the fifth generation, the populace was almost exclusively one of lazy billionaires who inherited all of their wealth and never had to lift a finger nor use a brain cell. The sixth generation began that way, but the entire planet went broke when the business managers stole 90% of the money and moved to Venwordien IV.

The “hot ticket” in interstellar tourism at the time was the grand tour of Saturn's rings. The residents of Brochdarn VII decided to use woe left of their considerable fortunes to build a ring system of their own that would out shine Saturn and make the planet the new tourist spot of the galaxy. The interweaving rings are a truly magnificent example of stellar engineering and what happens when a committee does aesthetic design. The multiple intersecting rings have various polka dot, plaid, pastel, and neon patterns. This leaves an impression of both awe and incredibly disturbing tackiness.

### NEW LAS VEGAS

It seems that whenever human settle areas with no resources or means of supporting the population, they inevitably build casinos. These casinos, in turn, draw a seemingly inexhaustible supply of retirees, con artists, and those with no discernible ability to comprehend statistical probability. This has made many on New Las Vegas extremely wealthy and some have moved to Brochdarn VII. This only proves that people never learn.

Terran 18 Card Stud and Blackjack are the two most popular games, with 30-sided craps a close third. The Spinward Spinster serves the best buffet. Be sure to catch The Aquarius's underwater ballet and heavy metal rocket concerts.

### THE DYSON-SPHERE MALL

No one knows the exact beginnings of the largest artificial structure in the galaxy. It is thought that there was initially a small group of five entrepreneurs who opened up their own shopping center in orbit around a Terran colony planet sometime at the end of the Zenovoure War because of outrageous on-planet taxation and rental fees. Since their prices for imported goods were so much cheaper than their planet based competition, the spaceport enterprise

quickly expanded and its reputation grew to the point where people were taking shopping trips for all other solar systems just to shop there. Records indicate that the station was taken out of the planetary orbit around 20 years after its founding and was placed into solar orbit. From there the station continued to expand until food courts, clothing boutiques, and music stores surrounded the entire star. The sunward inside of the structure is filled with solar collectors and immense farms to feed the population.

Several billion teenagers inhabit this facility at any given time. The Dyson-Mall is a common hiding spot for those fleeing military conscription on their home worlds. This is ironic since most of them end up drafted into the mall's security corps. A majority of the workers at the mall live on the station and many have never left.

Numerous hostile enemy fleets have attacked the station. Those invaders that managed to get past the multiple layers of defense cannons and force fields have all been defeated by the Omega Sale Protocol. Most end up spending a very large percentage of their entire civilizations' GDP on consumer goods. Several Imperial battle plans call for diverting hostile fleets into the path of the Dyson-Mall.

### THE RUINS OF RJUNUV'TUV

Who or what created the ruins on a long-fizzled brown dwarf star remains a mystery to Terran scientists to this day. The energy which currently reaches the planet's surface is only capable of supporting the most primitive and energy-efficient life forms. The other planets of this solar system are in the process of being mined for a variety of raw materials.

The best age estimate of the newest ruins date them back 3 billion years. What's even more amazing is that those artifacts appear to be the remnants of *other archaeologists* who were excavating the site more than 5 billion years ago. No significant technologies have yet been unearthed at either the old or new sites (they both appear to be around ATRI-11.)

GM's Note: The 5 billion year old site is yet another dig. There are numerous naturally occurring semi-crystalline structures on the planet which look like they are of intelligent design. In reality, no sentient species has ever actually inhabited the planet other than for archaeological purposes. The artifacts are the rubbish and left-behinds of other science expeditions.



# Time Warp by Patrick Pena

Television, movies, and literature are filled with stories of time travel. Media has, in fact, become the catalyst for dozens of theories concerning time travel. The idea that someone might be able to travel into the past and change something, or travel into the future and see where it leads us, sparks the imagination like few ideas can.

Most scientists agree that traveling forward in time is theoretically possible. There are even those that argue that traveling backwards in time is possible. Carl Sagan has said that he believed time travel will be possible one day, but even he would not conjecture what effects traveling into the past might have. For now, time travel rests in the realms of theory and science fiction.

While science has not advanced to the point that time travel is possible, the *HERO System* has.

## Time Travel vs. Time Manipulation

Time travel is a fairly easy concept to understand, but the concept of time manipulation is a little more elusive. For the purposes of this article, time manipulation is considered to be altering the flow of time in a given area so that it passes faster or slower.

**Example:** The archvillain Clockwork is sitting in his lab watching would-be heroes defeating one trap after another as they make their way through his lair. Realizing they will eventually succeed, Clockwork decides it is time for Plan B.

Just before the heroes break through his door, Clockwork uses his mutant ability to manipulate time, to speed up his personal passage of time. As the door opens, the heroes see a blur of movement, as a particle cannon seems to assemble itself from spare parts in the rooms. A moment later, Clockwork starts laughing as the heroes dive back into the hallway in an attempt to dodge the newly assembled particle cannon's blasts.

Most superhero campaigns can handle time manipulation powers without changing the campaign's feeling or scope. Time manipulation might even be appropriate for high fantasy and space opera games. After all, in the *HERO System*, time manipulation is just a special effect. Let's take Clockwork's rapid assembly of a particle cannon. This could be represented by a major transformation. He transformed appropriate electronic parts into a working

weapon. The effect could also be accomplished with Energy Blast. In this case you would add Limitations like Extra Time to Start Power and perhaps Only While In His Lab. In either case, neither power is overly earth-shaking.

Time travel, on the other hand, will completely change the feel and scope of a campaign. One time travel power can totally derail a game, if the GM is not ready to handle the various implications that time travel could have. In fact, by adding one time travel power to a game, it is likely that the entire genre of the game will be changed. GMs who are ready for this can add an exciting element to their campaigns.

One important thing to realize is that just because you, the GM, allow a time manipulation power that does not mean you have to let your players have time travel abilities as well. The inverse is also true. Just because you let a science officer on your player's star ship figure out how to slingshot around a black hole so the ship could travel back in time, does not mean you have to let him be able to speed time up so that the crew reacts faster than humanly possible.

## Time Travel Theories

As a GM, considering a time travel campaign, it is important that you understand how you want time to work. Once you have decided that, then you need to decide if the characters in the game have the correct ideas on how time works. There are dozens of theories concerning the nature of time. Each one presents interesting plot ideas for a creative GM. Add the possibility that the character's theories concerning time travel are incorrect and you can create an enjoyable, suspenseful time travel campaign.

### REVERSE TIME TRAVEL IS IMPOSSIBLE

Many scientists hold this belief to be true. One of the key theories behind time travel is Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. It basically states that time is relative to the speed you are traveling. Light travels at around 186,000 miles per second. The closer one gets to light speed the more time slows. This is where the relative part comes in. For the person traveling at close to light speed, nothing seems to change. For outside observers, a year could pass while the person traveling near light speed took a single breath.

So, most scientists agree that it is possible to travel forward in time – but it would be a one-way trip. The reason is most scientists do not believe it is possible to travel at light speed. According to them, as you approached light speed, matter would become energy.

## RAPID ASSEMBLY PARTICLE CANNON

This power is built using the Obvious Accessible Focus to represent the large amount of parts needed to construct the large cannon. It takes a full phase to build the cannon, but after it is built it takes no extra time to fire it.

EB 12d6 (60 Active Points);  
OAF Bulky  
(-1½), Extra  
Time (Full  
Phase to set up  
the power -¼),  
16 Charges (-0).  
Total Cost: 21  
points

## TIME MACHINE

Extra-Dimensional Movement (any date and time) (60 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½). Total Cost: 24 points

## REVERSE TIME TRAVEL IS POSSIBLE

There are a handful of scientists that believe traveling back in time is possible. According to them, reverse time travel could be accomplished by traveling faster than light speed. The theory is that if anything could travel faster than light speed, time would appear to flow backwards for that person.

If you, the GM, decide that reverse time travel is possible then you need to decide the effect of reverse time travel. Can history be changed? To what extent can history be changed? What are the consequences of changing history? Is timelinear or dimensional? Before a GM considers these questions, it is important to realize that there are no right or wrong answers. All that matters is how the answers affect the story line and the feel of the game.

The first question that should be considered is, "Is timelinear or dimensional?"

## MULTIDIMENSIONAL TIME TRAVEL

The theory behind dimensional time is that time consists of numerous and perhaps even infinite dimensions. This can be a lot of fun. With infinite dimensions would come infinite histories and infinite possibilities – not to mention infinite work for the GM. Two other theories accompany this one. The first is the theory that time travel is always a one-way trip.

**Example:** If Doctor Time creates a time machine and travels into the past of his timeline, the moment he landed in the past, he would be responsible for creating a new timeline – one where he had traveled into the past. He could change the future and the future of those in the new timeline, but to the people he left behind it would always seem as if he just disappeared. This is because when he traveled forward again he would be traveling along the new timeline instead of the old.

The second theory is that if time is multidimensional and consists of near infinite timelines, there must also be near infinite alternate earths.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGING HISTORY

There is no reason to choose multidimensional time travel if you have not already decided that time can be changed. The only thing left for you to do is to decide what are the consequences of traveling through time and what are the consequences of changing history. The primary consequence that we are going to look at here is what causes the characters to change timelines.

As mentioned before, you could decide that the very act of time travel causes the players to create a new timeline separate from the one they had been in. Perhaps the characters know this and perhaps they don't. The discovery could lead to a campaign where the characters are trying to get home to their own timeline.

If time travel itself does not cause a shift in timelines, then you need to decide what does. Would revealing yourself as a time traveler cause you to end up in a new timeline? What about killing someone? What if that someone was the character's grandfather? The most lenient version would be that they only end up in a new timeline if they do something that changes the overall, large-scale course of history. As you are deciding this, it is especially important to decide if the characters are aware of the possible consequences. Them knowing that they could end up heading down a different timeline but not knowing exactly what they can get away with without changing timelines can make for a useful plot device.

**Example:** Captain Chronos goes back in time to try and stop an unknown metahuman-caused disaster from occurring in past. Realizing that he could cause the timeline to fracture, he is very careful about what he reveals to the people he comes in contact with, and very careful about what he does. After all he wants to change his timeline, not create a new one.

### LINEAR TIME TRAVEL

The theory behind linear time is that time is single dimensional. Linear time travel has several advantages that make it easy for the GM to run and fun for the players to play. The first advantage for the GM is that he only has to come up with one timeline. If he allows the characters to change history, he will need to modify his timeline, but this is almost always easier than creating a new timeline each time that character changes the past.

#### THE EXTENT OF CHANGING HISTORY

This is perhaps the most important aspect. The classic example used when asking this question is – What if a time traveler goes back in time and kills his father? There are two things to consider when asking this question:

How malleable is time? This is important whether you are using a linear time format or a dimensional time format. The most rigid view held is that even if you could travel in time you would be a mere observer. Despite how this sounds at first, it would not totally strip the time traveler of power.

**Example:** Doctor Time decides to go treasure hunting. Using his time machine to go back to July 13, 1733, he watches the progress of the *Nueva Espana* fleet as it leaves Havana, laden with gold. As the hurricane strikes the fleet, Doctor Time busily charts ships' last locations so that when he returns to his time, the ships of gold will be easy to find.

You could also decide that a person's destiny cannot be changed. The time traveler could see his father and talk to his father, but could not kill his father or stop him from dying at his appointed time. Although not a limiting as making the time traveler just an observer, this still strips the character of much of the potential power that could be had with time travel. If you go this route, I suggest allowing characters to try and alter people's destiny. Doing this can create a unique roleplaying opportunity. What keeps them from succeeding? If done correctly, this can be great fun, but you need to know your players. Are they going to get frustrated and become disinterested in the game because they can't do what they want their characters to do or will they use it as a roleplaying catalyst?

Of course you could allow the characters to change anything in history. A lot of the romanticism and fascination concerning time travel centers on this very possibility. Changing history should not be overly easy or it takes away from some of the excitement and adventure. Make your players work for it.

#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGING HISTORY

Changing time should always have consequences. Whether the consequences are beneficial or not is totally up to you. How you handle this aspect of time travel has a huge effect on the feel of the game. Do the characters have to be careful how they interact in order to avoid making inadvertent changes to history? How hard is it to avoid changing history? Does history tend to fix itself? Perhaps your players killed Hitler just to find that someone worse showed up in his place. Other common consequences are causing dangerous time paradoxes that threaten to bring an end to time, and being hunted by some protector of time. The protector could be anything from time police to the incarnation of time.

#### MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

As with most things, there is no single right answer. Consider the story you want to tell. Consider what your players would enjoy. If time travel is going to be part of an ongoing campaign, consider the effects that your decisions will have on your campaign world. If you choose well, you will find yourself involved in an enjoyable game.

## TIME ENHANCED RECOVERY

Aid Recovery 3d6, Delayed Return Rate (5 points per Minute, +1/4) (37 Active Points). Total Cost: 37 points

## Time Manipulation

Time manipulation is the ability to alter the flow of time in select areas or for specific things so that it moves faster or slower than normal. The *HERO System* treats time manipulation as a special effect. As special effects go, a player would be hard pressed to find one with more potential versatility. Time manipulation can be represented by dozens of powers.

### AID

By changing how time passes for himself or another character, a time manipulator could make someone temporarily super-fast. Aids to SPD and Running are excellent ways to build this ability. If the time manipulator is always fast, or if he cannot cause others to react faster, then it would be cheaper and more reliable to buy extra Speed and Running Characteristics.

If a time manipulating character wanted to, he might also alter the flow of time so he could recover from fatigue faster than humanly possible. Recovery Aid would be one way to do this. The following guidelines are suggested:

- (1) Recovery Aid is limited to 1-3d6 Character Points of Aid.
- (2) Characters cannot increase the maximum number of Character Points that they can add to Recovery.

### CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Using time manipulation to cause random fluctuations in the passage of time, a time manipulator could make it difficult for everyone in the area to function. Change Environment is the best way to build this power. This power should be built to cause penalties to CV, Movement, and perhaps some Agility Skills. At the GM's discretion, this power could be built with the advantage Selective Targeting. This way the character could allow teammates to be unaffected by his time tampering.

### CHARACTERISTICS

Increased DEX and SPD could both be viable purchases for a time manipulation character. If SPD is put into a Multipower, the character could be designed to become more dexterous as he speeds up. This would be accomplished by taking the Linked Limitation for any extra DEX that is purchased. This would cause DEX to increase in proportion to the amount of SPD being added by the Multipower.

## CLAIRSENTIENCE

Precognition and Retrocognition are both "textbook" time manipulation powers. These powers do have some of the same effects as time travel powers. A GM should be very careful about allowing a PC to take these powers. They can greatly affect the overall feel of the game.

**Example:** *Experience History:*

Clairsentience, Retrocognition (Sight and Hearing Groups) (50 Active Points), Retrocognition Only (-1). Total Cost: 25

## DESOLIDIFICATION

Desolidification can be used to represent a time manipulator changing time so he can dodge almost anything. The only required limitation to build this power would be the *-1/2 Can Not Pass Through Solid Objects* Limitation.

**Example:** *Time Enhanced Dodge:*

Desolidification (affected by light speed attacks and Area Of Effect attacks) (40 Active Points); Only To Protect Against Attacks (-1/2), Increase Endurance Cost (x2 End; -1/2). Total Cost: 20 points

## DRAIN

If a time manipulator could cause someone to become super-fast, it stands to reason he might also be able to slow him down. SPD and DEX Drains are one way to do this.

**Example:** *Time Distortion Ray Gun:*

Drain SPD 5d6, Ranged (+1/2) (75 Active Points); OAF (-1), 16 Charges (-0). Total Cost: 37 points

## ENERGY BLAST

A temporal flux beam could cause time in a small part of the target's body to stop or speed up a thousandfold, causing damage to the target from the stress of being partially pulled out of time. Imagine one part of the targets body aging rapidly while the rest of the body remains the same age.

## ENHANCED SENSES

Although most Enhanced Senses are not appropriate for a time manipulator, there are two notable exceptions. The first is Enhanced Perception. By altering how he perceives the flow of time, a time manipulator could slow things down so he could notice something that happen so fast that others might miss it totally.

The second is Increased Arc of Perception. A time manipulator could alter time so that he could look back and forth so rapidly that he would be able to see in all directions at once.



### ENTANGLE

---

Entangle could be used to represent stopping someone in time, but Transformation is probably a better choice to represent that effect.

### EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT

---

The *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* mentions using this power to allow for stopping time. This would permit a character to stop time, change positions, and start time again. This allows for a few things that teleportation cannot. A Character who stops time would have extra time to consider what was going on around him. He would also be able to walk around and get a better perspective on what was going on.

What Extra-Dimensional Movement does not allow for is moving things around. Other powers would be needed in order to do this. At the GM's discretion, a character could be allowed to open a door so that he could get somewhere but the door would be closed again when the Character returned to normal time. Teleportation *Usable on Others*, or Energy Blast could in conjunction with Extra-Dimensional Movement be used to accomplish some of the more famous time stopping tricks, like placing someone in the middle of an expressway or moving a bolder so it falls once the character starts time again.

**Example:** *Stop Watch:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (a duplicate dimension where time does not pass) (20 Active Points); OAF (-1). (total cost: 10) **plus** Teleportation 10", Position Shift, Usable as Attack (defense is being too heavy to be picked up) (+1), Transdimensional (+½). (total cost: 62); Total Cost: 72 points

### FORCE FIELD & FORCE WALL

---

A time manipulator could build a Force Field as a temporal field around the character. Inside the field, time would pass normally but anything traveling through the field would have to be powerful enough to overcome a thin barrier where time is stopped.

### HEALING

---

Rapid healing could be accomplished by causing months of natural healing to occur in just a few moments.

### IMAGES AND INVISIBILITY

---

By themselves these powers do not make sense for a time manipulation power, but together these two powers can be used in conjunction to build an extremely useful and interesting power. By altering how light interacts with time, a time manipulator could cause everyone to see his actions several seconds after he actually performed them.

**Example:** *Time Distortion:* Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe. (total cost: 30) **plus** Sight Images, -6 to PER Rolls (28 Active Points); Set Effect (the character performing the actions he performed 1 phase earlier; -1). (total cost: 14); Total Cost: 44 points

### KILLING ATTACKS

---

A Killing Attack could be given the special effect of rapid aging. Linking a Transformation power to this type of attack would be appropriate. A Killing Attack could also be used to represent stopping time passage for someone's heart, effectively stopping their heart from beating.

### LIFE SUPPORT

---

Life Support: Longevity is a classic time manipulation power. Extended Breathing, Diminished Eating, and Diminished Sleeping could also be rationalized as acceptable time manipulation powers.

### MISSILE DEFLECTION AND REFLECTION

---

These powers could be given a couple of different special effects having to do with time manipulation. A time manipulator could alter his perception of time so that he could see a speeding bullet well enough to hit it with a metal baton. In contrast, a time manipulator could just stop time for the projectile, causing it to hang motionless in air.

### RUNNING

---

Increasing Running for a time manipulator does not take much of an explanation. If this power is taken, the character should probably have increased SPD and perhaps DEX as well.

**SKILLS**

Buying a Skill as time manipulation does not make sense, but buying Skill Levels does. A time manipulator could easily get a bonus to a Skill for taking extra time without anyone perceiving them taking any extra time at all.

**Example:** *Taking Time Out:* +2 Overall Skill Levels (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-1/2), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 End, -1/2), Only For Skills That Could Benefit From Taking Extra Time (-1/4). Total Cost: 9 points

**SUPPRESS**

By buying Suppress Recovery as a *No Normal Defense*, and *Reduced Endurance (0 END)*, you can build a power that causes a target to stand motionless and awake stuck in a single moment for a long period of time. A day's worth of time seems to pass by in the matter of just a few seconds. When the target emerges from the effect he is so exhausted that he cannot seem to recover from fatigue.

By altering the flow of time around a target a time manipulator could cause that target to react much slower than normal. Using Suppress to accomplish this allows the time manipulator to keep the target moving slowly as long as he is willing to pay the endurance.

**Example:** *Three Day Moment:* Suppress Recovery 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 End, +1/2), Uncontrolled (removed by sleep or taking a powerful stimulant; +1/2), NND (defense is LS: Diminished Sleep; -1) (60 Active Points); Cost Endurance to Turn On (-1/4). Total Cost: 48 points

**TELEPORTATION**

As mentioned earlier, Teleportation with the *Usable as an Attack* Advantage can be used to represent a time manipulator stopping time long enough to pick someone up and move them. Teleportation can also be used to simulate short time stops that the character uses to move. This would mostly be used during combat. Extra-Dimensional Movement does a much better job of simulating a time manipulator's ability to stop time and move about in most other circumstances.

**TRANSFORM**

There are large arrays of time manipulation effects that can be accomplished using Transformation. Two of these effects are rapid aging and rapid assembly. Rapid aging can be accomplished by a Major Transformation that changes the target into an older version of itself. Rapid assembly would work the same. It would transform appropriate materials into something else. For instance, a cook with rapid assembly could cook a four-course meal in a matter of minutes.

**Example:** *Quick Meal:* 9d6 Minor Transform (unprepared food into a cooked meal) (90 Active Points); Limited Target (unprepared food; -1/4), OAF Bulky (Stocked Kitchen; -1 1/2), Extra Time (one minute; -1 1/2), Requires a PS: Cooking Skill Roll (-0). Total Cost: 20 points



# The Walls Have Ears by Tom Rafalski

## A Star System and Species for Use in the *Terran Empire* Setting

### CONTRUSTRATUS SYSTEM (STAR SYSTEM 3745238)

#### Single Star System

**Type:** G5V

**Brightness:** 70% of Sol

**Mass:** 0.9 of Sol

**Planets in System:** 10

**Planets in Green Zone:** 10

Nestled coreward and anti-rimward of Earth, the Contrustratus system contains a solitary and normal star with ten planets in a tight configuration between 0.7 AU and 8.0 AU from the stellar core. Extrasolar objects are uncommon in the system but occasionally wander through. The star is about half-way through its lifespan.

The first world of the Contrustratus system (native name Sicronia) is home to two native species, the Rosiot and the Silcasa. The two species share a symbiotic relationship, with the Rosiot acting as a “conduit” for the highly psychic Silcasa. This relationship and the existence of the Silcasa is unknown to the Terran Empire and the Malvans; only the Mandaarians know of what’s really going on in the Contrustratus system, and they’re not talking.

As far as the Terran Empire is concerned, the Contrustratus system is of little strategic value. The system has a nice collection of raw resources, but not enough to put the system at anything above a Low-To-Moderate priority level. The Empire might get around to sending an investigative team sometime within the century (or maybe earlier if some sort of emergency taxes the resources of much more affluent systems.)

Humans and other traders frequent the system to trade for Contrustratus Crystals. The intricate hollow jewels have become something of a collector’s item for the rich-and-even-richer, and fetch top credit in many systems. The traders have found gourmet foods are particularly attractive to the natives of Sicronia.

### SICRONIA (CONTRUSTRATUS I)

**Orbit:** 0.7 AU

**Type:** Rock-Iron

**Mass:** 1.1 Earth

**Density:** 0.9

**Diameter:** .95 Earth

**Gravity:** .982

**Day:** 22 Standard Hours

**Year:** 300 Standard Days (327.25 Local Days)

**Inclination:** 27 Degrees

**Primary Atmosphere:** Nitrogen, Oxygen (20%), Carbon-Dioxide

**Primary Hydrosphere:** Water

**Percentage Landmass:** 60%

**General Climate:** Desert and Temperate with Seasonal Extremes

“The native humanoids seem a very peaceful people and appear to get along very well; in fact, we didn’t see a single instance of arguments or fighting during our entire time on planet. They were very perceptive of our needs, and we often received things before asking. While technologically primitive, none appeared to want for anything and each lived in an opulent home made of wondrous materials. They also have some limited forms of mechanical transportation. We’ve managed to trade a number of relatively low-level technical gadgets for native crystals, the likes of which we’ve never seen before.”

— *Captain Trusrak T’Natiwi of the Trade Ship Neivunia, first ship to contact the Sicronians.*

The crystals are unique to Sicronia, and a small but healthy trade flourishes, as these gems are now highly desired amongst the richest of interstellar Terran society. Most trading ships note how quickly the Rosiot (the native humanoid species) appear to be developing technology, going from barely bronze-age equivalent crystal technologies to being on the verge of interstellar travel in less than a single human generation. This oddity has been reported to Imperial Intelligence, but has been “lost” in a pile of other reports.

Indeed, if the Mind Police had a hint of the nature of the actual dominant life form on Sicronia, they would cordon the system and send every available investigator on ships with Class 20 Displacer Drives running at full speed to the system at once.

The traders deal with the most advanced life form on Sicronia, but the Rosiot are not it. In fact, by themselves the Rosiot have evolved into little more than puppets and psychic conduits. Only a few “mutants” have the ability to think for themselves.

The real masters of Sicronia are silicon-based life forms which call themselves the Silcasa. They are the “opulent homes” and “transportation” from which the Rosiot are never more than a few meters away. The crystals traded with Terran merchants are the discarded chaff of Silcasa fetus cocoons. The “increasingly advanced machines and devices” of Sicronia are the equivalent of human teenagers and young adults, while the houses are the elders of the Silcasa race.

### THE MOONS OF SICRONIA

The moons of Sicronia orbit at 5 diameters and 11 diameters. The near moon exhibits considerable tidal effects upon the hydrosphere and most of the planet’s animal life show some sort of biological clock synchronized with its orbital period. Detailed close scanning of the surface might reveal what appears to be evidence of an alien structure once existing on the surface (An old abandoned and removed Mandaarin research post.). The far moon is much small and made most of highly magnetized iron. The second moon and it’s interaction with the planet’s internal magnetic dynamo cause occasional extreme electromagnetic storms.

### The Silcasa

*Silicon-Based Life Form*

*Direct ambient psychic/thermal/all electromagnetic energy*

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Silcasa evolved from creatures known as siocra that still exist on Sicronia. The siocra are crab-like creatures which live on the crust in extreme geothermal regions (Undersea vents, active volcanoes, hot springs, and such.) and underneath the crust in regions of the upper mantel. The siocra are able to thrive in both anaerobic and oxygenized environments and can withstand pressures and temperatures above the limits of the *Korundar*.

The genetic branch of the siocra which evolved into the Silcasa developed greater and greater mental capacity and achieved their current level of psychic abilities 25,324 Standard Years ago due to a random mutation. The mutation gives the Silcasa incredible mental powers, but they are only able to affect those abilities when the energy is “filtered” through a “conduit.” Without the Rosiot, the Silcasa lose all of their psychic powers.

The Silcasa have also evolved a much longer lifespan than the siocra and over the past several thousand years have purposefully developed another mutation which allows them to change their shape and form, to the extent that they are able to gain abilities far beyond any siocra (Shape Shift and various Powers as listed in the descriptions).

Silcasa grow in size by directly absorbing non-living material from their environment. Most of a Silcasa’s energy is also derived from direct absorption from environmental sources; however, Silcasa will often integrate into their structure cavities which are used to store various energy sources both passive (radioactive) and controlled (for example, two separate cavities into which hydrogen and oxygen are diffused from the environment using solar energy during periods of rest and which are used as a means of direct propulsion and as an energy source during times of action when mixed in a third open-ended cavity).

In terms of game mechanics, the default situation is such that the Silcasa’s energy absorption is passive in game terms, meaning that they do *not* exhibit a Transfer Power. Energy is absorbed in very low amounts, or they obtain and carry an internal power source (as in the case of adult Silcasa whose form is self-mobile).

### CULTURE

Silcasa spend 80% or more of their lives in direct psychic contact with one another. They have a very extensive symbiotic cultural memory, as indicated in their “remembering” exactly when the first psychic mutation occurred. While this situation leads to a much higher level of conformity than non-psychic species, it does not mean that they are a completely collective entity. (Special Note: The range of psychic abilities and the limit of how many Silcasa can communicate simultaneously with each other is left up to the GM’s discretion.) Silcasa become more individual as they age and gain more experience, and there are cases of older Silcasa feuding for a thousand years with each other.

Silcasa society is hierarchical, delimited by which phase a Silcasa is in, with the oldest phase bearing the top position. Within a phase, decisions affecting the entire community are made through a democratic-style debate process, but an individual Silcasa’s age heavily factors into its influence in the final determination. It is noted, however, that the second-tier adults often take charge during emergency situations.

It is important to consider that one of the worst crimes that a Silcasa can commit is the intentional harm or negligence of any Rosiot that it is “borrowing.” Silcasa realize how crucial the Rosiot are to their collective and individual health; indeed, they consider the Rosiot to be a

part of their body. While the Silcasa are able to manifest a huge variety of abilities, the ability itself is highly restricted with each transformation, and so they are unable to respond quickly to situations unlike the humanoid Rosiot who are much more adaptable. The Silcasa are able to justify this belief with the fact that no non-reactive independent thought has been detected from any Rosiot *susceptible to psychic powers* (see Rosiot description) within the past 7,000 years.

The Silcasa collectively deny that they are influenced by the Rosiot. This is not the case at all. While the Rosiot may not have independent higher-level cognition, they still have a wide range of emotional responses to both the environment and each other. These emotions are transmitted back to the Silcasa as sub-lingual messages.

### Game Mechanics

All Silcasa have the following Talents and Powers:

#### SILCASA ABILITIES

Absolute Time Sense  
 Eidetic Memory  
 Lightning Calculator  
 Speed Reading (When appropriate sense is part of form)  
 Universal Translator (Telepathic Based)  
*Silicoid Body:* LS (Safe Environment: High Radiation, High Pressure, Intense Heat, Vacuum, Extreme Electromagnetic Fields, Extended Lifespan), Variable PD/ED/MD and END Reserve  
*Silcasa Mind:* Telepathy, Mind Control, Mental Illusions, Mind Scan, Mind Link (Requires one or more Rosiot within 10" to channel through)

#### INFANT (0-50 YEARS OF AGE)

At birth, a Silcasa resembles two huge crystals, one inside the other. The interior crystal is the Silcasa fetus. The overall appearance is similar to what you might see in many lower-budgeted science fiction television shows or videos. At birth, a Silcasa has no self-awareness.

A Silcasa's sentience/consciousness slowly develops during this time from a purely reactionary set of responses to a fully self-aware being; the exact point at which the "I" is formed is uncertain even to the Silcasa. Throughout their infancy, the Silcasa learn to communicate with each other and develop the ability to conceive of original complex thoughts.

Silcasa infants remain within an Adult Silcasa's body until "Youth." There is always at

least one Rosiot under the control of the Adult next to the infant and a psychic bond between the parent and the infant constantly maintained. Often the first Rosiot granted to a young Silcasa is one of those who tended to it as an infant.

#### INFANT ABILITIES

0 STR  
 10-20 INT  
 10-20 EGO  
*Silicoid Body:* 5 defenses, END Reserve 20-40  
*Silcasa Mind:* Powers at 3d6

#### CHILDHOOD (51-500 YEARS OF AGE)

At some point soon after achieving full self-awareness, a Silcasa breaks out of its surrounding cocoon and enters into the next phase of its life. A Rosiot usually assists this process, but it is not necessary. At "birth," a Silcasa begins to take on the responsibilities and duties of a full member of society. With guidance from senior members, each Silcasa chooses a function and forms its body to be able to carry out that function. A few examples are doctoring to Rosiot and wildfire suppression.

And important step during childhood is a ritual known as "The Alone." In this ceremony, a Silcasa child is placed in a location at least 20' away from any Rosiot; it is the first time in its life that the Silcasa has been out of direct mental contact with others and the trauma that occurs can be severe and require months or even years of adjustment to the concept of being isolated from the thoughts of others. While an adult Silcasa is able to transmit its exact memories of "The Alone" to a child, it is ineffective due to the context (i.e. the child is still in direct mental contact with other Silcasa).

Silcasa children participate fully within their society. However, given their relative inexperience and limited memory base as compared to adults and elders, their decisions tend to be limited to local situations or they function mostly as "idea processors" instead of "concept generators."

#### ADULT (501-1,500 YEARS OF AGE)

Around the age of 500 years or so, a Silcasa develops its non-psychic capabilities to the point where it is capable of independent movement. Most develop a wanderlust at this point in their lives, desiring to see as much of the world (and beyond) as possible before their body mass grows to the point where they are effectively immobilized. As with everything else, a Silcasa will "bring along" at least one Rosiot with it at all times. The most recent discovery of the Silcasa is the ways in which to transform their capabilities to achieve space flight and to sustain an internal environment for "their" Rosiot.

Concurrently and reciprocally with this wanderlust is the point where a Silcasa's thoughts are the most flexible. Unlike most other species, a Silcasa is directly fed information during its infancy and youth; there is no need for the individual to be hyper-inquisitive. Upon reaching adulthood, a Silcasa has finally downloaded most of the collective knowledge of the entire species. Only as a fully-developed adult can a Silcasa *efficiently* add to the societal capacity and memory.

Adult Silcasa often find themselves at odds with the highly conservative tendencies of the rest of Silcasa society. To this point, this generalized frame of mind has helped the Silcasa to react appropriately to sudden changes while continuing on a steady socio-cultural path. It remains to be seen what effect the advent of spaceflight and the creation of far-distant colonies will have upon the Silcasa.

#### **ELDER: POST-REPRODUCTIVE (1500-5000 YEARS OF AGE.)**

At this age, the vast majority of a Silcasa's physical energy is devoted to maintenance of its sizable body and growth at a rate of up to several cubic feet of mass per year. Elder Silcasa are immobile, the only exception being the recent case of several beings who decided to stay in space after reaching a point where they could no longer safely reenter a planet. At a point generally around 4,000 years of age, a Silcasa's body will begin to fail for reasons that even the Silcasa have not yet determined. Once a Silcasa dies, it will begin to slowly deteriorate back into the environment; other Silcasa will not directly absorb parts of a dead Silcasa but do "feed" on basic compounds which have eroded from one.

A Silcasa at this stage is at the height of its psychic abilities. It is also at this point that it is physically most helpless, since it requires the assistance of Rosiot and even other Silcasa in order to acquire additional material to continue growing.

This mental and physical state produces a class of Silcasa which are less flexible in thought than an adult, but still more open-minded than the infants or children. Of all Silcasa, the elders are the most thoughtful and consistent in their approach. The long time span of this age, and their impeccable memories, will sometimes lead to elders holding personal grudges for a very, very long time.

The elders are the architects of Silcasa society. When a situation requires a quick decision, they will often advise but then leave the final decision and course of action to the adults. The short-term items on an elder Silcasa's "to do list" are measured in years and decades.

#### **CHILDHOOD ABILITIES**

0 STR  
20-30 INT  
20-30 EGO  
40-60 END  
*Silicoid Body:* 10 defenses, END Reserve 40-60  
*Silcasa Mind:* Powers at 6d6  
*Change Form:* Shape Shift (Extra Time: 1 Hour)  
*Powers:* 1-2 additional appropriate powers for its function at 15-30 Active Points, chosen when new form is chosen. Available powers include: Aid, Change Environment, Dispel (only Physical such as the Fire Extinguisher example, or Mental), Drain (STUN Only), Enhanced Sense, Force Wall, Healing, Images, Telekinesis

#### **ADULT ABILITIES**

0 STR  
25 INT  
25 EGO  
20 DEX  
60-120 END  
*Silicoid Body:* 15 defenses, END Reserve 60-120  
*Movement Powers:* Flying (10"-20"), FTL (Speed of Light – 1 LY/month), Swimming (5"-10")  
*Silcasa Mind:* Telepathy, Mind Control, Mind Scan, Mental Illusions, Mind Link at 10d6 (Requires one or more Rosiot within 10" to channel through)  
*Change Form:* Shape Shift (Extra Time: 1 Month)  
*Powers:* 2-3 additional appropriate powers for its function at 30-50 Active Points, chosen when new form is chosen. Available powers include: Aid, Change Environment, Dispel (only Physical such as the Fire Extinguisher example or Mental), Drain (STUN Only), Energy Blast, Enhanced Sense, Force Wall, Healing, Images, Life Support, Telekinesis



**ELDER ABILITIES**

0 STR

30+ INT

30+ EGO

120-200 END

*Silicoid Body:* 15 defenses, END Reserve 120-200*Silcasa Mind:* Powers at 16d6*Silcasa Elder Defense:* Ego Blast 4d6  
(Note that this different ability is **not** linked to the Rosiot. It is from an earlier Siocra mutation.)

Life Support (Usable On Others, Vacuum, No Atmosphere, High Radiation, Extreme Temperatures, High Pressures, Toxic Atmospheres)

*Change Form:* Shape Shift (Extra Time: 1 Year)

2-3 additional appropriate powers for its function at 50-75 Active Points, chosen when new form is chosen. Available powers include: Aid, Change Environment, Dispel (only Physical such as the Fire Extinguisher example or Mental), Drain (STUN Only), Energy Blast, Enhanced Sense, Force Wall, Healing, Images, Life Support, Telekinesis

Those few Silcasa who have chosen to remain in space at this age retain a small amount of mobility, mostly to stay in their current orbit, but may move at light speed in an emergency situation through the use of non-conventional propulsion.

*Flight:* 7"*FTL Travel:* Speed of Light, Increased Endurance Cost (x2)

Life Support (Usable On Others, Vacuum, No Atmosphere, High Radiation, Extreme Temperatures, High Pressures, Toxic Atmospheres)

**The Rosiot***Carbon-Based Humanoids**All physical properties similar to humans, other than brain structure.***PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Similar to the way in which the predecessors of humans evolved larger and larger brains to adapt and mold their environment, the first ancestors of the Rosiot found more intelligence to be a positive trait. At a point 3,328 Standard Years ago, one Rosiot was born with a particular brain structure susceptible to psychic control.

A Silcasa quickly learned to bond with the infant and through her was able to communicate and quickly teach the process to other nearby Silcasa. The Silcasa helped the Rosiot outsmart her siblings and breed with the strongest and most capable males. Her trait was dominant, and within seven generations 90% of the Rosiot were under the direct control of the Silcasa, carrying out activities and advancing the technological level at a highly accelerated pace. Unfortunately for the Rosiot, the very trait which gives them more comfortable lives also inhibits the growth of their own innate intelligence; the particular structures in the Rosiot have been developed through selective breeding to the point that 98% are incapable of independent thought.

**CULTURE**

98% of Rosiot are under the domination of the Silcasa and have no independent thoughts and thus no culture.

There is occasionally born a child of increased intelligence who is not susceptible to Mind Control. These children are sterilized at birth and moved to a large island off the coast of the largest continent by an adolescent Silcasa. These Rosiot have a positive native EGO. A Rosiot with a positive native EGO can **not** act as a conduit for a Silcasa.

**TYPICAL ROSIOT**

"Normal" human stats, except

-10 EGO

25 Mental Defense (only in proximity of Silcasa)

**'MUTANT' ROSIOT (not susceptible to Silcasa psychic abilities)**

"Normal" human stats, except:

15 EGO

30 Mental Defense



The Rosiot (and Silcasa)



**Siwendin (Contrustratus II)**

**Orbit:** 1.0 Au  
**Mass:** 1.1 Earth  
**Density:** 1.2  
**Diameter:** 1.01  
**Gravity:** 1.06 G  
**Day:** 32 Standard Hours  
**Year:** 360 Standard Days (271 Local Days)  
**Inclination:** 16 Degrees  
**Primary Atmosphere:** Nitrogen, Oxygen (22%), Carbon-Dioxide  
**Primary Hydrosphere:** Water  
**Percentage Landmass:** 20%  
**General Climate:** Tropical

The Silcasa have established two small colonies on Siwendin. One colony keeps in constant communication with the Silcasa of Sicronia. The other colony is a separatist group of reproductive-age and younger Silcasa which mostly refrain from contact with the main society. Against the wishes of the current Elder Silcasa, the separatist group is planning to expand the Silcasa to other solar systems once it attains enough members. It is unknown what steps the Elder Silcasa may take against the separatist group as they approach the necessary numbers to carry out their plan.

**NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA**

Siwendin has a variety of simple plant species and a number of small animal species (all carbon-based.) The native life forms are at a far too primitive stage to develop any sort of society, culture, or technology. They range in size from very small to almost whale-sized.

**THE MOON OF SIWENDIN**

Siwendin's small moon orbits at five diameters and provides little tidal influence to the hydrosphere. The moon contains very few minerals and no items of interest.

**Contrustratus III**

**Orbit:** 2.4 Au  
**Mass:** 20 Earth  
**Composition:** Gas Giant  
**Density:** 0.3  
**Diameter:** 4.05 Earth  
**Surface Gravity:** 1.215  
**Moons:** 0  
**Primary Resources:** Methane, Carbon Dioxide, Water Vapor  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Easy to Difficult (High surface temperature due to runaway greenhouse effect)

**Contrustratus IV**

**Orbit:** 3.2 Au  
**Mass:** 25 Earth  
**Composition:** Gas Giant  
**Density:** 0.2  
**Diameter:** 5.0 Earth  
**Surface Gravity:** 1.0  
**Moons:** 1  
**Moon Orbit:** 10 diameters  
**Primary Resources:** Methane  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Moderate (High atmospheric wind conditions)

**Contrustratus V**

**Orbit:** 4.0 Au  
**Mass:** 0.5 Earth  
**Composition:** Rock-Iron  
**Density:** 1  
**Diameter:** .8  
**Gravity:** .8  
**Moons:** 1  
**Lunar Orbit:** 11 diameters  
**Primary Atmosphere:** Carbon Dioxide (very thin)  
**Primary Hydrosphere:** None  
**Primary Resources:** Radioactives, Metallic Ores, Precious Metals  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Variable depending upon geography

**Contrustratus VI**

**Orbit:** 4.8 Au  
**Mass:** 0.7 Earth  
**Composition:** Rock-Iron  
**Density:** 1.3  
**Diameter:** .81  
**Gravity:** 1.053  
**Moons:** 2  
**Lunar Orbit:** 1, 6  
**Primary Atmosphere:** Carbon-Dioxide, Argon, Oxygen (15%)  
**Primary Hydrosphere:** Water  
**Primary Resources:** Metallic Ore, Basic Food Life forms  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Easy to Difficult

**LOCAL FLORA AND FAUNA**

Limited primitive life forms exist here. Mostly sponge and insect-like. None larger than 50 cm in size.

**MANDAARIAN OUTPOST**

The Mandaarians were studying the Silcasa for several generations before the Exodus. Located somewhere on this planet is a small station left by the Mandaarians as part of their emergency supply station system for those remaining behind. It is cloaked by a field that is literally impenetrable by any pre-ATRI 13 sensors or Spatial Awareness; should the cloaking field fail, the base will self-destruct within two hours (giving player groups enough time to grab a few items, but not enough to penetrate to the inner core of the base and figure out how to disarm the failsafe device.)

**Contrustratus VII**

**Orbit:** 5.6  
**Mass:** .2  
**Composition:** Rock  
**Density:** .65  
**Diameter:** .67  
**Gravity:** 0.435  
**Moons:** 2  
**Lunar Orbit:** 9, 40  
**Primary Resources:** Nickel, Iron  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Easy to Moderate

VII is a very small and airless planetoid with two small asteroidean moons. The furthest of the moons, upon close inspection, is older than the star system; it is an extra-solar object that was slowed down during its passage by several of the gas giants and finally ended up in a very far and highly eccentric orbit around VII. The second moon of Contrustratus VII is composed mostly of carbon compounds and is covered with organic material.

**Contrustratus VIII**

**Orbit:** 6.4  
**Mass:** .15  
**Composition:** Rock-Iron  
**Density:** 1.2  
**Diameter:** 0.50  
**Gravity:** 0.6  
**Moons:** 1  
**Lunar Orbit:** 11  
**Primary Resources:** Nickel, Iron  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Easy

**Contrustratus IX**

**Orbit:** 7.2  
**Mass:** 20  
**Composition:** Gas Giant  
**Density:** 0.25  
**Diameter:** 4.3 Earth  
**Gravity:** 1.075  
**Moons:** 0  
**Primary Resources:** Hyrdogen, Methane  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Easy

**Contrustratus X**

**Orbit:** 8.0  
**Mass:** 0.8  
**Composition:** Rock-Iron  
**Density:** 1.4  
**Diameter:** 0.82  
**Gravity:** 1.148  
**Moons:** 0  
**Primary Atmosphere:** Xenon  
**Primary Hydrosphere:** Methane  
**Primary Resources:** Noble Gases, Gases easily converted to ship fuel  
**Accessibility of Resources:** Easy

