

UnderWorld

Episode III of the “Between the Worlds” Trilogy A One-Round Living Force Tournament

by Morrie Mullins

Another call from the smugglers confirms that the heroes have yet to fully extricate themselves from the problems in the Belt, and more importantly, that Nirama has yet to discover the source of his opposition. All over the system, word is that things are about to come to a head. Now is the time for action. An adventure for Living Force heroes level 1-6. It is very important that this be played after *TopWorld* and *MidWorld* -- if not, do not play these scenarios.

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UnderWorld is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event but the actual playing time will be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom and the character's name, species and gender at the top. This makes it easier for players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use: *No-vote scoring*: The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.

1. *Partial scoring*: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
2. *Voting*: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually require advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

A note about the text: Some of the text in the module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Character Earnings

At the beginning of the round, if the characters are employed, they receive their pay. No matter how much

time has passed since the previous round, they receive pay for one week. Characters who are not employed but who have profession or craft skills may roll against those skills to see how much they have earned from their profession or craft in the last week. Use the method in the core rules (Craft: pg. 72 *Check result times 20 credits*; Profession: pg. 80 *Check result times 50 credits*). Note that characters may use only one of the above methods and must choose which before rolling (Employment, Craft or Profession).

General Notes to the GM

When running this adventure, or any *Star Wars* adventure, keep in mind the *Star Wars* adventures should seem like the *Star Wars* movies. The action should flow quickly and the players should not get caught up in too many details of what they are doing. Describe things in sweeping statements, and recall scenes from the movies when necessary to help players visualize what is going on. More than anything else, have fun.

This is an adventure for low-level Living Force characters, and therefore characters levels 1 through 4 are appropriate. If a player brings a higher-level character to your table, explain that he or she must use a lower-level hero to play in this event. If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see your event coordinator for hero creation instructions).

DM Overview

In the first two episodes of the "Between the Worlds" trilogy (*TopWorld* and *MidWorld*), the heroes were hired by Nirama to infiltrate the Cell, a renegade organization made up of Nirama's own smugglers who seem intent on removing him from power. In *TopWorld*, they learned about the Cell, but did little beyond confirming its existence. In *MidWorld*, they captured several members of the Cell and returned them to Nirama.

All is not well, though, even with several Cell members in custody. If anything, the opposition has increased as it becomes clear that Nirama has managed to deftly manipulate the situation and has come dangerously close to shutting down the Cell.

If it were as easy as that, the Cell would never have been a threat. Someone in Nirama's organization – someone he trusts – has clued the Cell into the role the heroes of Cularin have played in revealing the Cell's existence and membership, and now the Cell is acting.

Utilizing Nirama's codes, Nirama's personnel, and Nirama's name, the Cell contacts the heroes to hire them. The instructions are simple: "Root out the opposition, and help me destroy them." What the heroes do not know is that the "opposition" the heroes are to root out are

actually key personnel in Nirama's organization, all of whom are fiercely loyal to him. Their removal will pave the way for the Cell to topple Nirama, and take over smuggling in the system.

Encounter 1: Once More, With Feeling

The heroes are contacted by Jobrill, a familiar representative of Nirama's, bearing a datapad with another summons and a description of a novel assignment. Key members of the Cell have been identified, and the heroes must bring them in. Dead, or alive. It's too dangerous for them to meet with Nirama directly at this point, as he's being watched all the time by the Cell, but they are given a contact name in case of emergencies. The heroes are transported to Rothe Gate, a weapon storage facility, to begin their work.

Encounter 2: Rothe Gate

Rothe Gate is a hive of activity. The heroes, armed with a datapad listing several key names, must first meet with their contact. The contact, a walking protocol droid with designation N3-A2, provides them with more detailed information on their assignment. Their cover is straightforward. Based on their previous work for Nirama, he has elected not to make them a formal part of his organization, but has contracted with them to run weapons in the system. Thus, they are on Rothe Gate to pick up a shipment, which is being assembled to match a manifest in their datapad. While Nirama suspects the listed individuals of wrongdoing, it is only going to be through careful gathering of information that sufficient proof will be gathered to bring the Cell crashing down. Using this "cover," the heroes can move freely through Rothe Gate and accomplish that goal.

Encounter 3: Living Quarters

The simplest place to start is with a search of the communal living quarters for the suspected traitors who work on Rothe Gate. Timing this search is awkward, and the heroes have an opportunity to be creative in clearing the living quarters for a thorough search. In the personal security vaults kept by each of the suspects – which the heroes have access to through a security code provided them by 3-A2 – they find small pins with tightly spaced vertical lines. Much like the bars of a cell. However, no other vaults contain these pins, and the pins themselves are found in the center of each vault... a very suspicious placement for someone who is trying to be clandestine. As they make their exit from the room, a resident returns and confronts the heroes about their presence here. A fight ensues, since this is a legitimate Cell member who has heard rumors that someone is here to do what was done on Darkside.

Encounter 4: Personnel Records

Accessing personnel records for Rothe Gate seems more challenging, but becomes easier when the heroes are reintroduced to a security agent who was reassigned from Darkside (in the event "MidWorld"). Using the datapad they were given by 3-A2 allows them to gather encrypted data from the personnel records indicating that all of the suspected individuals have accessed their accounts and added or deleted key pieces of information – very suspicious behavior indeed! Something is not right, however. The datapad seems to be writing data even as it extracts information...

Encounter 5: An Unexpected Review

Nirama's loyal eyes and ears on Rothe Gate have alerted him to the activity of the heroes, though not by name, and he schedules a review. Everyone at the Gate is required to attend, and hear a message from their leader to be delivered live in the shuttle bay. As Nirama addresses his employees his eyes scan the crowd, pausing on the heroes. It is clear from the look in his eyes that he did not expect to see the heroes here.

Encounter 6: Decisions, Decisions...

Nirama ends his oratory with a call for anyone with information that he needs to come to a meeting with him later that day. The heroes must then decide what to do. Do they go to Nirama with what they've learned, or do they go to Nirama with what they suspect? As they are pondering these options, they are approached once more by 3-A2, who is acting very strangely. With Nirama suddenly on Rothe Gate, the heroes have become expendable, and 3-A2 has been set to blow them up and create a diversion during which time Nirama can be killed.

Encounter 7: Closing the Gate

Once they have dealt with 3-A2, the heroes find a suspicious-looking chip implanted in his circuitry. The chip bears the markings of one of Nirama's lieutenants, a woman Nirama trusts almost as much as Len Markus. Armed with this chip, the heroes can attend the meeting with Nirama. Shortly after they arrive, an attack comes, with the heroes, along with Nirama and Markus, holding off the Cell as they wait for reinforcements to arrive and shut down the opposition.

Important Note to Judges: It is absolutely imperative that you understand the subterfuge going on in this scenario. 3-A2 is NEVER working for Nirama. He is working for the Cell. The text of the event is written as though he is working for Nirama, however, to keep the language of the presentation consistent with the language you'll use when communicating with the

players. Remember, initially there is NO reason for the heroes to suspect they are working for anyone BUT Nirama. Jobril is a legitimate contact, who believes he is doing Nirama's will, and 3-A2 is "just a droid." For the event to run successfully, each clue they discover must build tension until they come to the conclusion, on their own, that they are being misled – and realize they either have to do something about it, or watch Nirama's organization crumble.

Opening Crawl

With the existence of the Cell established, and several of its members in Nirama's hands, the true extent of the threat to the smugglers is revealed. Nirama's organization stands on the brink of a drastic change in both leadership and philosophy.

Cularin has been stable for some time. The potential power shift within the smugglers' ranks, however, threatens that stability almost as much as the Metatheran Cartel. And so it begins once again, with a request on a datapad...

Encounter 1: Once More, With Feeling

Key ideas of this encounter: use Jobril to bring the heroes to work "for Nirama" once more; give them details of their assignment once they are all assembled; transport them to Rothe Gate

What the heroes know: It has been almost a month since the last time they were summoned by Nirama. In that time, rumors have abounded about the Cell, and their influence within Nirama's organization. Reports vary, but it is clear that somewhere between 25 and 75 percent of Nirama's "employees" have sympathetic leanings toward the Cell. *Information gathering* turns up nothing about specific names of Cell members, aside from those who were captured in *MidWorld* (Jasper, Jarrilyn, Ahlya, Dor Balse, Kruss Gaal, and Michael; DC 15 to get these names and remember who they are, if the hero played *MidWorld*). A DC 22 check will allow the heroes to hear that things are coming to a head. Nirama is marshalling those who are loyal to him, and seems ready to crack down on the Cell. Note: For purposes of these checks, every 100 credits spent on bribes gives a +1 to the hero's roll. Do not tell the players the bonus involved; ask them how much they're spending, then secretly add an appropriate modifier to whatever they roll.

The Twi'lek who greeted you this morning smiled in an unsettling way, showing off the double-row of

pointed teeth. The last time you saw Jobril, Nirama's master of properties on Cularin, he brought a summons. This time, as he extends the datapad with that disturbing smile, you have a definite feeling of déjà vu.

This is exactly who it looks like. Jobril is still Nirama's master of properties on Cularin, but he has been compromised. He is working for the Cell, although he isn't even fully aware that he is doing so. He believes he is doing Nirama's bidding, and as such, does not seem to be lying at any point. The only thing that is odd about him (and don't give *spot* checks or anything of the like to notice this; convey it through roleplaying, since anything you give a *spot* check for "must be a clue" in the minds of the players) is that he's in a good mood. He's always seemed gruff and unpleasant before, and now he seems almost jovial. (These things happen when someone plucks an annoying microchip out of your brainstem...)

"Well met, friend." Jobril smiles again. "I have been asked to retrieve you once more. My master wishes you to assist in finishing what you began."

These are true statements, in every sense of the word. The datapad Jobril has with him, which he will allow any hero to examine, contains the following message: "Jobril comes to you at my request. I ask you follow his advice. – N" which is signed with the stylized "N" Nirama always uses. This is a completely legitimate datapad, and a completely legitimate message. In fact, the program chip with the summons from Nirama that was used in *MidWorld* was inserted directly into this datapad. Thus, the message may sound familiar to the heroes, but that's normal. Nirama is a creature of habit, so they should expect him to utilize similar summons.

Jobril will hold off on answering any specific questions about why Nirama needs the heroes until they are all collected and taken to the landing pad. He will only confirm that yes, this has to do with anything they might have heard about the Cell, and yes, the heroes are uniquely qualified to assist in this near-final stage of the "operation."

As before, Jobril can offer bribes (nothing more than 1000 credits per hero, and he will make comments about Nirama preferring not to pay prior to services being rendered if he is pressured, but will still pay), and will do anything he can to get the heroes to do the job (short of threatening them). He will suggest that many favors can be accrued by assisting the right individuals at the right time, and the heroes have much to gain by assisting his master.

Once the heroes are all gathered and taken to Nirama's landing platform just outside Gadrin, Jobril will escort them on board.

The Twi'lek leads you through the mirror-bright corridors of the ship to a grand room that seems to be all pillows, cushions, and beverages. He picks up a bottle of dark liquid from a bar beside the door, pours himself a drink, and offers one to each of you.

If there's a reasonable form of beverage the heroes can name, it's here. Nirama sometimes uses this transport to move himself around, when he wants to be secretive, and the bar is STOCKED with both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

"It is a time of strife for Lord Nirama." He takes a drink. "The Cell has grown past the point where it is something he can safely ignore. You have shown that the Cell can be found, and dealt with. But Lord Nirama remains uncertain as to the extent of the Cell's power. To move directly against them, too soon, might bring the whole of his organization crashing down."

This is a fine place to interrupt boxed text. The bullets below contain questions that can reasonably be answered before continuing with the rest of his speech.

"We have obtained a list of personnel within Lord Nirama's ranks who may be directly affiliated with the Cell. They are particularly dangerous, as they are all stationed at Rothe Gate, Lord Nirama's weapon storage facility. If these individuals are truly members of the Cell, they must be disposed of. Lord Nirama does not ask that you perform this service for him, only that you gather sufficient information that he may move against them with confidence."

- So what exactly do we do? *You will be met at Rothe Gate by your contact, a droid of designation N3-A2. The contact will give you specifics. I have only been provided with enough information to get you where you must be.*
- What's our cover? *You are well-known in the organization. The rumor that has been started to prepare folk for your arrival is that Lord Nirama has hired a new group of mercenaries to run weapons for him. Your previous work for Lord Nirama, and your removal from his service on two occasions, has set you up nicely as mercenaries.* [Note: It is unlikely that you will have a table where none of the heroes played either *TopWorld* or *MidWorld*; in that event, modify the preceding text by removing the first and last sentences. Other answers may also need to be modified slightly if this bizarre contingency arises.]
- What can you tell us about Rothe Gate? *It is located at the outer edge of the asteroid belt, and*

is one of three central storehouses through which all of Lord Nirama's weapons move.

- Can we talk to Nirama? *It is better for Lord Nirama to keep you at a distance for the time being. It is dangerous for him to keep you too close, but it also looks dangerous for him to keep you too far away. The Cell remains aware of you.*
- So is it safe for us to do this? *Safety is relative.*
- Cute answer. Are we being set up to get killed? *Lord Nirama thinks more of his resources than to throw them away. You have proven yourselves valuable. It would not be in his best interests to sacrifice you. The danger you should be more concerned about is the danger to the system, should the smugglers become destabilized.*
- What will happen if the Cell takes over? *I believe the economic focus of the system would shift. Nirama's stance on slavery is well-known, and is a point of some contention. The conflicts with the pirates might escalate as well.* [Note: The smugglers – under Nirama's control – and the pirates are two separate groups. Nirama's smuggling organization, won from Riboga the Hutt, is a tight, well-managed business. The pirates, on the other hand, are simply pirates, intent on making money however they can. There is a long-standing conflict between the two camps.]
- What's in it for us? *You may expect rewards in line with what you may have acquired in previous service to Lord Nirama.*

These are the key questions. Once he has answered them, or once the heroes begin pressing for information he doesn't know (he's only been told enough to get the heroes here, give them a basic outline, and "sell" them on the mission), Jobril will excuse himself and the journey to Rothe Gate will commence.

Encounter 2: Rothe Gate

Key ideas of this encounter: arrive at Rothe Gate and attempt to find their contact; run afoul of a Wookiee trader in the docking bay, along with his hirelings; meet up with their contact, a rusty protocol droid, designation N3-A2; get the names of who they're supposed to dig up dirt on

Docking at Rothe Gate is uneventful, and Jobril nods as you descend the ramp into the hangar before turning into the ship and beginning to shout orders to the crew to begin loading the ship. Even as you reach the bottom of the ramp the crew begins streaming past you and grabbing cases of blasters, power cells, and other armaments. The walls of the hangar are piled, almost to the ceiling, with boxes of weaponry, labeled

in every language you've seen... and some you haven't.

The heroes have only ever seen Jobril deal with trade to and from Cularin. Thus, if they ask, it is entirely possible that the weapons being loaded onto the shuttle are bound for Cularin. No amount of questioning will allow the heroes to determine the buyer(s). In fact, there is no unique buyer for the blasters, they are simply being shipped to Cularin for general (black market) sales. None of the more exotic weaponry is being shipped to Cularin (read: None of the stuff you need a permit for).

As the heroes disembark the shuttle and are looking around for their contact, they are the victims of a case of mistaken identity. Blark, a Wookiee soldier and weapons dealer from the Outer Rim, spots one of the members of the party and mistakes them for a low-life who hi-jacked one of his shipments off Sullust. Have fun – pick a scout, fringer, or noble hero (Blark is stupid, but not stupid enough to misidentify a Jedi). Anyway, unless the heroes speak Shyriiwook, they're about to get jumped by an angry Wookiee and his cronies.

From just ahead of you, you hear an angry half-snort, half-shout. You look up, and there's a Wookiee rushing toward you, pulling a weapon from his belt!

And he has four thugs with him. If the heroes speak Shyriiwook, they will understand him to say, "Thief! Surrender now and I won't kill you!" Otherwise, the speech comes out more like, "Ggrroooooooooooooowwooorr!!"

Note that Rothe Gate has all the comforts of home. If home is a place where fights are cheered on, and bets are made, that is. Blark and his cronies will attack with melee weapons unless the heroes pull blasters, at which point, the gloves come off.

For heroes averaging levels 1-3:

Blark, Male Wookiee Soldier 2; IM +1; Def 13; Spd 6 m; Sz M; VP/WP 20/14; Atk +6 melee (2d6+4, vibro-blade), +3 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 0; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills: Demolitions +2, Intimidate +7, Pilot +4.

Feats: Armor (light, medium), Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, vibroweapons, heavy weapons), Dodge, Mobility.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, vibro-blade, Wookiee flight clothes, 2 medpaks.

Expendable Cronies, Various Thug 1 (4); IM +1; Def 12; Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP -/15; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, baton), -2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ

none; SV Fort +3 Ref +1, Will +0; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Jump +4.

Feats: Toughness, Simple Weapons, Light Armor.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, baton, clothing, 2 medpaks.

For heroes averaging levels 4-6:

Blark, Male Wookiee Soldier 5; IM +1; Def 14; Spd 6 m; Sz M; VP/WP 55/14; Atk +9 melee (2d10+4, vibro-blade), +6 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; SZ M; FP 2; Rep 1; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills: Demolitions +2, Intimidate +7, Pilot +4.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, & heavy), Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, vibroweapons, heavy weapons), Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, vibro-axe, Wookiee flight clothes, 2 medpaks.

Expendable Cronies, Various Thug 4 (4); IM +1; Def 10; Spd 10 m; VP/WP -/15; Atk +5 melee (2d6+1, vibro-blade), +1 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +5 Ref +2, Will +1; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Sense Motive +2, Diplomacy +2.

Feats: Toughness, Simple Weapons, Light Armor, Vibroweapons.

Equipment: Vibro-blade, blaster pistol, clothing, 2 medpaks.

It's fine for the heroes to talk their way out of this fight – if they can speak Shyriiwook. The point of this fight is not to kill anyone. This is designed to give the players a feel for what life is like on Rothe Gate. As soon as Blark and his cronies charge, a crowd gathers and bets begin to fly. The smart money is NEVER on Blark, since one of the bookies recognizes the heroes immediately as people who should not be trifled with, and if any of the heroes use Force powers, the odds on Blark drop like a rock. If things are going badly for the heroes (i.e., if Blark gets a lucky hit with the vibro-axe and drops one of them quickly – fudge the dice to keep from critting with the vibro-weapon, please), have Jobril appear at the top of the ramp and clear his throat. He will disavow any particular fondness for the heroes, but will make it very clear that he does not want fighting near Nirama's shipment.

Once he's forced to calm down, Blark will realize that up-close, the person who looked like the hi-jacker really doesn't look that familiar at all. Assuming he's still alive, he'll grumble an apology through one of his thugs and wander off. If he's not still alive, well, he can always be looted.

As the crowd disperses, a rusty protocol droid walks toward you. He stops, surveying the scene, and shakes his head. You hear a definite creaking.

"I am N3-A2. You are [name the heroes]? Come with me."

N3-A2's speech modulator is old. He sounds like a classic SF robot, lacking any fluidity or care in his enunciation of words. If asked if he is their contact, 3-A2 will sigh and admonish them for asking questions that are far, far too blunt. Yes, he has been awaiting their arrival. Yes, he has something for them.

N3-A2 leads you behind a stand of crates and detaches a datapad from his hip. "This is far, far more serious than you realize. The fate, fate of the system hangs in the balance. If you fail, trade falls into ... [click, whirr] chaos. We will see a return to the old ways. It is even possible that the Hutts [long pause] may return to claim what was lost. Take this." He hands you the datapad. "It lists the names of those personnel who we must observe, and remove. You have the freedom, freedom to move about Rothe Gate. Use ... it. You may find information in the living quarters, and in the per-per-personnel files. Look for this." He punches a button on the datapad and an image appears on the screen. "This is a symbol that we believe to be used [click, whirr] to identify Cell members."

The image is included as player handout 2. The other contents of the datapad are included as player handout 1.

"Also within this datapad is a ship's manifest. The ship is docked in hangar, hangar eleven, along with security codes to get you access to ... anything you require. The ship is being loaded as we speak. You have three hours [click, whirr] to gather the necessary information and remove yourselves from Rothe Gate.

"Do this, and the Cell may be demolished, and order maintained in the system."

IMPORTANT CLARIFYING NOTE: The ship that's being loaded, for which the heroes have the manifest, is NOT Jobril's ship. It's another "dummy" ship that Jobril had set up for the heroes.

And really, there's no reason to deliver all of that in boxed text. However, that's all that 3-A2 knows. He has a very limited memory capacity, and has been programmed specifically for this task. His programming says that the heroes are working for Nirama, and he believes that the information they have been given will lead them to the Cell.

But programming is only programming. 3-A2 could not be more wrong.

There is nothing in the datapad other than the manifest (which is for all sorts of illegal weapons, including seven cases of thermal detonators, various heavy repeating blasters, and so forth), the list of names, and a slicing program. None of the names mean anything to the heroes, and they are included as Player Handout 1. The slicing program appears to be standard fare.

Welcome to the world of real-time roleplaying. The three hours within the game corresponds precisely to how long you have until the slot ends. If you like, put a stopwatch on the table. From here on, I will try to provide you with time markers so that you can gauge the players' progress.

It is also worth noting at this point that the "suspects" are all conveniently off Rothe Gate right now, having been summoned away for a planning meeting. This makes it easier to access information about them, and impossible to interrogate them directly. If asked, 3-A2 will confirm that this was done intentionally, to allow the heroes the chance to operate with a limited time window.

Gathering information about the suspects is impossible in the time allotted. In addition to the ship with which the heroes are associated, there are four other ships receiving shipments and every hand is busy. The only things that can be gotten on a successful *gather information* check, no matter what DC is met, are that things are extremely busy right now, and there are almost certainly Cell members on Rothe Gate. No names can be unearthed.

Encounter 3: Living Quarters

Key idea of this encounter: gain access to the personal living quarters (semi-communal barracks) in Rothe Gate; search the quarters of the suspects; find clues as to their involvement with the Cell; get jumped by yet another untrusting thug; max run time: 45 minutes

It makes no difference whether the heroes decide to go here or to the personnel files first. In fact, if they fuss around too much, they may not even get to both of them before Nirama comes a-callin'. But there are clues in both places that are relevant, and which make it clear that all is not as it seems.

The key challenge here is how to get into the personnel quarters and conduct a meaningful search. Proceed with the following text, and then find out what the heroes want to do.

About three hundred yards down a series of winding corridors, deep in the heart of Rothe Gate, are the

living quarters for the crew of the asteroid. The double blast-doors are set with clear plastisteel viewing windows, through which you can see rows of cubicles stretching off in both directions. One of the cubicle doors opens, and you can see a small living space inside just before the door swings shut again. Bed, desk, chair, shelves.

Go ahead and have the heroes roll *spot* checks. DC 18 or better, they notice a silver square with a keypad set into the back wall of the living cube. If they deduce that this is likely a safe of some sort, well, good for them. Since it is.

Now, the trick becomes, how to successfully get in there, wander around, and dig up information on the suspects.

As we've already established, there are NOT a lot of idle hands on Rothe Gate right now. There are a handful of late-shifters asleep in here, but unless someone starts very literally tossing beds around, no one is likely to wake up.

That's not to say that you should TELL the players that. At least, not initially. Let them work up a reasonable strategy to approach the living quarters, but when it comes right down to it, anything that's not dumb should work. If they send in one person to scout, make sure that you don't let just one person do everything in the encounter. Have them figure out within a few rounds that the only folks who are in here are asleep (the person who came out of the front cell left the living quarters immediately, heading for one of the hangars), and move on.

The layout of the living area is fairly basic: The living cubes run along the wall with the doors through which the heroes enter, as well as the opposite wall. There are 40 cubes to a wall, each labeled with the name of the resident in basic and the resident's native language. It is thus easy to find the living spaces for the suspects. Entering them requires that the security system be disabled. Since there's generally nothing of value kept outside of the safes inside, so it only requires a DC 20 *repair* check, a DC 15 *disable device* check, or whatever is cinematically appropriate (judge call!) to get into each cube. When they enter the first cube, read the following.

The room in which you find yourself is barely large enough to be livable, by most standards. The cube is roughly four meters to a side, and sparsely decorated. A bed is folded down from the left-hand wall, and a desk has been built into the wall opposite the door. Recessed drawers decorate the right wall, and shelves take up every other spare inch, aside from the space roughly a quarter-meter square, finished in bright silver and set with a keypad just above the desk.

The description is about the same from one cell to the next. There's nothing worth looting in the rooms, outside of the safes.

Those safes, by the way, need either a DC 35 *disable device* check to open, or the use of the access codes in the datapad, which reduce the DC on the check to 15. If none of the heroes have *disable device*, *repair* or *computer use* will substitute (since the datapad is helping).

When the first safe is opened, the following information should be conveyed.

The inside of the safe contains a small pile of credit chips and a single pin, sitting dead-center in the safe. The pin is about the size of your thumbnail, black overlaid with a dozen parallel silver lines intersected by a single silver line stretching from one side of the pin to another.

It looks kind of like **Player Handout 2**. One of these is found in every safe of a suspected Cell member, and in no safe not belonging to a person on the list (if the heroes decide to break into some of them as well). Each of the Cell suspects has 1000 credits worth of credit chips in their safe. There is nothing worth stealing in any other cube, and frankly, if the heroes are wasting time trying to loot from Nirama's people while they're working for Nirama, they need to have their heads examined.

When they finish going through the five cubes and finding as many pins – each pin dead center in its respective safe, impossible to miss – things get a little more interesting.

As you exit the last cube, the blast doors slide open and a bleary-eyed Trandoshan steps through.

The Trandoshan's *spot* check has been rolled for you. He got a 25. If all of the heroes hide better than that, then there will be no fight here. Otherwise, this is Gorssk, he's coming off a double-shift, and he really doesn't like people messing around directly across from his cubicle home. He's also a member of the Cell, and he recognizes the heroes, whose names and faces have been made very familiar to Cell members after their last two entries into Nirama's organization. If he spots ANY of the heroes, he pulls his blaster and fires. Two rounds later, the rest of his shift arrives.

For heroes averaging level 1-3:

Gorssk, Male Trandoshan thug 2; IM +0; Def 12; Spd 10 m; VP/WP -/15; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, baton), -2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ +10 to strength checks against being disarmed by Move Object (has trained against Force users); SV Fort +4 Ref +0, Will +0; SZ

M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Intimidate +3, Speak Twi'lek.

Feats: Toughness, Simple Weapons, Light Armor.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, 2 hold-out blasters, fatigues.

Gorssk's work crew, Trandoshan Thug 1 (4); IM +1; Def 12; Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP -/15; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, baton), -2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +3 Ref +1, Will +0; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Jump +4.

Feats: Toughness, Simple Weapons, Light Armor.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, baton, clothing.

For heroes averaging levels 4-6:

Gorssk, Male Trandoshan thug 5; IM +0; Def 13; Spd 10 m; VP/WP -/15; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, baton), +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +5 Ref +1, Will +1; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Intimidate +3, Speak Twi'lek.

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (simple, blasters), Light Armor.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, 2 hold-out blasters, fatigues.

Gorssk's work crew, Trandoshan Thug 1 (4); IM +1; Def 12; Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP -/15; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, baton), -2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ +10 to strength checks against being disarmed by Move Object (has trained against Force users); SV Fort +3 Ref +1, Will +0; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Jump +4.

Feats: Toughness, Simple Weapons, Light Armor.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, baton, clothing.

(Yes, observant GM... these thugs look a lot like the ones in Encounter 2 – because all thugs look alike!)

Gorssk will crash through the cube doorway across the hall from the blast doors and use that cube as cover from which he can fire as he waits for his crew to get here. None of them will sound the alarm, since Gorssk is worried they've been discovered and are about to be turned in to Nirama. They will fight until dead, or until they have been convinced fighting is no longer a viable option. Gorssk has a hold-out blaster in each of his boots and will not hesitate to go for them if some Force user uses Move Object to disarm him, though this is difficult because he's specifically trained against that contingency. Anyone who succeeds in doing this immediately becomes a primary target, since while

Gorssk likes fighting, he believes in fighting fairly – and that ain't fair!

The cubicles are well enough insulated from sound that no one will awaken from the firefight. The heroes can thus deal with the fight and move on to whatever comes next – be that Encounter 4, if they've not been to Personnel yet, or Encounter 5, if they have. Remember to find out what they do with any dead bodies, or any prisoners they may have.

Encounter 4: Personnel Records

Key ideas of this encounter: attempting to gain access to the personnel records for Rothe Gate, the heroes meet up with Nala Noos, former acting security chief for Darkside; they must convince Nala of the validity of their mission, and gain access to the personnel database for the asteroid; max run time: 45 minutes

It makes no difference whether the heroes decide to go here or to the living quarters first. In fact, if they fuss around too much, they may not even get to both of them before Nirama comes a-callin'. But there are clues in both places that are relevant, and which make it clear that all is not as it seems.

Coming here first gets them a "contact" within Rothe Gate, someone who they've met before (if they played *MidWorld*) who may be able to be of assistance if they have prisoners from the living quarters, but it's not essential. What's important is their ability to gauge the extent of the trouble within Rothe Gate, and see how folks inside Nirama's organization have viewed what's gone on over the last few months.

The Office of Personnel for Rothe Gate is located about twenty meters from the exit to the hangar eleven, not far at all from the ship for which you're "responsible." The blast door is clearly marked, in bold letters: "PERSONNEL." And directions to the office were not hard to come by.

If you have time, allow the heroes to roleplay getting directions from 3-A2, Blark, or anyone else they seem to have latched onto (Jobril is not available). If you don't have time, just send them there in boxed text.

Allow them to consider a plan of approach. Once they enter the personnel office (assuming they don't go in guns blazing), read the following.

A row of computers and monitors lines the far wall, and a line of desks fills the center of the room. Data chips are scattered all over the desks, and various printouts are strewn across the floor. Between the

desks and the bank of computers sits a frazzled-looking Trandoshan female with pale yellow skin. She glances up and sighs as you enter.

This is Nala Noos. If any of the heroes played *MidWorld*, they will recognize her as the former acting head of security for Darkside. She finally got the transfer she was wanting, but isn't much happier on Rothe Gate since she's been "demoted" to paperwork duty. She will brighten noticeably if she recognizes any of the heroes (and she **will** recognize any of them who played *MidWorld*), and will push aside a pile of data chips and papers to lean her elbows on her desk and engage them in conversation.

Now, there are two contingencies here. First, it's possible that none of the heroes at your table played *MidWorld*. If so, things are a bit more complicated. If they played *MidWorld*, things get a little easier. In neither case is the task impossible. **In either case, what they're trying to do is get Nala out of the room for a few minutes, so they can access the databanks.**

IF NONE OF THE HEROES PLAYED MIDWORLD

The Trandoshan leans across the desk. "What can I do for you?"

If none of the heroes participated in *MidWorld*, then they will have to convince Nala to give them a few minutes with the equipment, or distract her in some way so that one or more of the heroes can do something behind her back.

Things Nala can tell heroes she's never met before:

- Yes, this is the personnel office. Can't you read?
- I'm Nala Noos. You know, this isn't what I'm trained for.
- I'm trained for security. Used to work it, over at... another facility.
- I'm happy with the organization, sure. Who are you, anyway? What's with all the questions?
- Yeah, I've heard of the Cell. Bunch of fools, likely to break down everything Nirama's worked to build.

It's hard to *bluff* Nala (her *sense motive* is +12), but not impossible. Appealing to her loyalty to Nirama may work, since she has met other folks who she believes were working for Nirama to get rid of the Cell. She can't be bribed, but if the heroes present a convincing, well role-played argument, she may excuse herself for a few minutes to "take a walk." She will insist on locking the blast doors behind her, so that no one can get in or out, and there's only the one exit to the room. She can also be mind-tricked, etc. In short, if they come up with a way to distract her and get access to the computers (and yes, this includes such melodrama as feigning a

blaster accident in the corridor just outside the personnel office and pleading with her to go get help after disabling the comm center on the near wall), and make it cinematic and fun, allow it to work. Then skip to the section, "IN EITHER CASE."

IF AT LEAST ONE HERO PLAYED MIDWORLD

Here, things are slightly easier.

The Trandoshan rises, a smile creasing her pallid face, and you recognize Nala Noos, the head of security from Darkside. "Hello! What are you doing here?"

Conversing with Nala will reveal the following:

- I finally got my transfer.
- I'm not exactly happy with what I'm doing. I want to go back to security.
- There was a big shake-up at Darkside after you left. [Speaking only to the heroes who played *MidWorld*.]
- Things changed for the better after you were there. For a while, at least.
- Most folks didn't think anything of you being there. People come and go from Darkside all the time. But I don't believe in coincidence. You're there, then you're not. We've got a bunch of idiots calling themselves Cell, then they're gone.
- Yeah, I think you might have had something to do with it. I didn't say anything to anyone, though. If you did something to hurt the Cell, you did something good.

Nala couldn't be much more fiercely loyal to Nirama. Having seen elements of the Cell in action on Darkside, and having been head of the security team there, she knows how much damage they could do.

As above, the goal is to get Nala to give them a few minutes to access the personnel records, and any reasonable, cinematic method should work. (And yes, this does include the "cute" Trandoshan Jedi asking her if she'd like to go for a walk. Nala's not had much time for socializing since she came to Rothe Gate, since most of the Trandoshans here are losers.) She will also be very interested if she'd told about the Trandoshans who jumped the heroes in the living quarters. She's had her doubts about them...

Regardless, she won't stay here while the heroes are accessing the databanks, but she also won't go out of her way to stop them since she suspects they're working for Nirama and is more than willing to help out. (And no, this doesn't mean they were indiscrete. She was head of security on Darkside, and she has a good nose for these things!)

IN EITHER CASE

As the blast doors slide shut behind Nala, you get to work.

Let them describe what they're doing. Setting watches, going through the piles of datachips, what have you. When they commence slicing, make sure you know exactly who is watching what is going on with the datapad, and read the following.

Hooking 3-A2's datapad up to the records computer, you set the program to work delving deep into the files, past the standard personnel fare, into the logs kept by each of the individuals you're investigating.

Have the folks who are doing the slicing roll *computer use*. If they make DC 20, then they notice something strange in the way the data is being transferred to the datapad from the system. After 10 minutes, they figure out that the flow of data seems to be two-way, with the data going into the system from the datapad of much higher volume than what they would expect (ie, the datapad is actively uploading to the five personnel files, as well as downloading). If they make DC 25, they notice after five minutes of data transfer that the transfer seems to be two-way (all of the information above, just faster). If they make DC 30, they notice after two minutes.

By that time, the damage is already done. No amount of slicing can undo what just happened. The upload happens in the first two minutes – then everything gets downloaded, as a chunk, back into the datapad, and any trace of what just got uploaded is wiped from the pad (it was a subroutine of the slicing program).

After several minutes, the screen of the datapad flashes, telling you that the download is complete. The personnel folders of the five suspects are now in your datapad, complete with their private logs. A message appears on the datapad screen: "Encrypted files detected in personal logs 32344, 98126, 77202, 64365, and 11020. Decrypt files?"

DC 10 *computer use* will allow the heroes to figure out that those are the personnel numbers for the five suspects. Decrypting the files will provide the following information (a sample decrypted file is included as player handout 3): These are encrypted message logs between the suspects, discussing Cell activity and plotting to overthrow Nirama. While only one such file is provided as a handout, all have similar tones.

When Nala returns, if the heroes present the information to her, she will tell them that in her expert opinion, the electronic trail is not enough. They need

something more tangible. She can also tell them that it is not common practice for Nirama to decrypt personal communications, so it's quite likely things like this could exist on the system. Security is tight in the organization, but Nirama doesn't impinge on his employees' privacy without good reason.

If the heroes have not yet completed Encounter 3, she will send them there. If they have, she will ponder what to do next, until the all-hands call comes in, telling them that Nirama has arrived for an unscheduled review of the facilities.

Encounter 5: An Unexpected Review

Key idea of this encounter: the base is in an uproar as Nirama arrives unexpectedly to conduct a "surprise inspection;" he summons all of the smugglers of Rothe Gate to the largest hangar, where he addresses them, noticing the heroes in their number as he speaks

Upon the heroes completing both encounters 3 and 4, you should read the following:

As you [pick one: exit the personnel office, or leave the living quarters], every intercom in the complex activates at once.

"Attention! All personnel and guests to Hangar One. Repeat, all personnel and guests to Hangar One. Central administrative review pending, all personnel and guests must attend. Full security system enabled in ten minutes in all sectors but Hangar One." The message then repeats.

Workers are pouring out of every door and streaming in the same direction. The heroes are welcome to ask what's going on. Most of the workers are in quite a hurry – be sure to describe the jostling, and the bumping, and the grumping – but the following information can be gained with a DC 15 *gather information* roll. (And share the wealth, if multiple folks want to gather information from the throng.)

- Hangar One is this way. [Point, genius.]
- It would be very, very bad to miss a Central Administrative Review. You'd better show up, even if you don't work here.
- A Central Administrative Review means Nirama's come to review operations.
- The full security systems being active means that no one can move anywhere in Rothe Gate without setting off an alarm, except in Hangar One.
- Hangar One is the biggest hangar here. It's not used for shipments, it's only used for reviews. It's totally secure.

Now, we come to the part where some of the heroes may want to be sneaky. This is a relatively bad idea, but they're not the only ones who may have it. The "Gosh, I thought I could be sneaky" contingency is included at the end of the encounter. For now, rest assured. If they think they're being sneaky, they're not, and will end up dumped unceremoniously into Encounter 6, reunited with the rest of the party. In the meantime, let's remind them what a bad idea it is to split the party in Living campaigns, shall we?

IF THE HEROES ELECT TO GO WITH THE CROWD, skip straight to "In the Hangar."

IF THE HEROES LOOK LIKE THEY'RE CONSIDERING GOING ELSEWHERE, have Nala run into them. As a former security chief, she can tell them the following: *Being outside the hangar when the full system is turned on is just a bad idea. There's no way to get around it. Besides, this is Nirama. I'd imagine you'd want to hear what he has to say, and maybe try to get an audience with him... all things considered.* And she'll wink. If the heroes have told her more about what they know, then she'll be very insistent that they attend the review. If not, she's just guessing – still – that they may have something of interest to Nirama. Hopefully, Nala can convince at least most of them to attend the review. It's a very, very bad idea not to do so, and she'll emphasize that as much as she can.

In the Hangar

It looks as though the entire work force of Rothe Gate – several hundred strong – has turned out for the review. An elaborate shuttle is parked in the center of the hangar, the main hatch open. A gleaming silver ramp extends as you enter the hangar, and the three sets of blast doors slide shut.

There's a flurry of activity as the workers hurry to arrange themselves in even lines. While they lack the poise of a military organization, they certainly demonstrate the same level of discipline. As they come to attention, eyes forward, you find yourselves a little unnerved. This is a very different feel than what you're used to from the rowdy smugglers.

The ramp finishes extending and clicks into place, and that click can be heard echoing through the near-silent hangar. Then comes the sound of footsteps as Nirama descends the ramp, his four eyes scanning the crowd. Behind him walks, Len Markus, a pale, dangerous man, the group representative of the system's smugglers – Nirama's most direct link to the "troops."

Nirama reaches the bottom of the ramp just as a pair of astromech droids finish moving a short platform into position. He mounts it as Markus takes up a position just off his left shoulder.

Find out what the heroes are doing. If they're moving at all, Nirama notices them now. If not, he notices them as his eyes scan the crowd.

"Rothe Gate has always been like a second home to me." Nirama smiles at the assembled workers. "Your role, above all, is central to the well-being of our organization. You form the backbone of our economy.

"It is with great pleasure, then, that I find myself among you once more. To ... review ... our progress." His eyes sweep the crowd. Then he reaches your group and his eyes pause. If you hadn't been looking right at him, you might not have noticed, and his eyes move on just as quickly – but you would swear that he looked almost surprised to see you here.

The speech goes on, with Nirama extolling the virtues of Rothe Gate. Eventually, he begins walking the ranks, clapping men and women on the back and speaking to some individually. When he gets to you, he pauses, clapping [pick someone quiet] on the shoulder, then leans in and whispers, "You and your companions will attend me in Chamber 9 in one-half hour." Then he moves on.

"Gosh, I thought I could be sneaky..."

This just in, from the Department of Bad Ideas: INTREPID HEROES GET DUMB AND TRY TO GET AROUND ONE OF NIRAMA'S SECURITY SYSTEMS WHEN THEY'VE BEEN TOLD NOT TO.

If one or more of the heroes decide that it's a good idea to try to do more sneaking around, after they've been told that everyone is required to attend the review, well, so be it.

They will begin in a single room. As soon as they move, they will trigger motion sensors. They can try disarming the motion sensors. Good luck. DC 35. These are serious motion sensors. And every door has sensors, and there are new motion sensors that have to be disarmed every ten feet in the corridors. In other words, they will eventually fail a roll and set off the alarms. You might as well boxed text it.

Once they set off the alarms, the security droids will come. They've got their weapons set to stun, and there are as many of them as you need.

Security Droids (as many as needed): Walking military droid, Thug 6; Init -3 (-2 remote processor, -1 dex); Defense 12 (+3 armor, -1 dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP -/8; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6+1, hand), +6/+1 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle); SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; SZ M; Rep 0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Equipment: Blaster rifle, integrated comlink, remote receiver (disabled), armor, vocabulator.

Skills: Speak Basic, Climb +3, Jump +3.

Feats: Weapons (blaster rifle), Acrobatic.

Surrendering is an option. In fact, it's a pretty good one. The lead security droid WILL speak (because boxed text speech is a free action) prior to initiative being rolled, and will say, ***"Surrender and you will be taken before Lord Nirama."*** If they do this, they'll be taken to Nirama (read: go to Encounter 7). If not, they can blow up a few security droids, but ultimately, they will be overrun, stunned, and taken to Nirama, where they'll be dumped at his feet, with the rest of the heroes present, in Encounter 7. Note that having any of them arrive this way, much less the whole party, will make Nirama grumpy. Especially if they blow up some of his droids.

Encounter 6: Decisions, Decisions...

Key idea of this encounter: after Nirama's speech ends, the heroes are once more approached by 3-A2, this time with a very large explosive device planted in his torso to take the heroes out of the picture; they must deal with the device (disarm, etc.) and then head for their meeting with Nirama

IF YOU HAD ANYONE AT THE REVIEW:

Nirama's final words to the assemblage remain with you. "I know there are divisive elements within our organization. But you must all understand that for us to continue to make progress – and profit – we must work together. Thus, if any of you have ... information, which you believe I need, please see me shortly. I will be holding audience here for as long as it takes."

IF YOU HAD NO ONE AT THE REVIEW:

If all of the heroes went somewhere other than the review, you're going to have to (a) run this encounter as a "chance run-in" with 3-A2, while the heroes are being escorted to Nirama, or (b) skip this encounter and describe the distant sound of an explosion somewhere in Rothe Gate. **Only** use option B if you're running very short on time. Otherwise, have 3-A2 wander up, through the security escort, and begin speaking to the heroes. The security droids won't blast him. Not immediately. However, if you had at least one person at the security review, then that subset of the party is what gets approached by 3-A2.

IN EITHER CASE...

You walk through the winding corridors of Rothe Gate, pondering your options. Nirama wants to meet with you. That much is clear. What that means, in light of everything you've seen, is not.

You round a corner and a familiar, rusty protocol droid looks up, disconnecting his power cell from the wall and turning to face you.

This is 3-A2, again. He looks different. Give the heroes *spot* checks. Scaled observations are detailed below. The better people roll on their spot check, the better the information they get, but just because someone rolls badly doesn't mean they don't notice anything. Start with the lowest DC for the spot check, and give successively more information with every increment of five units. You can break it down more finely if you like, but try to give everyone something a little different.

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DC 5 | 3-A2 is moving a little slower than before. If a droid could look tired, he would. |
| DC 10 | 3-A2's eyes are green. You would swear they were yellow before. |
| DC 15 | 3-A2 is not creaking as he moves. |
| DC 20 | 3-A2's power cell should be in the upper half of his torso. He had the socket plugged into a cell in his hip. |
| DC 25 | The area around the plug 3-A2 was charging is rust-free. Looks like fresh work. |
| DC 30 | 3-A2 is beeping. About one beep a second. Like a timer. |

So, here's the thing. 3-A2 is now a walking bomb. The heroes are expendable, since Nirama is on Rothe Gate, and the plans have changed. Nirama is going to be assassinated here (3-A2 doesn't know this), and it's useless to have the heroes carrying around information like what they have when Nirama's dead. The heroes are, officially, loose ends. 3-A2 has been sent to tie them off. The power cell on 3-A2's hip is where the bomb has been inserted. The change in eye color is the result of a different form of radiation coming from the bomb in his hip. You may give players appropriate knowledge checks (DC at your discretion) to figure out what their information means. The knowledge checks reveal more with the more detailed the clue was, so making a knowledge check after getting the eye color clue shouldn't immediately give them, "He's got a bomb in his leg." It should give them something more along the lines of, "He may have a different power source. Green is a color associated with some low-grade nuclear sources." Make them more nervous if you've got people getting more detailed clues. Give clues first, then knowledge checks to figure out what they mean. And have fun scaring them.

3-A2 approaches you, his movements smoother than you remember. "Thank you for your assistance. Your

services are no longer required. The new controller of the Smugglers Guild thanks you for your assistance.”

At this point, if nobody heard the beeping before, or figured out what was going on: ***You hear a beeping coming from the protocol droid. One beep per second. Like something counting down.***

And let the fun begin!

We’re not going to bother with full stats for 3-A2. He’s a standard protocol droid, with a Defense of 10 and 8 wound points. As long as the heroes don’t do something dumb, like specifically target the part of his body where the bomb is (and please, please, please give them wisdom checks to NOT do that, if the player declares that as their intention; DC 5 to know that you DON’T SHOOT AT BOMBS), they can take the droid out and then proceed with dealing with the bomb.

Now, disarming explosives is only a DC 15 *demolitions* check. But first, they have to GET TO the device, which is buried inside 3-A2’s circuitry. This should be a fairly tense operation. Describe increases in the speed of the beeping, a high-pitched whine, and so forth at the heroes start by removing the non-rusty plate on 3-A2’s hip, then begin digging through the circuitry. Have them roll some checks (whatever you feel appropriate), but remember – ultimately, the task they have in front of them is not THAT difficult. DC 15 isn’t too bad, and you can give them 2 retries before it blows up on them (double failsafe mechanism to make sure that 3-A2 didn’t accidentally discharge before he was supposed to). If it does blow up, well, it’s 8d6, reflex save DC 15 for half.

That’s not the point, though. Make it tense, make it take a little while to dig through the circuitry, and when they spot the explosive itself, give the folks who are doing the work *spot* checks. If they make a DC 15 check, or anyone watching over their shoulder makes DC 18, they notice an odd chip near the explosive. The chip can be extracted either before or after the explosive is disarmed. It is also possible, if no one in the group can do demolitions or other device disabling activities, to yank the bomb out and toss it down a nearby garbage chute. When the bomb is removed, it starts this extremely high-pitched whining, like it’s getting ready to blow. Roll some dice behind your hand as they’re rushing to get rid of the bomb, and have it explode just after it goes down the chute, blowing back at them. Give anyone within 10 meters reflex saves (DC 15). Success means they get out of the way, failure means they take 1d6 blowback damage.

If they succeed in disarming the explosive, read the following.

With a high-pitched whine that sounds almost mournful, the beeping stops. You wait for a long moment, half-expecting an explosion, but none comes.

The chip, when extracted, has a strange symbol cut into it. It’s clearly (*computer use*, DC 10) a control chip for the droid, and the symbol can be recognized (*knowledge: streetwise* (*Cularin*), DC 20) as belonging to Ari Melast, one of Nirama’s lieutenants. Making that *streetwise* check with a DC of 10 will also reveal that this is NOT a symbol Nirama himself uses, so this droid was not under his control. If the droid blows up, this chip ends up amidst the rubble, and can be found with a DC 10 search check. SINCE THE CHIP IS CRITICAL, you may have to get creative. But, they need to find it.

Now, the heroes must figure out, based on what they know, what to tell Nirama in their meeting. That would be next – in Encounter 7.

Encounter 7: Closing the Gate

Key ideas of this encounter: meet with Nirama; decide what to tell him about the situation (effectively, determine the fate of the smugglers in the system); assist in defending Nirama when the Cell launches an all-out assault on him, while the heroes are in with him

There are two ways the heroes can get to this point. They can either show up of their own accord, or they can be taken into custody by the security droids and dumped at Nirama’s feet. If you have a party that’s split, start the standard text (below), and then have the remainder of the party delivered along with the other trouble-makers (below). If the heroes are all delivered by the security droids, then Nirama’s mood will not be overly pleasant, as he is (a) surprised to see the heroes, and (b) extremely unhappy that they were caught violating his security system. If they actually blew up any of his security droids, Nirama will be almost angry, asking how his protection became so insufficient that the heroes felt the need to violate his base and destroy his property. And then, he will give them a chance to explain.

You arrive at Chamber 9, where Nirama is holding audience, almost exactly one-half hour after he finished addressing the personnel of Rothe Gate. The long, straight hallway leading to the chamber is lined with armed guards whose eyes always stare straight forward, yet you feel unsettlingly certain that every one of them is watching you, every step of the way.

You reach the door and are greeted by the pale, almost albino face of Len Markus. He looks at each of you, his dark eyes seeming to take in everything at once. Your clothes, your gear, and especially your

weapons. He cocks an eyebrow, then shrugs. "Issues for Nirama?"

Being told that Nirama summoned the heroes is plenty for Markus. As does being told that the heroes have information that Nirama will want. He is simply acting as a gatekeeper at this point, making sure the folks who get in pose no real threat to Nirama. And given the number of security droids in the room with Nirama, and his own presence just outside the door, he isn't too concerned that the heroes will try anything foolish. Once the heroes have provided an adequate explanation, he will enter a passcode in the keypad beside the door (stealthily concealing the exact numbers behind his hand – NO SHOULDER SURFING), and the door will slide open. The heroes should take the hint, and enter.

Chamber 9 is exactly what you've come to expect from Nirama. Not opulent, but extremely nice. Cushions are scattered across the floor, and Nirama himself sits on a padded bench in the center of the room. A dozen security droids ring the edges of the circular room, blaster rifles by their sides. The only exit to the room is the door through which you just entered.

Nirama doesn't rise. He gestures to the cushions on the floor before him. "I must admit, I had not expected to see you here. I'd been told there were outsiders present, but..."

The door hisses open and several security droids step through. They rather unceremoniously toss several individuals on the floor in front of Nirama before stepping back.

If any of the heroes were captured, they're with this bunch the two Twi'lek Cell sympathizers who got caught sneaking around during the review. Otherwise, it's just the Twi'leks.

Nirama looks at the two Twi'leks, neither of whom looks familiar to you.

If there are heroes tossed on the floor: *He then glances at the rest of your group. "These are with you? Stand away from those two, please." He gestures at the two Twi'leks.*

Now, back to the text everyone gets.

The two Twi'leks stare at Nirama, eyes wide, head-tails twitching. He stares back, and you can see the blaster in his rear hand begin to twirl. "You two," he says quietly. "You knew Jobril. I think you can tell me what happened to him."

The Twi'leks shake their heads and begin murmuring pleas. They aren't begging – yet – but you can see how it could turn into begging very quickly.

If the heroes offer that they have seen Jobril recently, Nirama will be interested. He will listen to their information about Jobril, nodding all the while. When the heroes finish telling him everything they know about Jobril, proceed.

"It appears that Jobril has, in fact, been compromised. Somehow, someone overrode his loyalty to me. That would have required some delicate work. One would have needed a detailed familiarity with the Twi'lek nervous system." The blaster twirls more quickly.

"I will ask you one more time." He stares at the two Twi'leks. "What happened to Jobril?"

One of the Twi'leks turns pale, but the other steps forward. "Lord Nirama, oh highest of the high, we acted in what we believed the best interests of the guild..."

Nirama holds up his hand. He looks at your group. "Please, step further away from them. Or, duck. Ducking would be good."

The Twi'leks squeal as the security droids level their blasters and open fire. In less than a second, nothing remains but two smoking pairs of boots.

Nirama sighs, and places the blaster in his rear hand on the bench beside him.

"Now. I would very much like to know what you are doing here. Some of you have worked for me before, so you know – honesty goes a long way."

This is decision time. The heroes can tell Nirama as much or as little as they like. There are several things that they may know by this point. I've listed these below, along with Nirama's reaction.

If they elected not to tell him anything, that's their decision. Nirama will nod and begin to release them. *We all make our decisions. Perhaps we will cross paths again. You do good work.* Then, skip to the boxed text that begins with the lights flickering before the heroes can leave.

Jobril brought us here. He had a datapad that he claimed was a summons from you. *Jobril's loyalty was compromised. I had hoped he was dead, but I heard that he had brought my ship to Rothe Gate, along with new personnel. I appreciate your willingness to answer a summons, but ... it was not mine.*

Our contact on Rothe Gate was a protocol droid, designation N3-A2. *3-A2? That rusty pile of junk? I had him sent to the scrap heap. He was my personal protocol droid for some time, and knew too much.* What he will not say, but what the heroes may pick up

on: Perhaps his memory chips survived intact a little too long.

We were sent to investigate these individuals, who are apparently traitors to you. [Show him the list.] ***Impossible. I have all of these individuals operating out of my personal base of operations as we speak. I trust them implicitly. Someone was trying to discredit them in order to weaken me.***

They all had these pins in their personal safes. ***Can you be sure they weren't planted there?***

Well, there were also these encrypted communications we found in their personnel files. ***Hmmm... interesting. How did you obtain these?***

We think it's possible that the datapad we were given was uploading information as it downloaded the files. ***Or that it uploaded the files themselves? These encryption strings are not ones that will operate on our system.***

We found this chip in 3-A2. It looks weird. ***This marking belongs to Ari Melast. She's one of my lieutenants. This is the chip that was controlling 3-A2? Well, that answers quite a bit.***

Oh yeah, 3-A2 tried to blow us up. He said that our assistance is no longer required, and that the new controller of the Smugglers Guild thanked us for our assistance. ***Markus! Get in here!***

At that point, Nirama has figured out that someone is about to do something very bad. He also has figured out that the heroes are on his side. If they don't tell him about 3-A2's statement, then he will not be alerted to the coming attack until the next set of boxed text. Which happens right about... Now.

The lights flicker, and the hum of the security droids stutters, then dies as the blaster rifles fall from the droids hands and the droids themselves clatter to the floor not long after. The door slides open and Markus leaps through as it slides shut once more. His blaster is out, and his eyes are wide.

"Nirama, we're under attack! I've summoned help, but I don't know how long until it arrives."

So, here's the thing. The heroes can elect to help Nirama, or not. If they assist in repelling the assault for 3 rounds after the first shots are fired (for characters level 1-3) or for 6 rounds after the first shots are fired (for characters level 4-6), then help will arrive and all will be well. If they do NOT assist, Markus and Nirama will be overrun, taken away, and control of the smugglers will change hands. So this is a very meaningful decision. MAKE SURE TO RECORD THE OUTCOME OF THIS ENCOUNTER ON THE CRITICAL EVENT SUMMARY AT THE END OF THE ROUND.

The heroes have one round to make their decision and get ready. Then the door gets blown off its hinges and the world gets really ugly. There is sufficient furniture (a trio of the padded benches, a couple of tables) to set up some cover, and you can get two individuals with blasters to either side of the door. Nirama and Markus will take the right and left sides of the door, respectively (see DM Aid 1 for their stats), leaving room on each side for one hero. The rest of the heroes should disburse as they see fit. Use standard SWRPG rules for Defense and cover bonuses.

Nirama looks at you. "Now is the time. Will you stand with me?" He doesn't have time to barter, but the look in his eyes makes it clear that he will make it worth your while.

And then, the door explodes. On the other side are the Cell's attack squad.

For heroes level 1-3:

Cell Attack Squad (6): Various Soldiers 5; IM +2; Def 15 (+2 dex, +3 class); Spd 10 m; Sz M; VP/WP 50/12; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, baton), +8 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; SZ M; FP 2; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Demolitions +5, Intimidate +7, Listen +2, Repair +2, Spot +5, Survival +7, Treat Injury +7.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, & heavy), Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, vibroweapons, heavy weapons), Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Mobility, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol).

Equipment: Blaster pistol, uniform, baton.

Round 1:

Nirama and Markus open fire on the attack squad. The attack squad returns fire. Both Nirama and Markus draw dedicated fire from one of the soldiers. Do NOT crit on either of them. Hitting them is fine. Killing them is not. Not in the fight. The other soldiers will each pick a single target at which to fire. The soldiers are the guards who were standing in the corridor, who are apparently tasked with killing Nirama.

Round 2:

More firing. The soldiers begin moving up. If the heroes are not helping, one of them makes it through the door this round and throws himself at Nirama.

Round 3:

More firing. If the heroes are still not helping, reinforcements arrive for the Cell, and Nirama and Markus are both overborne and taken away. The heroes are ignored. If the heroes ARE helping, then at the end

of the round, blaster fire comes from the far end of the corridor, and when the soldiers turn their attention in that direction, Markus and Nirama shoot them in the back.

For heroes level 4-6:

Cell Attack Squad (12): Various Soldiers 5; IM +2; Def 15 (+2 dex, +3 class); Spd 10 m; Sz S; VP/WP 50/12; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, baton), +8 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; SZ M; FP 2; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Demolitions +5, Intimidate +7, Listen +2, Repair +2, Spot +5, Survival +7, Treat Injury +7.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, & heavy), Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, vibroweapons, heavy weapons), Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Mobility, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol).

Equipment: Blaster pistol, uniform, baton.

Round 1:

Nirama and Markus open fire on the attack squad. The attack squad returns fire. Both Nirama and Markus draw dedicated fire from one of the soldiers. Do NOT crit on either of them. Hitting them is fine. Killing them is not. Not in the fight. The other soldiers will each pick a single target at which to fire. The soldiers are the guards who were standing in the corridor, who are apparently tasked with killing Nirama.

Round 2:

More firing. The soldiers begin moving up. If the heroes are not helping, one of them makes it through the door this round and throws himself at Nirama.

Round 3:

More firing. If the heroes are still not helping, reinforcements arrive for the Cell, and Nirama and Markus are both overborne and taken away. The heroes are ignored. If the heroes ARE helping, then the soldiers begin to move up, don't get very far, and 2 more soldiers arrive at the end of the round, at the far end of the corridor.

Round 4:

More firing. Since the heroes must be helping to get to this point, the soldiers move up further. One of them almost reaches the door before Markus makes his head into a scorch mark on the wall. 2 more soldiers arrive at the end of the round, at the far end of the corridor.

Round 5:

If you guessed "More firing," you're right! The soldiers continue to press, and it's starting to look like their numbers are just going to overwhelm the heroes and

Nirama. Markus is screaming into his comlink, but it seems to be dead. One of the soldiers actually makes it into the doorway. Let a hero smoke him, or Nirama will if everyone else misses. 2 more soldiers arrive at the end of the round, at the far end of the corridor.

Round 6:

Two soldiers charge the room, blasters blazing. The sound of boots in the hall gets louder as the rest of the soldiers charge. The smoke from the blasters and the screams of the soldiers (and maybe the heroes, if they aren't playing it smart) are thick in the air, but only those 2 soldiers make it through the doorway this round. At the end of the round, blaster fire comes from the far end of the corridor, and when the soldiers turn their attention in that direction, Markus and Nirama shoot them in the back.

Conclusion

Conclusion A: Nirama Taken

ONLY run this conclusion if the heroes consciously decided not to help Nirama. If they helped him, then make it grand and heroic and have them succeed!

You watched Nirama hauled away by the Cell and had to wonder if you did the right thing. A strange mix of sobriety and celebration filled Rothe Gate before you left, as news of Nirama's deposal and death spread. You were put on a shuttle back to your homes, assured that your service to the Cell would be remembered.

Conclusion B: Nirama Not Taken

As the last echoes of blaster fire fade from the corridor, Nirama turns to you, barely visible through a haze of smoke, and speaks. "Thank you. You have made the right choice. The Cell wanted nothing so much as profit, no matter what the means. They would have done unthinkable things to this system. I am gladdened that you did not allow this to happen.

"I am also gladdened that you have helped me to survive this day. This, too, will be taken into account in the future." He turns to Markus. "Find Ari. This is her work. Find her... and bring her to me."

Markus nods grimly, turns on his heel, and exits the room. As he disappears from sight, Nirama sighs and looks to you once more.

"Good help is so hard to find. And I have always been one to reward good help."

Conclusion C: Nirama Accidentally Killed in Firefight

Don't let this happen. Fudge some dice or something.

Here Ends, “UnderWorld”

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for Living Force events.

- 1) Experience awards in Living Force are not made for achieving objectives, but instead for successfully completing an adventure of a given length. Thus, if the heroes survived and accomplished the primary goal of the adventure, they receive full Adventure Experience (600 xp for core LF plot scenarios, 350 for non-core LF scenarios).
- 2) Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-400 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the hero interacted socially. Do NOT automatically award max roleplaying XP, consider carefully how well the players stayed in-character. This is your opportunity to reward appropriately cinematic behavior, so use it!

Adventure Experience Award:

Did the heroes gather all necessary information to uncover the plot against Nirama, and keep him alive? If so, each hero who survived receives 600 xp.

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Adventure Experience: | 600 xp |
| Roleplaying Experience: | 0-400 xp |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Possible Experience: | 1,000 xp |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|

If the heroes did not complete the scenario because of time constraints, but were “on the right track,” you may award ½ adventure experience. If the heroes succeeded in at either gathering the information or keeping Nirama alive, but not the other, award them ¾ adventure experience.

Loot Summary

If it’s not on this list, the heroes cannot keep it. This is a house rule that overrides what they may actually acquire in the scenario. Certificates are not supplied for standard equipment, but it should be assumed that any equipment the heroes find which is not listed here cannot be kept or is non-functional for one reason or another.

From Nirama:

Each hero may choose either:

2000 credits

OR (Premiere month of May 2001 only)

[hero name] has been given the following, in gratitude, by Nirama, Crimelord in the Cularin System

Choose one (1) of the following. Note that this does NOT include a permit for the weapon. Possession of a restricted weapon without a permit is punishable by confiscation of the weapon, and the levying of a fine equivalent to the weapon’s market value. “Don’t get caught.” – Nirama. Heavy Blaster Pistol or Vibroaxe

After May 2001 - only 1 of the above per run of the scenario.

Weapons other than Blark’s vibro-axe that are won in combat may be kept. Note that all other weapons are standard, non-restricted variety weapons, not particularly impressive.

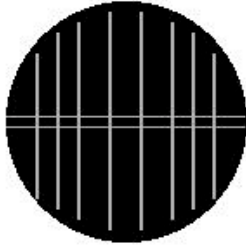
Player Handout 1: Suspected Traitor File

The following are suspected of involvement with the Cell. Investigate them fully. This datapad will allow you to access their personnel records from the central terminal in Rothe Gate. Return it to your contact when you complete your mission. Further investigation should be accomplished within their living quarters. Physical evidence is needed to directly tie the traitors to the Cell. Absenting that, actions taken by Nirama will seem arbitrary and empower his opposition.

Do NOT fail.

| <u>Darkon Lakade</u> | <u>Rothe Gate engineer</u> | <u>Male, Cerean</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cyria Dombasle | Rothe Gate inventory supervisor | Female, Human |
| Maarten Haal | Rothe Gate inventory supervisor | Male, Human |
| Gal O'Wei | Rothe Gate security specialist | Female, Sullustan |
| Plu Markeela | Rothe Gate operations manager | Male, Ithorian |

Player Handout 2: Cell Symbol



Player Handout #3: Decrypted Message

Decryption Algorithm 722b, mark 8&sd999-#@52-91972
Key BR68-C411

Personal Log 32344, Message Encrypted [nine days ago]

Darkon,

All is ready for the Cell to move on Rothe Gate. The weapons facility is central to our long-term goals. With Nirama removed, the system will be much easier to control.

Gal

- Encryption string 7iu21ssdaidaloinn23hgzii

DM Aid #1: Nirama and Len Markus

Nirama: Male alien Scoundrel 6/Crimelord 9; IM 1 (+1 Dex); Def 22 (+1 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 90/15; Atk +9/+4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ Illicit Barter, Better Lucky than Good, Rear Hand Dexterity; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +10; SZ M; FP 6; Rep 17; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Equipment: blaster pistols, expensive clothing, blast vest hidden near him at all times, personal space yacht *Viper Wing*.

Skills: Appraise +19, Bluff +20, Computer Use +15, Diplomacy +19, Forgery +18, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +14, Listen +9, Knowledge (Alien species—Caarite) +7, Knowledge (Cularin system) +9, Knowledge (Streetwise—Cularin system) +12, Pilot +5, Profession (Accountant) +10, Read/write Basic, Read/write Caarimala, Read/write Huttese, Search +10, Sense Motive +20, Sleight of Hand +7, Speak Basic, Speak Caarimala, Speak Tarasinese, Speak Huttese, Speak Sullustan, Spot +10.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Infamy, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Sharp-eyed, Skill Emphasis (Forgery), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

SQ: *Rear Hand Dexterity*—can use hand pointing rearward for tasks with only a –2 penalty.

Len Markus: Male human Fringer 3/Soldier 8; IM 3 (+3 Dex); Def 25 (+3 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 79/14; +13/+8 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ +5 bonus to Diplomacy checks to buy or sell goods; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +5; SZ M; FP 12; Rep 6; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Equipment: blaster pistol.

Skills: Appraise +4, Computer Use +6, Disguise +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Knowledge (streetwise—Coruscant) +4, Listen +5, Pilot +5, Read/write Basic, Search +3, Speak Basic, Speak Sullustan, Spot +7, Tumble +7.

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Low Profile, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Critical Event Summary

UnderWorld

1. Did the heroes locate Ari Melast's control chip in the droid?

Yes

No

If so, did they tell Nirama about it?

Yes

No

2. Did the heroes assist Nirama and Len Markus in repelling the Cell?

Yes

No

3. Was Nirama taken by the Cell?

Yes

No

4. Did the players decide to try to get around Nirama's security system, and end up getting take to him by the droids?

Yes

No

Did they seem to recognize how silly and futile this attempt really was?

Yes

No

5. Did any of the Heroes die protecting Nirama? If so, record names, RPGA #'s, and next of kin below.

Convention Coordinator:

To report these results (for events during the month of May 2001 only), you may US mail them to:

RPGA - Living Force, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707

Or email to: LFPlots@rpga.net

Or fax to: (425) 687-8287 Attention Living Force Critical Events

Check <http://www.rpga.net/LF> for other methods.