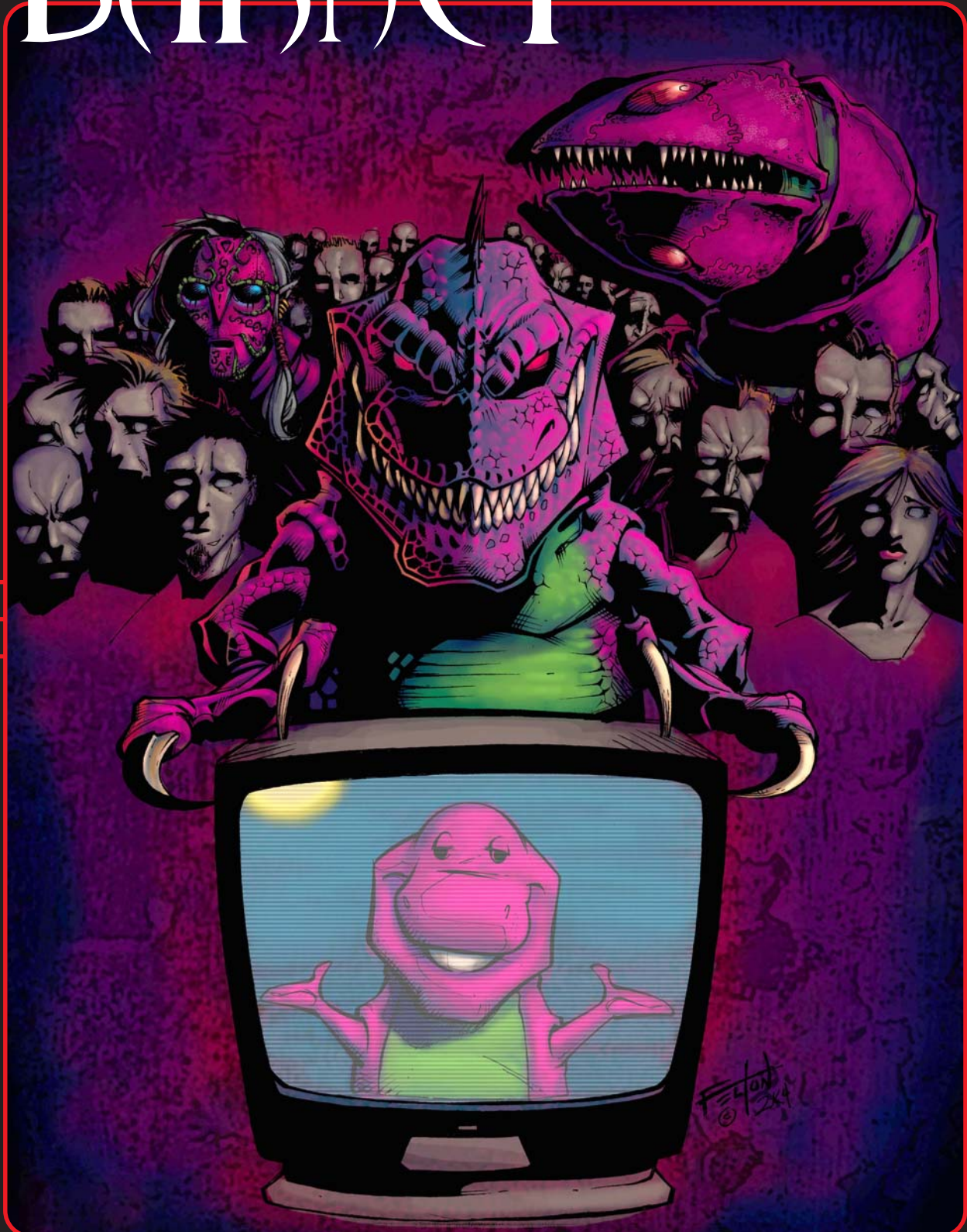


The Jihad to Destroy BARNEY

Writer's Guide and
Roleplaying Sourcebook



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Really, This Isn't Bullshit

We work and slave twenty-four hours a day, spill blood, set spongies on fire, chop them up into filet mignon, flatten their cities, destroy their planets, what have you, all so you can lie in bed at night and think to yourself, "Gee, I'm glad I'm not a mindless drone in the service of the Lord of Purple Hell". And don't you ever forget it.

The concept of a Jihad Universe has existed since the beginning of the Jihad, long before there was ever a written definition of it. The High Prophet (pbuh), and his Band of Merry Funsters, would take their mostly suburban surroundings and on it play out a never-ending struggle between It of the One Tooth (Barney) and the glorious forces devoted to his demise, that is, the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Dinosaur. These first few freeform years were peppered with strange acronyms (CLITORIS, ORGASM, OSHIT), science fiction references (Star Trek, Battlestar Galactica, Ringworld, and stuff even I've never heard of), and a regular stream of stories, long and short, all taking place in this nebulous reality spawned from the imaginations of those who posted to alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die.

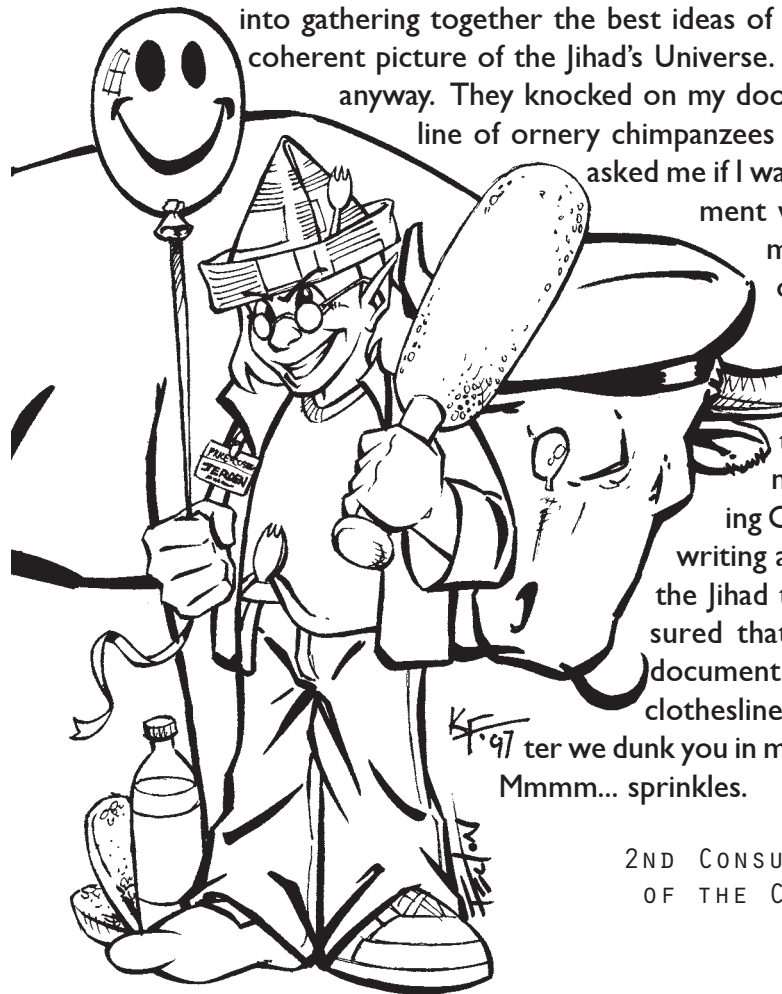
The longest of these stories were known as Operations, and were equivalent to military advances, or drawn-out battles. While many Operations are known to have existed, only the ones after Operation:WorldWalk have been archived in much (indeed, any) detail. For many years, there was no unifying concept of a Jihad Universe, and humorous (and sometimes embarrassing) discontinuities were commonplace. The carrot-shooter comes to mind, and let's just say that the laws of physics were given about as much respect as the law that allows police officers in Paulding, Ohio, to bite a dog to quiet him.

The authors of this wholly remarkable work have put a lot of blood, sweat and caffeine into gathering together the best ideas of contemporary Jihaddi writers to form a coherent picture of the Jihad's Universe. Well, that's what I assumed they meant, anyway. They knocked on my door late one winter evening, followed by a line of ornery chimpanzees who obviously hadn't eaten in days, and asked me if I wanted to write an introduction for a document whose details they began to foist under

my gaze at a rate of knots. It was all printed on very nice paper, so I agreed. The chimpanzees burned down my kitchen.

I have since received compensation, including a fetching new blender and track lighting. But I digress. What you now see on your screen is a guide for writing Operations, and now serves as a canon for writing any kind of fiction based on the world of the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Dinosaur. Be assured that disregarding this frightfully important document will result in your being strung up on the clothesline outside Headquarters and left to dry after we dunk you in monkey urine and cover you with sprinkles.

Mmmm... sprinkles.



2ND CONSULATE BROTHER DRAGONFYRE JONES
OF THE CHURCH OF ST. DINO THE AVENGER

CHAPTER 1

FOR THOSE WHO CAME IN LATE...

The Earth is under attack.

The demon lord B'harne is waging an assault on the souls of everybody on Earth. Under the benevolent guise of the children's television host Barney the Dinosaur, B'harne seeks to destroy the minds of children and adults and bind them to his will. Once he has made mindless slaves of humanity, B'harne will rule the Earth with an iron talon.

Though if B'harne's ally Charn'El, an alien sorcerer who's elevated himself to the status of a god, has his say, B'harne will be the lord of a charred and ruined Earth. Charn'El has seen the future, you see; he knows that soon enough, humanity will rise up and destroy him and his people in a ruinous war to the knife. He knows that if he wants his people to survive, he'll have to strike humanity and destroy us before we have the opportunity to destroy him. These two powerful creatures have joined forces and now stand against the human race.

But they don't stand unopposed. Out there in the shadows, there's a group of special men and women who have dedicated their lives to fighting the combined forces of B'harne and Charn'El. There *are* things that go 'bump' in the night, and they are the ones who bump *back*. They're out there guarding the planet from things that would drive you nuts just to *glimpse*. Aliens. Wizards. Werewolves. Tentacled horrors that you couldn't see in horror movies. These people sit out there on the ragged edge between civilization and the howling void, armed to the teeth, in order to hold off Armageddon for one more day.

They are the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur.



WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON AROUND HERE

The following is a transcript of a lecture given by official Jihad historian Dr. Jason Carmichael to the incoming class of recruits at TRES Corps Headquarters on April 12, 1999.

Who are we?

At first glance, it seems like a dumb question. We're the Jihad! But, if a thoughtful Jihaddi approaches the idea, they find it's not as simple as it seems. We are an organization made up of many different types of sentient beings, recruited not only from the four corners of the world but of the multiverse, and we have a healthy respect for differences. With all this tolerance for the eccentric, how do we manage to keep the Jihad together?

It is simply thus: B'harne must be destroyed, all else is irrelevant.

This is the binding thought. However, a thoughtful man would ask why this is the binding thought. For that answer, gentlemen, you need a bit of a tour of Jihad history, and that is why I am here. I hope at the end of this tour you will have some idea of the nature of the Wyrms we oppose, why we — the Jihad — came to be, and how we got here from there. So with no further ado, let us begin.

We don't know a whole lot about the Beast we oppose. We don't know where he came from or even what he truly is. There is speculation he is a demon from the deepest pits of Hell or some truly malevolent spirit. We really don't understand his nature, or why he chooses to fight the way he does. Any attempt to answer any of these questions or even approach the Wyrms himself has one of three consequences: Either the Wyrms is slain temporarily, or the one approaching the Wyrms has ended up either dead or spongified. We can surmise from the above fact that B'harne must be a very private whatever he is.

But some conjecture and piecing together what we do know, we find that first of all he is probably not of this Earth. Second, he has some kind of alliance with the Lyrans — although the details of the alliance are unknown to us. We also happen to know that the Lyrans hate and fear humanity to the point they wish to destroy us, but we aren't quite sure why. Third, B'harne cannot be killed permanently with any weapon we have short of Lord Owsen's Barney Slayer — and even that is ambiguous as we've never really had a chance to test it. Fourth, he has two associates that are similar to what he is — B'haby B'hop and B'heel'hay. It isn't really a lot. But most importantly, we know the effects B'harne has on humanity — and if you haven't seen it, I hate to tell you that it isn't pretty. Luckily for us, he wasn't as much of an issue in the past as he is today...or human history may have taken a different and more unpleasant course.

Perhaps he didn't really get a chance to destroy this world as he so desperately wished because there was no simple way to destroy the world in those days. Communication between parties was slow and painful, and even the dual inventions of the telegraph and the radio still didn't change the fact that it was difficult to get a message out to a lot of people in a way that didn't involve them thinking about what they had just read or heard.

Ah...but then television came into the mix. You've heard all the derogatory names for it, I have no need to go into those. For the first time in human history, we had a medium that instead of encouraging thought, encouraged people to sit and look at the images until their brains turned to pabulum. And it's really no surprise that we see the rise of B'harne in conjunction with the maturing of this technology.

Now, before we get into a debate over the merits of television, I want to point out that it is not completely an evil. It does serve a purpose for entertainment and education. However, in the form it has now, there is not much use for the imagination or the intellect. And that is the weapon that the Beast counts on...to be able to invade the brain and take over without his victim even realizing what is going on.

It's hopeless, right? I mean, there's no way we're going to convince the Mundanes to give up their television sets and go back to reading and listening to the radio. In fact, if you tried such a campaign in Mundania, you would be laughed out of your seat. And revealing the true nature of the Beast is an impossibility as well. I mean, c'mon, a children's television character is out to destroy humanity as we know it? Even if you did get past the absurdity of your postulate, the panic that would ensue would play right into the Beast's hands.

Jason Carmichael, Historian of the Jihad

150 points

Jason Carmichael is one of those rare breed of Jihaddi who can claim to have seen the Golden Age. He joined the Jihad soon after its founding, supposedly recruited by one of the members of the Original Seven (although which one has been lost to time, and Carmichael refuses to tell). He served ably in the early skirmishes with the Hell Wyrms, but when the Jihad was forced slightly into the open in the early '90s, he fell into Liaison work (the first documented Liason), keeping the Jihad safe from the pens of journalists and historians everywhere, a job which he performed ably.

Then came Worldwalk and Phoenix, and Carmichael's life was turned upside down forever. Carmichael had often noted that he was the only one keeping any historical record of the Jihad, and was often invited to different Jihaddi headquarters to lecture on the place of the Jihad in history. One of the days he had been invited to lecture, he had gathered up a few notes, leaving the rest of them carefully filed in his house. Before he could return to his notes, he had been sucked into the events of Operation WorldWalk, and when it was finally over, he found one of the consequences of the near-collapse of the timelines was that his house was no longer where he had left it, and missing along with it were his piles of notes and memorabilia from the early days of the Jihad.

When this war was over, he returned to civilian life, only to find that research in the Mundane sector no longer held any interest to him. He took a vacation to find himself, and after stumbling around in the mountains of Colorado for a few weeks, he decided that he wanted to become a permanent fulltime Jihaddi. To achieve this goal, Jihaddi higherups created a fiery car crash on the route to a job interview, and to the mundane world, Jason Carmichael perished in that accident, a few days shy of his twenty-eighth birthday.

However, Professor Carmichael remains alive, holding an honorary commission in TRES and a professorship in the MAUL War College, and still lectures newbie Jihaddi on their place in history. There have been recent efforts to commit Professor Carmichael's lectures to print, and the result has become known as the Carmichael Lectures.

Attributes: ST 9 IQ 15 DX 9 HT 12

Advantages: Common Sense [10]; Alternate identity (legal) / James Kimball, reporter (from early nineties) [5]; Ambidexterity [10]; Acute Vision+1 [2]; Courtesy Rank+6 [6]; Eidetic Memory+1 [30]; Language Talent+3 [6]; Magery+1 [15]; Sensitive [5].

Disadvantages: Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Bad Sight [-10]; Insomniac (Normal) [-10]; Nightmares [-5]; Phobia: Squeamishness (mild) [-10]; Workaholic [-5].

Skills: Acting-14; Bicycling-10; Chess-15; Conspiracy Theory-16; Diplomacy-14; Driving-11; Fast-Talk-14; First Aid-15; Fishing-15; Guns-10; Hiking-13; History-17; History: Esoteric(history of the Jihad)-18; Hypnotism-15; Intelligence Analysis-13; Language(Chinese)-17; Language(French)-17; Language(German)-17; Language(Russian)-17; Leadership-14; Literature-16; Navigation-13; Orienteering-14; Photography-14; Research-17; Shortsword-10; Sociology-13; Survival-14; Teaching-16; Typing-12; Writing-14.

So the war must be secret. But who can be trusted with that secret, and be willing to be the good guys, doing a job that must be done with absolutely no recognition?

Enter the Jihad

Unfortunately for students of history, there isn't much in the way of actual tangible history left from the early days of the Jihad. While I was present for a large portion of it, even my carefully kept notes were lost in an accident, and I only have the memories of myself and others to rely on. The problem with memory, especially in a literate culture, is that it tends to become myth rather easily, and the distortions from mythologizing something make it harder to make out what the original truth was.

But two facts seem most important in the lead up to the Jihad. First, the Wyrms seem to have decided that the best way to bring about his Purple Kingdom was to reveal himself to the world — not as the slobbering form of evil incarnate that we know him to be, but a sugary-sweet children's television show character. In some ways, this choice of guise turned out to be lucky for us, because it has helped us keep our War out of sight of the mundanes, but on the other hand, it also turned out to be unlucky because the primary audience for a children's television show is the young and impressionable minds of children.

Soon after B'harne's show went on the air, sometime in the mid to late eighties, a man whom we Jihaddi would come to know as the High Prophet (Pez be unto him), but who at the time was nothing more than your ordinary construction worker, would begin to have the first in a sequence of dreams and visions about some evil loose on the world that would destroy humanity if it wasn't checked. At first, he wasn't sure about these visions — would you have been if you were living a perfectly ordinary mundane life and you started getting odd visions about a kid's television show character being the incarnation of pure evil?

Luckily for the Jihad and the fate of humanity, the High Prophet was willing to put up with these visions, and as they continued unabated, he began searching out others who might be having these same visions. It was made easier by the fact that his visions seemed to want him to search out these others. Over the course of a couple years, he found them all — a priest, a soldier, a doctor, a teacher, a physics Ph.D student, and an airline pilot, and from that humble Seven came the organization that you are all a part of today.

In 1990, after several meetings with those others who shared his visions, the High Prophet uttered what we know today as the Three-fold Truth, which included the statement I gave you at the beginning of this speech. With the arrival of the Truth, he was finally able to call forth that most noble undertaking. He called a Jihad — a Jihad against the Evil that had come to torment Earth. The War began at this point, the same War you and I are fighting today.

The early days were a pretty heady time to be part of the Jihad. Missions were taken on solo and in pairs. None of the structure that the current Jihad relies on to be able to function existed at that point, and people were pretty much cast to the wind, doing simply what had to be done in those days. Granted, the opposition forces weren't very well organized at that point either, which was probably the one saving grace for the nascent Jihad.

The Studio Four

In late 1991, an event happened that nearly broke the cover of the young Jihad, which would have destroyed the Cause. I mean, before, crimes were up as Jihaddi would take on minions of B'harne in less than subtle places and fashions, but this event was different because of the scale of the crime. Four young recruits to the Jihad decided that it was time to take the War to the enemy's lair. They decided that they would break into the studios in which B'harne's show was filmed and find some way to make it impossible for B'harne to continue to tape the show.

Unfortunately for them, the cops showed up at the studio halfway through this rampage and the four people there were busted for breaking and entering and malicious vandalism. This would not have been so bad for the Jihad if one of the people responsible for the job hadn't broken down and confessed exactly why and what he was doing there.

This event was, as you can imagine, front page news. Especially when it at first seemed as if the young man who had said this was turning out to be perfectly sane in all ways other than his rather interesting delusion. The other thing is that he knew a few names, and there was some pressure coming down from the other side to book these four away, as well as anybody else who might have been associated with the studio ransacking.

The very first Jihad cleanup crews were used on this mess. Some of us took spots as reporters to swing the reporting of this mess, and even one daring Jihaddi somehow managed to get himself put on the psychiatric team evaluating the Studio Four, as they became known.

There was lots of debate among Jihaddi in those days about what to do with these four young men, as it looked like charges were going to be filed by our Opposition, hoping to strike a blow for their side against us. Finally, it was decided that we unfortunately had to abandon these people for the greater sake of keeping the War going. We also had to make it so that in the future, when the Wyrms and his minions tried to accuse



us of existing, that it would make them look insane.

To accomplish this, we added notes to the file of the one that told everything that he was known to have schizophrenic breaks with reality, and we let the others know that if they so chose to join their friend in his testimony that we would do the same thing to them. The other three thankfully chose to be sentenced rather than make things any harder for the rest of the Jihad, and the crisis of exposure was over.

But it became clear that the ad hoc structure that we had formed to run the Jihad was quickly being outpaced by the membership growth, and a couple of our founders had expressed an interest in returning to a so-called 'normal' life. It was decided that even though the High Prophet had done much good for the world by uttering the three-fold truth and calling a Jihad, it was time for a different way of organizing ourselves.

Before any of this work in rearranging could be done, though, the High Prophet and several of his closest associates turned up missing and could not be found anywhere. What exactly happened, we still do not know. Some of the more religious members thought that the High Prophet and the other missing had ascended for their role in bringing about the Jihad, some of the more pragmatic thought that they were simply tired of inter-Jihad politics in the wake of the Studio Four and thus had simply wandered back into Mundane life without telling anybody, and some of the more conspiracy minded held that the Wyrms and his allies had captured them in a ploy to destroy the Jihad once and for all.

If it truly was the latter, it didn't work. From the original Seven, we still had Lord Owsen and the Mystic Mongoose around. While neither of them wanted to be the man in charge — they had seen the stress on their old friend during the bleak winter when it looked like we were about to lose everything — they did an admirable job holding the Jihad together until somebody else could be found to lead it.

The Rise of the Jihad Autonomous Organization

To explain how the Jihad moved to this next stage, I have to step back a little and tell you of the rise of the proto-JAO. In the wake of the Studio Four incident, some Jihaddi thought it was wise to band together in groups and work towards the destruction of the Wyrms in that fashion. A group of people had access to more resources than a single person. Also, the Jihad had learned the value of cleaning up after itself, and it was easier to be able to plan missions knowing that you both had a cleanup crew in place and that the cleanup crew was friendly. It also allowed for some flexibility for passing orders from the top to the bottom.

A lot of these organizations were set up around a similar geographical area, most notorious being the band clustered in and around Texas A&M University, which produced a number of well-known Jihaddi, and another band clustered around the upper Midwest that later became known as MAUL.

But a couple of these proto-JAOs took a slightly different approach to maintaining a membership base. First of all, they allowed anybody to become part of their organization, and made it less tied to geography. Second, they picked somewhat of an overarching theme for their membership to consider themselves part of. These two proto-JAOs called themselves, respectively, the Dobermans and the Resurgent Templar, and are the forerunners of today's Doberman Empire and TRES Corps.

It should be noted that some of this ability to transcend geography was in part due to the introduction of the JihadLinker. Before, when one had to rely on ordinary methods of communication, there was less ability to coordinate what was going on with your fellow members when you had to rely on the plain old telephone service. But even at the basic stage, where 'Linkers acted as glorified pagers, there was a tremendous freeing of resources, and it allowed for the non-geographically linked proto-JAO to come into ascendance.

All of this leads to the leadership race which Owsen and Mongoose were overseeing, since neither of them wanted the job. And although they looked at the geographically based proto-JAOs, they took a longer and harder look at the two that were managing to transcend geography. Of the two, the Dobermans were both older and larger, and their leader, Fleet Commander Serbeus, seemed the wisest choice to lead the entire Jihad.

Thus Owsen and Mongoose named Serbeus the new leader of the Jihad. Serbeus, besides leading the Dobermans, was also somewhat a student of classics, and his first act was to rename his office to the Office of the Praetor, perhaps to confer upon the Jihad the majesty of the Romans. Soon after he was named Praetor, Serbeus would add the appellation "Empire" onto the name of his organization. It is pretty much from the addition of this appellation that we declare the first fully fledged Jihad Autonomous Organization, the Glorious Doberman Empire.

The entire period I refer to here is now referred to as the Golden Age, though as a member throughout most of the period in question, I fail to see what is so Golden about it. It was most definitely not as idyllic as later Jihaddi would make it out to be. This is probably partially due to the tendency of memory to make myth, and the Golden Age is a time that has fled into myth. We have a little better idea of what was going on in the next period of history — a point in time that a current Jihaddi might actually recognize what's going on, a time of the first JAOs and the first attempts at working globally.

We have already discussed somewhat the rise of the Doberman Empire, so let us concentrate on what other major JAOs existed about this point. Those are, in no special order, TRES Corps, the Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards (MAUL), the Blood Jihad, and the Legion of Doom. Also, at about this time we had the rise of a couple small R&D shops and the emergence of the Maenads, both of which had an interesting effect on the Jihad as we know it.

Going Global

As I mentioned, this is the first period where we were able to work beyond the borders of the United States in any coherent way, which is good because the Wyrms were starting to eye territory elsewhere. One of our first missions out of country was the Montreal Incursion in 1992, which is important for two reasons — it was one of our first missions outside the boundaries of the United States and it was the first time we met a certain sponge minion by the name of Mikey Crawford.

However, in late 1993 and early 1994, not only was the Jihad starting to attract recruits from other continents (most notably Europe and Australia), but we began having the manpower to stage skirmishes in those countries. Unfortunately for us, our Adversary had found his way to England and Australia before us, and got somewhat of a head start in working his evils on those populations. Thus, we had to make up for lost time. Probably our worst blow came in 1994 when the Wyrms announced that he would be translating all his shows into Spanish, French, German and Portuguese which meant that his influence would be spread that much further. With this threat, some of the JAOs tried to boost their capabilities to respond into Europe and Latin America, the two biggest targets for the Wyrms.

The Secret War had grown from something ran out of a few American cities into this worldwide response team in just under four years. Divine interference or manifest destiny aside, this accomplishment is something for

Timeline

25,000 BC: Rise and fall of Atlantis. The Illuminati is founded after the collapse of the Atlantean thaumocracy.

18,000 BC: Lyrans mage Charn'El ascends to demi-god status.

1500 BC: Charn'El has vision of human race destroying his people; Lyrans begin concerted effort to locate the threat.

300 BC: Lyrans bioship stumbles across Earth; first attempt at conquest fails due to interference from Illuminati and Seleucid magicians.

1776: Adam Weishaupt founds the Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria. Original Illuminati is mildly amused.

1787: First recorded conflict between the Maenads of the Holy Albino and the Lyrans.

1947: Human sorcerers guided by a Lyrans magus open the Babylon Road in the California desert; first large-scale Lyrans incursions on Earth; Grey ship attracted by the Road crashlands in New Mexico; first contact with the Greys.

1970: First contact between the Salusian Empire and Earth during the *Apollo 13* mission.

1975: High Mage of Lyrans summons demon B'harne as part of long-term campaign to enslave or eliminate humanity.

1987: "Barney and Friends" TV show debuts in the United States.

Dec. 1988: Maenads discover the origins of B'harne, vow to fight it.

1988-1990: The High Prophet and Original Seven Jihaddi begin having visions; gather together.

1990: High Prophet utters the Threefold Truth; Jihad to Destroy Barney formed.

Dec. 1991: Studio Four incident; armed takeover of Barney show ends with Jihaddi in police custody.

Mar. 1992: Studio Four incident resolved; first Jihad Autonomous Organizations begin forming along geographic lines.

Nov. 1992: First non-geographic JAOs, Dobermans and Resurgent Templars, formed.

Jan. 1993: High Prophet and five of Original Seven disappear, Tilden Owsen and Mystic Mongoose remain; WEDJEE research lab founded.

Mar. 1993: JihadLinker first introduced.

Apr. 1993: Doberman Fleet Commander Serberus named first Leader (later Praetor) of the Jihad.

Aug. 1993: Dobermans become the Glorious Doberman Empire, the first JAO.

which the Jihad should be proud. The Doberman Empire was conducting operations in Australia, Europe, Brazil, the United States and Canada simultaneously in the Spring of 1994. The Doberman Empire was definitively the best equipped and largest fighting force the Jihad had ever fielded, and they were very good at their job. We'll come back to this thought in a second.

TRES Corps, which had emerged under the leadership of Lord Owsen from the struggling band of the Resurgent Templar, was less able to be involved in world straddling missions of great importance, so they decided to concentrate instead on being able to respond quickly to any threat in North America, and having good intelligence in place to be able to respond to those threats. When the DE picked up a formerly independent R&D shop known as WEDJEE, then headed by a man known simply as Captain Midnight, but who would later become Fleet Commander Samhain of the DE, TRES responded by starting their own in house R&D group that would gain the appellation of Zeta.

The Blood Jihad, from its very founding by a couple of the oddest people to ever grace the Jihad's presence — a pair known as Arsenal the Lone Warrior and Uplink — had an interest in both space and R&D, and soon became known as the place in the Jihad to go if you had an interest in the mix of those two subjects. We are still not entirely sure how they managed to get their stuff in orbit, or just how they managed to establish a moon base without anybody noticing, but somehow they did. There are guesses that there were deals made with Russia, who, for cold hard American greenbacks, was willing to pass off Blood Jihad launches as their launches, but this is a subject upon which the Blood Jihad High Command kept utmost silence.

The Legion of Doom prided themselves on their special operations skills. They also prided themselves on being one of the more extensively cross-trained troops in the Jihad. If you needed somebody who had an obscure skill-set, chances were that they called the Legion home. The Legion also excelled at despongification techniques, being one of the first groups to establish a division specifically devoted to studying ways to clean Barney's influence out of people's heads. They worked in small groups, and were masters of striking hard and fast — and were also among the first JAOs to really excel in cleaning up after themselves.

Lastly, there were the Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards, or MAUL. The thing to keep in mind about MAUL is that they were the only JAO to survive from the time in the Jihad when people banded together because of their geography. Thus, they had a very strong association that the Midwestern United States was theirs to protect. The other interesting thing about MAUL is that they refuse to use anything better than current technology in the mundane world — they really like their tanks — and they don't have much clue in the meaning of the word 'subtle'. Thankfully for the Jihad, the few times MAUL has gotten on the wrong side of the cameras, they've been mistaken for the United States military.

And that is a brief look at how the Jihad stood going into the summer of 1994, unafraid of the world, taking on the HellWyrm wherever he might strike, and thinking that nothing could seriously harm them. They had managed to avoid the news cameras for years, and perhaps it was hubris that caused the next big crisis of exposure. It started with a lost prototype JihadLinker.

Mr. Crawford's Linker

A Canadian member of the Doberman Empire was doing some normal work in Montreal when he put the prototype JihadLinker he was entrusted with in his bag and then failed to zip the pouch he had put his Linker in. Of course, as he was wandering through Montreal, the Linker fell out of his bag.

Normally, this wouldn't have been a big problem, since Linkers were arcane things to use back in the day, but this was a new prototype with the simple to use interface and the bright shiny green Send button. It was simple enough that a Spongeie could figure out how to work it, and I suppose you can guess what happened.

Yes, the prototype JihadLinker ended up in the hands of Mikey Crawford. Now Mikey was already starting to gain a reputation among both Jihaddi and his fellow spongies as a fellow who always walked away from Jihad operations, ever since his first appearance in the Montreal Incursion a few years back. Mikey typed out something along the lines of "hl al yu evul juhadee" and punched the shiny green send button. Little did any of us know at the time that this one action of Mikey's (somehow sent to the 'entire Jihad' distribution list) would very nearly lead to the end of the Jihad.

Mikey's message triggered a flurry of activity as to where a spongeie had gotten ahold of a JihadLinker, and how a spongeie would have been able to figure out the arcane interface. Within a day, the Dobermensh who had lost the linker realized what had happened and pulled out his old one, only to find a flurry of activity over a sponge minion on the link. Wisely, or maybe not so wisely, he kept quiet for a few more days before he reported the prototype missing.

One mystery was solved when the prototype was reported missing — the question of just how a Sponge Minion figured out how to use a Linker. The prototype was much easier to use. However, there was the bad news that it was a prototype and thus contained the latest encryption schemes and other gadgetry that we didn't really want in the hands of the enemy. Thus, the Doberman Command decided that they would do an all-out raid on the McGill campus (which is where the signal from the Linker was pretty consistently coming from — Mikey had decided that talking to Jihaddi was a pretty fun activity and was pretty consistently sending messages extolling the virtues of the Wyrms) and take the Linker back from the spongeie who had it by force.

Unfortunately, there were a lot of Dobermensh who wanted to participate in this raid since they were rather angry at the Sponge Minion who was polluting their link. Serbeus probably both invited too many soldiers along and assigned the wrong type of mission. This was definitely a case where a snatch and grab carried out by a small team would have been best, but Serbeus decided that Mikey was probably hiding in a Purple Forces safe house, which would mean rather a lot of manpower to take out.

Thus a large contingent of heavily armed Dobermensh were ordered around the McGill campus one sunny June morning and ordered not to fall back until the Purple Forces base was found and cleaned out, and especially not to return until the prototype was back in their hands. Not only did the mission fail as Mikey Crawford was not where we expected him to be at that time, but two Dobermensh were less careful than they probably should have been as to whose face they waved their weapons into. The civilian couple they mistook for spongies were actually undercover RCMP officers who didn't

Oct. 1993: Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards (MAUL) declares itself a JAO; Owsen takes command of the Templars, renames the group TRES Corps.

Nov. 1993: WEDJEE incorporated into DE; Legion of Doom founded; mercenary known as Trooper Anhur joins the DE.

Dec. 1993: Blood Jihad founded.

Jan. 1994: TRES Zeta Squad founded to compete with WEDJEE; Maenads discover, join Jihad.

Jun. 1994: Mikey Crawford gets his hands on a JihadLinker, sets off an aborted invasion of Montreal; Jihaddi arrested by Canadian police.

Jul. 1994: Serberus resigns from the Jihad over the Montreal incident; names DE Commander Augustus as successor; Augustus begins probe into preventing future incidents like Montreal.

Sep. 1994: Augustus endorses probe recommendations; first Jihad spin teams formed.

Aug. 1994: Trooper Anhur chosen to join Maenads, given the name Serp the Feral.

Oct. 1994: Jon Marburger joins TRES Corps.

Nov. 1994: Malaclypse the Seeker joins the Blood Jihad.

May 1995: Malaclypse starts Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, Inc.

Jun. 1995: Augustus retires; names Samhain new DE Fleet Commander and puts Praetorship up for election; Serp the Feral first (and only) freely elected Praetor.

Dec. 1995: Serp attempts to use Jihaddi as mercenaries in Africa and Central Asia. Samhain resists Serp's requests. Tensions between the DE and the Jihad leadership escalate.

Jan. 1996: Serp called into meeting with Maenad leader Windigo the Feral; Serp vanishes; JAO leaders appoint J. Foxglov as the new Praetor.

Mar. 1996: Operation WORLDWALK.

Aug. 1996: Ariana Mahtash joins the Blood Jihad.

Aug.-Sep. 1996: Operation PHOENIX.

Oct. 1996: Operation PACIFICA; Owsen declared missing in action; Jon Marburger becomes TRES Grand Admiral.

Dec. 1996: Foxglov retires from Praetorship; Triumverate formed by Windigo the Feral, Marburger and Shardik the Feral.

Jan. 1997: Blood Jihad leadership vanishes under mysterious circumstances. Verthandic Rangers formed

really appreciate having illegal weaponry waved in their faces.

To be fair to the two Dobermensh who were not exactly as careful as they should have been, most of the invading force weren't exactly careful as to who they were frightening — enough so that several Canadian papers were screaming about the attack on McGill, even the Albertan ones. But the two Dobermensh caught by the RCMP were in a lot more trouble than their buddies, and the trouble doubled when the RCMP discovered that both of the terrorists they arrested carried American passports.

This fact, as you can probably imagine, caused quite an international uproar. Canada was not pleased with the prospect of terrorists slipping over the border to conduct operations against Canadian citizens, and there was some diplomatic tension between Ottawa and Washington over the whole matter.

Inside the Jihad, things were even more tense than they were in the relationship between the United States and Canada. There were two reasons for this — first, if either of the two that were caught in Canada decided to speak about what exactly they were up to, the entirety of the War would be put at risk. Plus, there was a lot of finger pointing going on over whether MAUL (who had explicitly refused to jump in when the Dobermans realized they were in some trouble, stating a lack of jurisdiction) and TRES (who came up with some intelligence that Mikey may not be where the Doberman Empire expected him to be, but couldn't get anybody in Doberman High Command to listen) should have tried harder to stop the events that lead to crisis.

As the summer drug on, we found that Canada was willing to drop the book on the two caught Dobermensh, which rather worried many of the higher ups in the Jihad, for all it would take is one person spilling the beans. Luckily, the two had learned something from earlier history, and they knew to keep their mouths shut as to why exactly they had been at McGill with heavy arms. Nobody, by some freak miracle, had been killed at McGill, nor had anybody been shot. After some negotiation with liaisons in State, we managed to get the two a very good lawyer, and they were summarily found guilty, given a suspended sentence, and escorted out of the country with word that they were no longer welcome in Canada.

While the diplomatic crisis between the US and Canada was resolved upon the return of the two Dobermensh to the United States, the internal repercussions of this raid would resonate through the Jihad for months to come. The biggest of course, was Serbeus' retirement from both the Doberman Empire and from the Office of the Praetor. As his replacement in both, he named Commander Augustus, the one man in the DE high command that had recommended not going after Mikey Crawford in Montreal.

Augustus' first move was to start an inquiry into how the McGill raid could have occurred and suggestions as for how to keep it from happening again. His second was to court martial the two Dobermensh who had been unlucky enough to get caught, but to make the point very clear, he also court martialed their commander. Augustus was quoted at the time that "I want it to be known that this war is first and foremost a secret, and officers within the Jihad are to conduct themselves with that thought above all others."

The task force on how to prevent this sort of incident from happening again came up with a few very good solutions. Unfortunately, they also came up with one solution that would cause problems down the line. Among the good solutions they had is that we need to strengthen the Liason program, which was working well in the US, to other countries in which there is a large chance the Jihad would conduct major operations — and first and foremost

on that list is Canada.

Second, it was recommended that there be spin teams in place to clean up after these sorts of messes. While every Jihaddi I've talked to hates spin duty, most of them acknowledge the importance of the job in keeping the world ignorant of their war. They know quite well that while they would love to expose their Enemy for who he is, this is impossible, and that it takes just one piece of stupidity for their own cover to be blown.

Third, there was a few hints that the disaster at McGill could have been prevented if either TRES Intel had been able to get their findings to the DE or if MAUL had gone ahead and provided the backup requested. Thus, Augustus thought it might be all well and good to weaken the 'autonomous' part of the acronym 'Jihad Autonomous Organization'. It seemed like a good solution to stop a McGill crisis from occurring again, but the ramifications of this would soon play out for the Jihad. We'll come back to this in a minute.

Rising Stars

I had meant to talk to you about two groups that would play an important part in the Jihad — the rise of the small R&D shop and the Maenads of the Holy Albino. Both reach their heyday in the period between the Second Great Exposure and the rise of Serp, so it is instructive to talk about them.

I have previously mentioned WEDJEE, the incorporation of which into the Doberman Empire gave Fleet Commander Samhain his original DE rank. I have also mentioned TRES Corps' Zeta Squadron, their own in-house group. The Blood Jihad also had their own R&D crew, known as the Skunk Works. The last of the independent R&D shops, a small operation known as the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, was started by my esteemed colleague, Professor Malaclypse.

The independent and JAO-based R&D shops play an important part in the rise of the Jihad. It dates roughly between the beginning of 1993, when WEDJEE was first formed to Operation WorldWalk in March of 1996, a good three years, and those three years are best summed up by Professor Malaclypse when he once characterized them as 'The Age of Amuck Scientists'.

It was, from what I understand not being a techie-type myself, a wonderful time to have been a Jihad scientist or technician, for ideas were springing forth from all corners. Sometimes their inventions were useful — these were the folks who originated your JihadLinkers, among other things. But sometimes, they were just silly — Admiral Keith's Mathattackius gun is probably the example you're most familiar with, but there were other atrocities against science committed in this period.

Of course, the most vibrant period for the techies is the Fall of 1994 to Worldwalk, in which thousands of oddities were produced randomly for the Jihad, some as desponge tools, some as sheer 'what the hell were you thinking?' curiosities. It should be noted that the brilliant minds most associated with their respective JAOs R&D shop — Admiral Svartalf of TRES, Professor Malaclypse of VR, and Centurion Ceberus and Fleet Commander Samhain of the DE — all got their starts during this time period.

As our opponent has no appreciable R&D shop whatsoever, but amazing adaptability to take on whatever we throw at them — or in the case of the Lyrans, to sometimes transcend it — our R&D shops have been one of the things that have kept us in the war for nearly as long as we have been fighting

from the remnants of the Blood Jihad and Evil Geniuses.

May 1997: First Triumverate resigns, replaced by VR Professor Malaclypse, TRES Commander Shahrazad and TRES Captain Shadur T'Kharn.

Jul. 1997: Operation HOMEFRONT; VR incursion into alternate universe results in first enemy holding known to be totally freed from B'harnate influence.

Aug 1997: TRES Grand Admiral Marburger vanishes after an attack by spongin in San Francisco; TRES Admiral Melanie Davies named as successor.

Apr. 1998: Jihad Praxeum Veneficus founded to foster magical studies.

Jul. 1998: Admiral Davies takes extended sabbatical; TRES Admiral Kirk Felton named as successor.

Nov 1998: Malaclypse the Seeker resigns official positions in the Jihad, remains on as Civilian Advisor Emeritus.

Jan. 1999: Marburger returns to the Jihad and is court-martialed and demoted for dereliction of duty.

May 1999: Now.

it. Even if they do have the occasional flight of fancy that leads to some atrocity against science.

Oddly enough, the other group that came to the forefront in the halcyon days of 1994 were the Maenads of the Holy Albino, a group that is nearly as diametrically opposite the pursuit of Science as you can get and still be in the Jihad. I say this with some tongue in cheek, of course, as some of our best R&D minds are also Maenads, but the mysticism of the Maenads seems to collide in interesting fashions with the focus on science to fight the HellWyrms that the Jihad seems to have.

Thus, it is interesting to note that at the same time the High Prophet was beginning to have his first inklings of visions, so was the Chosen of the Holy Albino, as the story goes. For six years, they hunted the Wyrms and the Lyrans on their own terms, but as time progressed, they found themselves running into more and more Jihaddi. As there were few in the Maenads, they realized an alliance would be beneficial and Windigo the Feral, aka now-Commander Inagei of the DE, led the Maenads in making themselves known to the Jihad.

Since then, they've been violent but effective warriors for the Jihad, and whether their mysticism is correct and they are selected by the Holy Albino, or if the skeptics are correct and they are simply picked by Windigo, it is mostly considered an honour to be invited to join the Maenads.

The Rise and Fall of Serp the Feral

Part of the reason I bring this up is that the Maenads play an important part in the next big event of the Jihad, which is the rise and fall of Praetor Serp. Serp was his Maenad name; his full DE rank and title was Centurion Anhur Spartacus Hades. He was, at the time of his induction into the DE in December 1993, one of the Jihad's brightest young stars. He had served a good proportion of time as a mercenary, hopping between African bush wars before finding out about and joining up with the Jihad.

Once he was in, he demonstrated his knowledge of tactics to Fleet Commander Serbeus, and so impressed the Fleet Commander with his knowledge that Serbeus gave him one of the fastest promotions to Warrior that we have on record in the DE. He performed ably in all the missions he was assigned, and managed to bring back all his men from every mission. His biggest coup was during the Second Great

Exposure, when his command was the only one to even somewhat succeed on the mission. They surrounded the safe house, entered, found it empty, and retreated. While this was technically in violation of his orders, it impressed both Serbeus and Augustus at his responsibility in a situation where everybody was losing their head, and his promotion to Centurion was both the last act by Serbeus in the DE, and confirmed as the first DE act of Augustus.

He continued serving as Augustus' tactician through the fall and winter of 1994 and doing a very good job at it. His promotion to Commander seemed all but assured once a spot was opened for him, as his only real competition he had was fellow-DE Centurion Manticore, and Serp was sure that his tactics and strategy would win him the position over an R&D geek. Besides, that very same winter, he had been inducted into the Maenads, something which Centurion Manticore had not managed to do.

While he was biding his time, waiting for the promotion he knew that he so richly deserved, his tactics skills were often requested for use by other JAOs, and so he would often go to help them do mission planning. Remember, the task force studying the McGill Incident had recommended that JAOs be a little less autonomous, and part of that was involving high rank-



ing officers of other JAOs in your battle planning. Thus, Serp found himself well-recognized throughout the entire Jihad.

In May of 1995, Augustus, proud of the work he had done for the Jihad, decided that it was time that he stepped down and went into a well-earned retirement. But before he did that, he announced that there would be a Jihad-wide election for the Praetor position in June, after he stepped down. The second thing he did was name a new Doberman Empire Fleet Commander. Much to the shock of Serp, his bitter rival, Centurion Manticore, was named Fleet Commander Samhain.

Worse, when Serp angrily brought up the unfairness of it all to Augustus, Augustus told Serp the reasons he had picked Manticore over him — mainly that Manticore was much more competent at the two tasks of dealing with lower-ranked officers and having a head for details that was important to the position of Fleet Commander. Augustus also made a point of telling him that if one of the two Commander slots had opened up, that he would have been the man, but that Augustus honestly believed that he wouldn't make a very good Fleet Commander.

Serp thought for a while about everything Augustus had said, and then decided that he would get the one position that could tell even the Fleet Commander of the Doberman Empire what to do — Praetor of the Jihad.

We now know that if Augustus had kept Serbeus' tradition of naming his successor, we probably would have never had Praetor Serp in the first place, as Augustus probably would have named either Samhain or TRES Admiral J. Foxglov to the position. But Augustus had a quiet love for democracy, and he honestly believed it was truly the best way for the Jihad to pick its leaders. Unfortunately, the problem with democracy is that everybody gets to pick, and people often end up with exactly the government that they deserve. Such was the case here, as Serp was well known to the lower ranks in other JAOs, and they went overwhelmingly for him, despite the DE not really voting for him at all. Perhaps this should have been a warning sign to the rest of us that Serp may not have been the wisest choice. However, we were pleased that we made it through an election and we had our first elected Praetor, and Serp looked as if he would mend fences with his commanding officer as he named Samhain his adjunct.

And at first all seemed well with Serp. He was genuinely liked by the lower ranks, and he started a number of projects to make inroads on the HellWyrms. Some of these were massive multi-JAO projects, and the practice in collaborating would come in handy sooner than anybody imagined possible. The assault had the HellWyrms retreating. For the first time it felt as if the Jihad had the upper hand against their Opposition, by what seemed to be their daring Praetor's doing.

Serp had a few good ideas as well. He was the first to think of the monetary aspects of running a huge war, and the International Jihad Treasury, the bane of Jihaddi everywhere, was one of his innovations. He was consistently looking for ways to make money for the Jihad as well as fighting the Wyrms, and given his background, he hit upon the obvious solution — sending Jihaddi as mercenaries into the wars he had once fought in.

Unfortunately for Serp, an angry and violent reaction to this plan came from his commanding officer, the man he thought he could control by becoming Praetor of the Jihad. Samhain was so angry with Serp that he resigned his position as adjunct right then and there and blistered Serp's ears with invective that none had ever heard from Samhain before or since. Instead of taking no for an answer, Serp got the bright idea to try to oust his old rival from the Fleet Commander's chair in the DE so that he could take the job. The month of December was spent in a Jihad version of chicken — both Serp and Samhain trying to see who would blink first.

As the rest of the Jihad began to understand why Serp and Samhain were in this bitter feud, it was obvious which side they began to side with. None of them thought that sending their JAO's soldiers to fight in wars that didn't even have to do with the HellWyrms, whether it was for money or whatever else they could get in trade, was a very good idea. One by one, all the other leaders sided with Samhain. Serp, of course, tried to excommunicate all of them, but before he could name replacements, Windigo asked for him to come to her office for them to talk.

Serp walked into the office with Windigo, the door closed, there was the sound of raised voices, and then the door opened and Windigo was the only one to walk out. An inspection of the office behind her showed nobody in the room and no signs of the Praetor. The only comment anybody could get out of

Windigo was, "Offended me, he did," and to this day we have no idea what happened to Serp except that he was gone.

It was January 1st, 1996. In a few days, the high command of all the JAOs got together and decided that they would first not repeat Augustus' failed experiment in democracy, and they unanimously named Admiral J. Foxglov of TRES Corps their new Praetor. That was the beginning of the year that seriously got Weird.

Operation WORLDWALK

Why was it weird? Well, in March of that year, the HellWyrms decided he was tired of this tickytack war of attrition with us and decided to bring it all to an end by collapsing all the known universes into one that he figured would be more favorable to him and not to us. He planned to accomplish this by the means of a device that would do this collapsing of timelines. Our attempt to stop this fiendish plot is recorded in Jihad archives as Operation WorldWalk.

I will warn you, before I head into this section, that some of the stuff I am about to describe may not make much sense, but I assure you that the events I will attempt to relate to you really happened, and wasn't the result of the entire Jihad taking a hit of LSD all at the same time — even if that's what it felt like at the time.

It was a sunny day in mid-March when things went haywire suddenly and without warning. I know most of you have probably seen the Matrix, when Neo experiences his bout of deja-vu, and that is how the first few permutations felt, as if we'd seen this before. But not realizing what we were up against yet, the Jihad dismissed these odd cases of deja-vu as nothing more than deja-vu and continued in our normal routines, which turned out to be the dumbest thing we could have done.

Since the whole episode is difficult to describe in any meaningful way in the third person, let me tell you what I was up to, since I found myself drug into this war. At the time, I was a young professor at Indiana University in Bloomington, and I had agreed to spend my spring break at the Doberman Empire headquarters so that I could talk to their young recruits in much the fashion I'm speaking to you all now. I had started out early in the morning and made good time, and arrived at DE HQ about two hours before the first queasy feelings of deja-vu were reported.

I consider myself one of the lucky ones. DE HQ, along with several of the other Jihad bases had, in the age of Amuck Scientists, installed some equipment that nobody was really sure was going to work exactly as predicted. I suppose there's something to be said for preparedness, as the gadgets worked exactly as they were supposed, isolating Jihad bases in the storm the Wyrms had cooked up.

What was that storm? Well, none of us had a clue what was going on except for the odd senses of deja-vu until suppertime. I recall having just sat down with Fleet Commander Samhain and the rest of the DE command staff when a young Dobermensh came running into the room with the news that they were getting a transmission from the Wyrms. We were eating in a private dining room, so I was privileged to watch said transmission. It was typical Wyrms insipidness, but the plans he detailed silenced the entire command staff of a JAO for five whole minutes.

What did he say? Well, he told us about his shiny new machine, that he had buried in New Mexico, and he told us that he was in the process of getting us out of his hair for the last time, because his shiny new machine was in the process of compacting the multiverse into something that would be more tractable to him than this one was. And he very specifically mentioned that there was nothing we could do to stop the Jihad from becoming obsolete and if we were to try, it would do no good, so we shouldn't even bother to stop him, and we might as well live our last few days in peace.

It was hubris at its finest, but as I said, the statement stunned the entire command staff of the DE, and I'm sure it had the same effect on other command staffs throughout the Jihad. A frantic teleconference was arranged by the Praetor, and the entire high commands of all the JAOs was frantically called together. It was a relief to see so many of the highest-ranking Jihaddi still around, but worse news was to follow when a couple folks reported that they hadn't heard from folks who had been sent out on missions over the last few days and hadn't been under cover when the Wyrms flipped his machine on.

You see, when the Wyrms announced his plans to contract the entire multiverse into one universe that was much more favorable to him, he released a string of reality quakes. The first few were subtle, hence those odd sensations of deja-vu folks had been reporting all afternoon, but they were about to grow in both

number and magnitude. Somehow, by sheer luck and mad geniuses doing the science, the majority of the Jihad's bases had been equipped with dampeners that reduced the effect of these reality quakes on the folks inside. We didn't really know what would happen when we sent folks out into it, but of course we had to give it a try.

The boys in both TRES and Doberman Intelligence placed the signal around Carlsbad, New Mexico, probably somewhere in the massive cave systems nearby. So now the Jihad had an agonizing decision to make. Did they send people out in that time storm knowing that they might not be able to make it through, or did they hope the collapse of timelines would play out in their favor? The Jihad, being who we are, chose to go with the slight glimmer of hope, and organized a quick inter-JAO exploratory team to meet up near Carlsbad and spelunk into the caverns from there. Warrior Ashur Galand (now Centurion Ceberus) was chosen to head this last ditch effort at stopping the Wyrms' evil plans, and they were sent out into the time stream with the hopes of the entire Jihad behind them.

Those who fought in this force tell me it was quite the experience, as they moved across country trying to get to where they belonged, with scenery changing in odd fashions and even their very transportation and clothing changing depending on which quake was rattling through. The scariest part, some of them told me, was when people would change or disappear in front of their eyes, as one time stream made it more likely that one person would be there instead of another. Somehow they fought through the geography and the quakes and what appeared to them as quite the acid trip and somehow made it in one piece. One battle later, in which the opponents kept changing along with everything else, they were filing into the system of caves which is Carlsbad Caverns, desperately searching for the machine that was doing this all.

Now the thing was, as they had been making their way to Carlsbad, the machine had been speeding up as it had less and less universes to incorporate into the flattening, so the rest of us were seeing things outside as careening from universe to universe to universe in a rather quick fashion, almost like flipping through a TV set with millions of channels. Only it was the universe, and we had no control over the rate of channel-flipping.

The exploratory team found the Wyrms in the deepest cavern at Carlsbad, watching his machine near the end of its task, and gleefully celebrating that the Jihad would not pull a rabbit out of its hat this time and stop his nefarious plans. Unfortunately for the Wyrms, Galand and his company stepped out of the shadows just as he finished gloating to whoever could hear.

In the fiercest battle the Jihad had ever fought to that time, the machine was destroyed just before it could finish crushing the universes into one, and B'harne found himself temporarily inconvenienced. One of the more interesting unsubstantiated pieces of this battle was the conviction of some of the Jihaddi present that the Wyrms had killed Warrior Galand, but that Galand had somehow come back to life and returned the favor to the Wyrms. Reports like these were dismissed as the remnants of the acid trip like nature of the expedition, but it gives you an idea of the oddity of both WorldWalk and the Jihad.

When Galand destroyed the machine, it unleashed one last massive reality quake that put things mostly back the way they were as the timeline tried to heal itself from the damage the Wyrms had done. It wasn't perfect, though, as TRES Corps immediately reported in surprise that they had a small space fleet and Space Station Ithaca, and the Blood Jihad reported that Luna Base had somehow gotten larger.

Plus, there were many Jihaddi who had been in the



world when the quakes had occurred and hadn't been heard from since. Occasionally, you'll find some older Jihaddi recognizing a friend who had battled next to him prior to WorldWalk only to go missing in the chaos that was WorldWalk, only to later show up rejoining the Jihad but not remembering their prior Jihad career, which causes a lot of awkwardness on both sides. Thus, if you get recognized by an old-timer, be kind to him or her, for you might be their long lost friend — even if you don't remember it.

After the psychedelic mess that was Operation WorldWalk came the aftermath. Most folks were fairly sure it the Wyrms attempt to find a more tractable universe, just as he said when he was gloating to the Jihad's various commanders, but some of the more conspiracy-minded among the Jihad suggested it was the Lyrans attempting to make an end run around humanity. The collapse of the timelines might have simply caused us no longer to exist, and since the Lyrans want to see us dead, this would have worked just as well as killing us off.

It was time for a break from the Wyrms and it felt nice to know that Galand had iced him for us so that we could concern ourselves with preparing for the next war. For some reason, the Legion of Doom decided that they had to get in space now, and threw all their resources into creating a space fleet. The rest of the Jihad went on training and drilling, proud of how well they'd come out of WorldWalk, and thinking there would be absolutely no way the Wyrms could top what he'd done.

So we went through the spring and summer of 1996, blissfully content that we could take anything the HellWyrms could throw at us. Thus, it came as a horrible surprise when we found ourselves under attack once again in mid-August — and this time the HellWyrms had found allies. On top of it, the Wyrms, with help from the Lyrans, had put some sort of mystical spell on the top dozen of our leaders at the time that made it nearly impossible for them to hide.

Operation PHOENIX

For the second time in the year, we were taken by surprise by the enemy. When the Wyrms returned to earth with his new allies — an alien race known simply as the X'hirjq — we were nearly sunk in the war before we started. The X'hirjq seemed impossible to beat because they were more technologically inclined and they were stronger, faster, and more adept than the humans they were fighting. And to make things worse, they had joined up with the Wyrms of their own free will, which meant that they had lost none of their faculties to spongification. Plus, at the time, we didn't know that the Wyrms had cast his tracking spell, so they kept popping up around the most important Jihaddi. It is a surprise that as many of them survived Phoenix as did, given the focused attention upon them.

It has been said that Jihaddi do not know the meaning of the word 'quit'. At the worst, when it looked as if many had been killed in their attempts to fight the X'hirjq, the Jihad still picked up and continued to fight ever onward. However, the losses racked up all over — in Scotland, in Atlanta, in Louisville, in Iowa, in San Juan, in space, all over the place, the Jihad was losing and losing bad. It was a bad time to be on the home team. Somehow, despite all this, the Jihad kept fighting, sacrificing everything it could in a desperate attempt to make the impossible happen.

One of the most notable sacrifices made in the War Against the X'hirjq was that of Admiral Michael Davis and Captain Patrick Stewart of the Blood Jihad, and all the crew of their ships *Lexington* and *Defiance*. In the middle of the war, when it looked as if all hope were lost, the two ordered their fighters to do as much damage to the X'hirjq mothership as possible. Then, when it looked like they were about to be swatted, the two proceeded to make a kamikaze run on the mothership with their own ships, killing everybody aboard both the *Lexington* and the *Defiance*. It had about as much effect in the long run as a gnat colliding with an elephant, but for them even to attempt it showed the bravery of these two men and the crew of their ships.

The turning point for the Jihad, however, was probably the battle for the new TRES Corps headquarters starting September 10th, 1996. It started much as many of the other battles had — very badly for the Jihad — and got much worse before it was all over. The X'hirjq smartly sabotaged our communications medium before they started the attack in earnest. To make things even worse for the Jihad, the weather, which had been sufficiently odd since the start of WorldWalk, delivered a surprise blizzard to Colorado the same night the X'hirjq and the HellWyrms decided to bear down and take out TRES HQ.

The morning of the tenth dawned overcast and cold, with heaps of snow on the ground from the prior



night's blizzard. It also looked like more snow was on the way. The fighting started out on the highway, but the Jihaddi fighting were pushed back towards the headquarters. It did not look good for the Jihad, and if the X'hirjq and the Wyrms were allowed to take TRES, the war would be over. Surprisingly, then-Commodore Marburger showed his courage under fire by trying his best to keep the Jihad fighting and just not fleeing against an overwhelming show of strength by the opponent. The day progressed with the blizzard dumping more snow on the heads of those fighting, and the fight wore on.

About sundown, the Jihad managed to briefly turn things its way when it unleashed the artillery it had on the B'harnate heavy infantry on the field and a contingent of Dobermenschen showed up to help spell the weary TRES soldiers who had been battling all day, and this combined force finally finished off all B'harnate troops on the field. But the battle was still far from over. The next morning, the morning of September 11th, the X'hirjq took their spots and fiercely began attacking the TRES and Doberman soldiers on the battlefield. But in a miracle, the blizzard broke, and the sun shined through on all the snow and ice that had accumulated on the battlefield, and the X'hirjq put off their attack plans until nightfall because they were blinded from the reflection of the sun off the snow and ice.

The night of September eleventh, and the morning of September twelfth, the Jihad contingent at TRES HQ fought as hard as they could, but there wasn't much they could do against the tactical and numerical superiority of the X'hirjq. Finally, the Jihaddi retreated back to the base

itself, hoping that it could hold against the mighty force advancing against them. But the force overpowered the Jihaddi even at the gates of the headquarters, the power blew, and all was lost for the Jihad.

Except that the power had only flickered and not died, and when the power came back up, the Jihad guns at the gates were able to finish off the last of the X'hirjq. The sun rose on the morning of September twelfth with the Jihad in possession of the battle that turned the tide. The battle for TRES HQ had carried a costly price for even the victors, as a large contingent of Jihaddi had perished trying to deliver a victory. This battle still remains to this day the costliest in Jihad history in the number of Jihaddi killed or injured in the fighting. It was, in all senses of the phrase, a Pyrrhic victory for the Jihad.

Strangely enough, three days later, many of the Jihad higher ups would fight perhaps the oddest battle they'd ever fought. They ended up fighting against B'harnate friendly copies of themselves, and after our guys defeated them to a man, we discovered that the X'hirjq had been conning both us and B'harne. We discovered that the X'hirjq weren't here to destroy us, but that they were here to test us. They had only joined in an alliance with the Wyrms as a way to get here and pull off this test because humanity meant something special in the X'hirjq belief system. So the bloodiest war the Jihad had ever fought was pretty much for nothing. Let me repeat that, nothing. All the sacrifice, all the bloodshed, all the fighting was for nothing more than a stupid test. If that doesn't make you angry...

In the end, the final toll was thousands of Jihaddi dead, thousands more wounded, the Legion of Doom all but destroyed, the Blood Jihad nearly without a command staff, the DE lost most of its worldwide bases, and TRES was forced to rebuild a headquarters mostly leveled to the ground. To make things even more interesting, the X'hirjq had oh-so-helpfully blasted humanity with an industrial-sized psychic blast, so that it would not remember the events of Phoenix, which was good for us in one fashion because it meant that the War would stay a secret, but combined with the events of Operation WorldWalk, it meant quite a mess in terms of the psyches of the mundane world.

Given a disaster of this scale, one would expect that the Jihad would take a large amount of downtime in order to rebuild, right? Nothing is ever that simple in the Jihad.

Operation PACIFICA

In mid-October, roughly a month after the X'hirq invasion, a young lieutenant in TRES Corps who was helping get JihadNet back on its feet noticed an odd anomaly out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Anomaly seemed the best word, because sometimes the structure would be there and sometimes it wouldn't, and this seemed awfully odd. So, he reported it to Admiral FoxGlov, who took an interest in the anomaly.

After closer investigation, it was confirmed that there was an island out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that was not connected to the Earth in any significant fashion. Not only that, but it was full of sponge minions and Lyrans — and in another shock, life signs that matched up with a Jihaddi who was missing in action in Phoenix.

But before Admiral FoxGlov could report this to his higher ups — Admiral Marburger and Grand Admiral Owsen — Owsen went missing in a fight with the Hell Wyrms that Marburger witnessed. Before Owsen was taken, he handed over the Slayer and his pistols to Marburger, which meant that the one weapon that might just be able to kill the Wyrms stayed in Jihad hands. Shaken by this, Admiral Marburger assumed the Grand Admiral's chair in TRES Corps — only the second Grand Admiral in that JAO ever — and as his first action determined that TRES would send an expeditionary force to the island.

However, since TRES didn't have a navy, he had to call in a favor. Luckily for the Jihad, the Doberman Empire maintained a small navy, and the Pacific branch of the DE Navy, based in San Francisco, had seen very little damage from the X'hirq Invasion. Nobody was really quite able to explain how San Francisco had been rendered exempt from X'hirq attacks, but explaining it took a back seat to just being thankful that there was a naval fleet to transport them in the first place.

So the Jihad descended upon Doberman Naval Base San Francisco for the long trip out to Pacifica, which is what the island had been dubbed. A large portion of Jihad higher-ups felt some obligation to make this trip, and it was probably the closest thing we have had to an all-star cast heading out to battle the Hell Wyrms. This is probably the *dumbest* mistake the Jihad has ever made, and the Jihad has made quite a few mistakes over the years.

Of course, the war started out well. While there was some resistance, the trip out was relatively quiet, and the spongies in the city provided no challenge to Jihad troops. To make things more interesting, the Hell Wyrms were culled from the battlefield early by an angry young TRES Corps officer, Lt. Geier. It was the first time the Jihad found itself with the upper hand early in a battle. Of course, the Jihad would quickly learn that early successes made the fall all that much harder.

You see, we found out too late that Pacifica was a trap set up by the Lyrans to lure Jihaddi to a place where they could be captured and destroyed — using MIA Jihaddi from the X'hirq invasion as the bait in the trap. And we gave them a very large chunk of the command staff of all the remaining JAOs. To give our commanding officers the benefit of the doubt, it should be pointed out that they weren't going to leave MIA officers to rot, as that's never been the way the Jihad has operated when given a choice.

Given the mission objective — that is, find out if there were any of the Jihad's missing in action on Pacifica and if so, to rescue them — we were relatively successful in achieving those goals. Pacifica turned out to be much less of a disaster than Phoenix had been, and we were able to find out more about the Lyrans, that shadowy race that seems to be associated with B'harne.

The reason we're aware that it was a trap is that the Maenads, bolstered by the addition of four more to their ranks — Grand Admiral Marburger, Fleet Commander Samhain (which is ironic considering the role Maenadship played in the story of Serp), Admiral J-Rock of TRES, and then-Captain Felton, also of TRES — fought their way to the Citadel, where they took on Charn'El, the High Mage of Lyra.



The people who were present are notoriously reluctant to talk about it, given the death of their comrade, Lord Tilden Owsen, at that battle. However, despite Owsen's demise, we were able to recover the Barney Slayer, and it is being held in a safe location for when it might be needed again. The Maenads also, somehow, managed to banish Charn'El from this plane. Unfortunately, without Charn'El's power to hold up the island of Pacifica, it began collapsing into the sea, and the Maenads were barely able to escape with the Slayer and some Lyran books and artifacts.

In the end, Pacifica occupies an odd position in Jihad history. It wasn't a victory per se, but it wasn't a defeat either. In the end, I suppose stalemate would be the best word. We lost some of our best in the fighting, but managed to deal a blow to the HellWyrms and the Lyran, and for good or for worse, Pacifica is the start of what we can now safely call the 'modern Jihad'.

The Triumvirate and the Beginnings of the Modern Jihad

After the events of Pacifica, Praetor Foxglov was tired. He was tired of fighting pointless wars, tired of losing people, and the Praetor was probably reeling from the loss of Owsen on top of everything. He resigned from the Jihad which left the office of the Praetorship open again. A hastily convened conference of Jihad higher-ups decided that the office was too much for one person, and decided to dissolve the Praetorship and replace it with a Triumvirate. After a bit more deliberation, they decided the first Triumvir Praetors, the official title of those holding seats, would be Grand Admiral Marburger of TRES, Windigo, and Shardik the Feral (also known as Warrior Hephaestus of the DE).

The Triumvirate was a bold new direction for Jihad leadership, and it was one that was probably needed, because the Jihad had grown much more complex than it had been in the days when Owsen and Mongoose had chosen Serbeus for the job. There were more demands on their time, and although JAOs had winged back to being slightly more autonomous than they had been in Serp's time, people still looked to the Triumvirs for many things involving funding and general direction.

And the Triumvirate was needed pretty much right away when Blood Jihad Commander Theodore Brock (aka Arsenal the Lone Warrior) went, as best we can tell, absolutely and totally nuts. To understand this, you have to understand that it had been a very bad year for Arsenal. He had a reputation for being secretive at the best of times, and Admiral Davis had privately reported some concern about the mental state of his commanding officer after the events of WorldWalk.

A total break with reality didn't occur until after the kamikaze run of Admiral Davis and Captain Stewart in Phoenix. In the same battle, the ship that Arsenal had been commanding had been disabled and left for dead by the X'hirq. By the time Arsenal and the people on his ship were able to bring the systems up and running again, the war with the X'hirq was over. The combined guilt of being unable to help his officers fight the X'hirq combined with the mental state that Admiral Davis had been concerned about led to a full blown psychotic break, and while the rest of the Jihad was out cavorting around Pacifica and, later, working on cleaning up from the mess of the X'hirq invasion, Arsenal started making plans to, in his eventual words, 'get help'.

There was many odd requisitions for some types of experimental gear, which were somehow gotten without comment. This probably happened because there was so much going on in the Jihad that nobody really had much time to pay attention to what Arsenal was doing, and probably, in all honesty, nobody much cared. The Blood Jihad had become a broken shell of its former glory, and the fact that it was hanging on at all was somewhat of a minor miracle. The only reason anybody had any thought of the Blood Jihad at all is that the *Andromeda* remained our only significant space presence after Pacifica and there were more important things to worry about.

So, on January 18th, 1997, Arsenal went to the *Andromeda* to make what he called 'a surprise inspection visit'. Within the hour, TRES Ithaca reported that the *Andromeda*'s engines had fired up and she had left Earth orbit. They also noted that they had tried to hail the starship and got no response. Given this strangeness, and fearing the ship had been taken by enemies, they launched interceptors. The *Andromeda* wouldn't let the interceptors get too close, and repelled any that did with non-lethal force, and so the TRES craft dropped into escort to watch what the *Andromeda* did.

After a few hours of escort duty, the *Andromeda* suddenly and without warning opened a portal in front

of itself and dove in. It was all the TRES pilots could do in their surprise to take the readings, and in debrief, seemed as if they were almost unsure of what they had seen.

At four PM Eastern time, Lt. Colonel Ariana Mahtash, ranking Blood Jihad officer, who had been left in charge of Base One while Arsenal made his inspection trip, received a delayed message from Arsenal. It was in this message that he stated that he had gone to find help, and that she was to serve as ranking officer of the Blood Jihad until such time as he could return. She contacted the Triumvirate and was told to wait for a few days to see if Arsenal returned, and if not, then she was by all rights the commanding officer. The days passed, and on January 23, 1997, Ariana Mahtash, who had been a Jihaddi for maybe eight months at that point, became the new commanding officer of the Blood Jihad.

Verthandi Ascendant

Things were in chaos. Mahtash knew that she needed some help. The base systems were in a mess, and she needed somebody with a head for detail. Luckily for her, she knew somebody who might be able to do the job, and her first act as the commanding officer of the Blood Jihad was to ask Grand Admiral Marburger to reassign her friend, Lieutenant Katze Brenner, to the Blood Jihad. Brenner, who had taken leave for two weeks to get established in the semester, had already headed for Base One to see what she could get done unofficially, but the two friends were glad when Marburger acquiesced to this request.

The other piece was, when Mahtash and Brenner were trying to find out who was left in the Blood Jihad (the records at Base One were in a shambles after Phoenix), they were presented with the sudden surprise that Professor Malaclypse not only still had a Blood Jihad commission, but that he wanted to help them get the organization back off the ground. For their parts, Mahtash and Brenner were glad to have him around as they both were relatively new to the Jihad and didn't always know what was useful and what wasn't.

While Brenner, Mahtash, and Malaclypse were putting in all this effort to upgrade and reform a JAO which sorely needed it, the Lone Warrior's close friend and former Blood Jihad R&D chief Uplink showed up, which surprised all parties because it had been assumed that he had gone with Arsenal. After some questioning, it was ascertained that he had been in South America investigating a slight rise in spongification rates in Rio de Janeiro, and the only way he could think of fixing the problem was to, in the words made famous in Vietnam, "destroy the village to save it." He was shouted down by both Mahtash and Malaclypse, but decided that the Blood Jihad was legitimately his command, and thus attempted to put his plan in action.

Luckily for the entire Jihad, Mahtash and Brenner had been working overtime to reform the Blood Jihad's requisition system, and the second Uplink's attempt to requisition the material and troops he would need to pull off his Rio scheme crossed the system, the new Blood Jihad command knew about it. When confronted with the evidence, Uplink still talked about the rightness of his crusade and how this would strike a victory against the Wyrms. Enraged, Malaclypse invited Uplink to "settle this in private." What exactly happened in that meeting is unknown except to the parties involved — Uplink has not been seen since and Malaclypse refuses to discuss it — but it is believed that the Professor dispensed proper justice for Uplink's crime.

In the wake of the Uplink incident, it was decided unanimously by Brenner, Mahtash, and Malaclypse that the Blood Jihad was better off being left in the past, and decided to merge its functions with Professor Malaclypse's independent R&D shop, the Evil Geniuses. The Triumvirate, never overly fond of the old Blood Jihad in the first place, agreed to this change and the Verthandic Rangers came in existence, with Brenner, Mahtash, and Malaclypse leading in a structure very similar to the Triumvirate. They became known as the High Council, and Brenner and Mahtash both took the title 'Councilor'. (Malaclypse preferred — still prefers — the title 'Professor' and was known to berate recruits who use the title 'Councilor'.)

The Rangers, as they became known around the Jihad, quickly established that they were, along with TRES Zeta and WEDJEE, home to some of the best R&D minds in the Jihad, and the Explorations staff became known as one of the quickest response teams in the Jihad despite their overly casual attitude towards command structure. The other thing they added to the Jihad was an ability to strike across dimensions, given Professor Malaclypse's research interests. All of these pieces would come in handy in a few months.

Changing of the Guard

The time between early February, when the Rangers threw off all the old trappings of their Blood Jihad days and July, when things heated up again, was relatively quiet for the Jihad. The only interesting thing that happened during that time span was that in May the first Triumvirate stepped down, saying they were proof of concept only, and it was time for more permanent members to serve. The first trium suggested Professor Malaclypse of VR, Captain Rens Houben of TRES Zeta, and Commander Shahrazad of TRES to serve as the new Triumvirate, and the heads of all the JAOs agreed to that. The three respectively named Commander Aris Merquoni of VR, Councilor Brenner of VR, and Captain Jones of TRES to serve as their respective adjuncts.

This brings us to July, in which excitement happened. Granted, the summer of 1997 wasn't as exciting as the entirety of 1996, which had brought us Worldwalk, Phoenix and Pacifica all in one year, but it was the summer of 1997 which brought the events of Marraketh and Homefront to our attention.

The events of Marraketh are less important than that of Homefront, but chronologically it comes first, so let's touch upon it briefly. When I was interviewing the principals in this event for their take on it, Councilor Brenner laughed a bit and said, "You have to ask about the most embarrassing event in my life, don't you?"

And Councilor Brenner is right, since the events of Marraketh begin with her indulging her curiosity and being kidnapped back to her homeland — the aforementioned Marraketh. The problem is, at the time of this event, Marraketh had been under the influence of the Wyrms for nearly twenty years of our time. So VR scrambled a team together and went into Marraketh after their Councilor. Of course, the team also happened to be Professor Malaclypse's first beta of his machine, and the machine acted predictably under the circumstances, scattering the Rangers across Marraketh and the next country over.

However, everybody managed to get themselves to Rhye, where Malaclypse had scouted ahead, and things ended up turning out for the best for all concerned. They rescued Councilor Brenner (indeed, in the reports, it seems as if Brenner came through the ordeal rather well, which is probably why she can laugh at the whole thing now) and liberated Marraketh from the Wyrms' thrall. Not bad for a few days' work.

Operation HOMEFRONT

Compared to Marraketh, Homefront turned out to be a much more difficult problem. For the first time in the Jihad's history, we were confronted not with the Wyrms himself, or the Lyrans, or any real metaphysical threat at all. This time, we found ourselves dealing with one of B'harne's elite Wyrms Minions — a group known as the Liasons (which are not to be confused with our Liasons). This particular Liason was named Rhyn, and the guy was a technical genius. Yes, there are geniuses working for the other side, as surprising as it might seem to you.

In fact, one of the ironies of Homefront is that for a brief time the Jihad and the Lyrans were on the same side — at least in the goal of shutting down Rhyn's operation. The Lyrans were even less amused at the idea of some ingenious human coming up with a way to pacify the whole planet without using any magic whatsoever than the Jihad was at the idea of the whole planet being spongified. Thus, both wanted to do whatever they could to stop Rhyn's plan.

Of course, the question is, what was Rhyn's plan? It was really rather ingenious despite being overly complicated — technological solutions to create what is basically a psychological effect tend to be these days. He planned to spongify the world with technology. He stuck these devices that were like crystal radios all over the world, and what these devices would do is pick up a signal broadcast from their main base in Kansas and relay it to the next station. They would also amplify the signal over the local area, so that everybody within range would become spongified, thus achieving the goals of his Lord, and letting him be in a position to rule the world.

The Jihad made it a priority to take out as many of these array devices as possible when they discovered that the Lyrans were doing the same thing, and they discovered they were up against a time constraint. That and there were simply too many array devices to stop. To kill this thing, they had to descend upon Rhyn's base in Kansas and destroy the generator.

The leaders of this expedition were then-Commander William Keith (now Admiral) of TRES and Warrior Persephone (now Centurion Selene) of the Doberman Empire. These two were the first to scout out the problem, both did some individual work on taking out elements, and then both of them lead a team of mostly young and inexperienced Jihaddi into Rhyn's base and managed to take out both the generator and Rhyn.

While it didn't have the sheer total-war elements of Phoenix, Homefront goes down as one of the more ingenious plans the Wyrms or those allied with him have ever pulled off, and it has made us more interested in the Liasons and what exactly they do. This is one of the more interesting things going on in Jihad intelligence at the moment, and it's something that I strongly urge you to pursue if you find that you have any interest in that sort of thing.

He Walked Around the Horses...

There was a month of relative quiet after the events of Homefront before the Jihad was confronted with yet another crisis. This was a smaller crisis than any of the operations, but any time a head of a JAO goes missing, it is a small crisis for that JAO. TRES Corps, by this time, had become the biggest JAO in the Jihad, taking the mantle from a struggling Doberman Empire still attempting to recover from its blow in Phoenix and Pacifica. And when the biggest JAO in the Jihad somehow comes up with a missing leader, the entire Jihad is somewhat affected.

We don't exactly know what happened, which seems to be a common tale to all these disappearances. All we know is that Grand Admiral Marburger had gone off to vacation in San Francisco, one of his favorite spots. When TRES needed to reach him on some matter of relative importance, and couldn't hail him on a linker, they sent one of the local TRES officers into San Francisco after him.

The TRES officer reported back that Grand Admiral Marburger was nowhere to be found, but that he'd left a trail of sponge minions on the way to wherever he went. It could have very easily been another mess of exposure except that the officer was very quick on her feet in coming up with a cover story on the spur of the moment, and she had some help in the form of a Jihad Liason who worked in the San Francisco Coroner's office. The disappearance is still filed as an unsolved mystery with the San Francisco Police Department, and we duly hope it stays that way.

Soon after these events, Captain Shahrazad would resign from her Triumvirate position and Captain Jones declined to replace her and stepped down from his own adjunct seat. In another near-unanimous decision (with one abstention, seeing as how she was the subject of the vote), the respective JAO heads named Grand Admiral Davies to the Triumvirate, and Davies named Commander Nolan of TRES her adjunct.

Mystical Underpinnings

Now, I've talked a lot about Jihad technology in this speech and not as much about magic, despite the Jihad being involved in fighting something that is pretty much a mystical war. While many Jihaddi over the ages have been mages, and some of them have been pretty adept at the magical arts, the study of magic has lagged behind. With the chief allies of the Wyrms being the Lyrans, a race of magic-users, you would have thought this lack of proper study would have become apparent to Jihad leaders early in the battle.

Sometimes it takes fresh eyes to point out the obvious, though, and that is exactly the case that led to the forming of the Jihad Praxeum Veneficus (or the Prax, as it is often referred to by its members.) It took a new Jihaddi in TRES Corps, one Lieutenant Joe Schneider, to make the point that what the Jihad really needed was a place for the mages of the Jihad to learn and gather information.

Lieutenant Schneider took his idea to Grand Admiral Davies, and Davies was delighted at the thought, and brought it over to the Triumvirate. Davies, Houben, and Malaclypse all agreed that a 'college of magic' such as Lieutenant Schneider was proposing was a good idea, and a vote was taken for Schneider's proposal. It passed easily, and the JPV became the newest organization in the Jihad, with Schneider bearing the title of Archchancellor and Admiral Keith of TRES Corps and Operative Lorin of VR as the two second in commands.

While the JPV has existed for about a year, they have already made a huge contribution to the magic

knowledge of the Jihad in much the same way that the research and development folks made a huge contribution before WorldWalk. While we hope there will be no 'Age of Amuck Mages' to go with the 'Age of Amuck Scientists', the mages of the Jihad have benefited hugely by being able to work with each other, and the Jihad has benefited from having its top magical minds working together, just as they had by letting its top technological minds loose. And JPV scored quite the coup when the Triumvirate decided that the Barney Slayer should be with the mages so that the mages could attempt to figure out how exactly it works.

In January of 1999, just after the new headquarters was finished, the Triumvirate called Archchancellor Schneider and told him to get an honour guard together from JPV to escort a package from the airport. The honour guard did the job it had been called there to do, and the package turned out to be the Slayer, moved under secrecy to the new JPV base. The Slayer has been there since, in a heavily guarded room.

Changes Upon Changes

During the summer that JPV was building their campus and expanding the horizons of thaumaturgy in the Jihad, Grand Admiral Davies grew tired of commanding the Jihad's largest JAO, and wanted to have the freedom to do other things. She talked with Admiral Felton, her second in command, and the two agreed to swap spaces. Felton became Grand Admiral Felton, only the fourth in Corps history.

In the fall of 1998, Professor Malaclypse also decided that it was time that he spent more time on his research, and he resigned all his Jihad commissions. However, it turns out that the best place in the world for him to work on his research interests is his old JAO, so you can often still find him around VRHQ. For the first time since the Triumvirate had been formed, the adjunct agreed to take the vacated seat, and Commander Merquoni joined the Triumvirate. She named Grand Admiral Felton as her adjunct. At the same time, Davies named Archchancellor Schneider as her adjunct, as Nolan had resigned his adjunct position.

That brings us to the here and now. What history I will be talking about next year is the history that will be made by each and every one of you. Remember that relatively new folks to the Jihad, such as Grand Admiral Felton, Councilor Mahtash, Rear Admiral Brenner, Admiral Keith and Archchancellor Schneider have made huge contributions to the Cause, and while those five might seem rather imposing to all of you now, I once remember all five of them — all of them TRES Corps recruits — sitting where you are now, listening to me tell them about the past of an organization of which they would contribute the future. And their future became the past I now tell all of you about.

The future is yours. Make the Jihad proud.

Thank you.

Wait a minute... when did *this* happen!?

Breaking kayfabe for a minute... at this point, if you're a well-heeled Jihaddi or have been reading through the fiction archives on jihad.net, you'll have notice that a lot of the stuff related in this potted history of the Jihad doesn't have a lot of evidence to back up that it actually happened. There's a reason for that.

You see, most - by which I mean 99 percent or more - of the original Jihad fiction that was written before Operation Phoenix has been lost thanks to a combination of poor archiving, authors getting bored and wandering off, and the vagaries of Usenet. Most of us have vague memories of the storyline for Operation Worldwalk, but nothing of the actual *content* of the story has survived to this day. This has led us to pretty much just recreating the entire backstory for the Jihad *ex nihilo* and in a manner consistent with the revisions originally planned for the Jihad Universe 2.0 project.

So, if you see something in here that doesn't jibe 100% with the story archives, that's why. The effect is probably most noticable in Phoenix, and a little bit in Pacifica. And if you have a complete or even a semi-complete archive of Worldwalk or older Jihad operations, please please **please** contact us at mrfnord@amigo.net and share the bounty.

CHAPTER 2

Rob mumbled something under his breath. "All right, I suppose it'll have to do. As you know, I have been ordered to take temporary command of Jihad forces in this region; you will, I hope, barely notice my presence - I am charging you to go about your duties as normal, and provide me with such resources as requested until the state of emergency," he gave him a pointed glance at the word 'emergency', "is over. He paused momentarily. "The situation is as follows: Two hundred Jihaddi are scheduled to make rendezvous to-morrow afternoon to participate in the attack. They are making their way here as we speak and will find individual billeting around the city, as per standard procedure; their sergeants are in contact with me through Jihadnet. Weapons are being smuggled across the border through the usual channels and we have managed to bring in three small mechs, currently stored somewhere in this city - they arrived three hours ago.

"From your description of the situation, I judge that this will be sufficient to take the Burnaby Mountain base with a minimum of casualties. Have there been any new developments in the last six hours?"

Lieutenant Muir rose; "I have sent you a report on the current situation. No significant further developments have taken place. We have better information than we did six hours ago, however, including satellite reconnaissance stretching back twenty-six hours. HQ believes they have the base mapped out adequately."

"TRES HQ can take their maps. Bloody newfangled machines aren't worth trusting." Too many times these satellite maps had cost Jihaddi their lives. "In any case, I think we can have this B'harnate base taken out of commission by the day after tomorrow - they've got no real taste for a good fight and a good bloody nose is typically enough to keep them out of non-strategic areas for a good long time. Barney's forces usually try to surround and drown their opponents through sheer numbers; they'll avoid this area in the future."

—from "On the Offensive," by Rob Bos



HEROES OF THE DAY

The Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur is the central protagonist in our little comedy of errors. The Jihad has taken on the task of defeating the forces and influence of B'harne, known in the mundane world as Barney the Dinosaur. The soldiers of the Jihad are equipped with beyond state-of-the-art weapons, powerful magical artifacts, and a ferocious will to win.

The Jihad's fight is governed by the ThreeFold Truth, which comprises the central moral/philosophical axioms of the entire war:

I. Barney is the demonic incarnation of all hell on Earth.

II. Barney seeks to make the world his Purple Kingdom, and does so by corrupting the innocent and weak into Sponge Minions

III. Barney must be destroyed, all else is irrelevant!

To that end, the Jihad has accumulated some of the greatest warriors under its wing, all of whom are dedicated to the goal of the ThreeFold Truth. For the last decade, the Jihad has fought in a hidden war against B'harne and its minions.

THE JIHAD IN DETAIL

The Jihad is organized in a decentralized fashion: Separate Jihad Autonomous Organizations (JAOs) perform their duties more-or-less-independently of the others. Overall, authority in the Jihad is vested in the hands of the Triumvirate Council.

The JAOs are the heart and soul of the Jihad. Each one has some sort of specialized function (as described below) that contributes in some significant way to the progression of the Hidden War. Most JAOs have a military component (which makes sense, considering that the Jihad is very much a military group at its core), usually equipped with cutting-edge — or beyond — weaponry. A handful of JAOs (and a number of Jihaddi) use occult powers in their battle.

Since Barney is a creature of the occult, magic is a very useful weapon against him and his allies. The strongest countermagic to B'harne, however, remains the sword Barney-Slayer.

The Barney-Slayer

Forged in the distant mists of antiquity, the sword resembles a traditional European short (or one-handed) sword of the late 12th century Christian Era. The metal in the blade (called Owsenite after the original owner of the sword, Tilden Alexander, Lord Owsen) is a mana-active alloy of unknown composition, capable of cutting through nearly any material known to mundane or Jihad science. The sword also has an animistic spirit bound to the large amethyst in the hilt. The spirit is capable of communicating with whomever is handling the sword, and often “speaks” telepathically (with a Irish Gaelic accent, no less!) to the owner. It is quite temperamental, and tends not like most of the people it comes into contact with. However, it doesn't have any control whatsoever over the blade or the wielder, so all it can really do in such circumstances is grumble.

However, that is not the sword's most impressive ability. The blade has been enchanted to act as a kind of magical sponge, absorbing magical energy from the surrounding area and using it to strengthen the blade. More importantly, the enchantment is “attuned,” for a lack of a better word, to the life-force of B'harne itself. Therefore, whenever the sword is exposed to B'harne's physical form, it literally sucks his life energy away. This power is, to the best knowledge of the Jihad, the only thing that B'harne truly fears, and he will do anything to put as much distance between himself and the Barney-Slayer.

Recently, during the Pacifica rescue mission, the Barney-Slayer was broken into two fragments during a duel between Lord Owsen and Lyran High Mage Charn'El. The Jihad recovered most of the Slayer's blade, while the whereabouts of the hilt (and of Owsen, who was presumably killed in the duel) are unknown. So far as Jihad intelligence has been able to determine to date, the hilt is trapped inside the dimensional bubble where the High Mage was imprisoned at the end of the Pacifica mission. Whether or not the hilt is still there is unknown.

The blade is currently being kept in a vault at TRES Corps headquarters, where it is apparently regenerating the missing half of the sword. The method of regeneration continues to baffle Jihaddi scientists.

Praxeum mages assume that the missing hilt is regenerating as well, possibly being altered by its proximity to Charn'El. What this means for the Jihad as a whole has yet to be determined.

ALL OVER THE WORLD

The Jihad's mission often takes it around the world and back in order to fight the good fight. While most of the fighting takes place where B'harne is strongest, the Jihad maintains watch over much of the rest of the world, as well as providing boltholes for Jihaddi caught out in the cold after a mission draws unwanted attention.

North America

North America is where the Hidden War started, and remains the Jihad's major stronghold. All the primary bases of the Jihad's autonomous branches are located inside the United States. The Jihad keeps a close watch over Canada as well, with monitoring stations in Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary and Vancouver, and safehouses scattered in cities across the provinces.

Mexico is watched with much the same amount of scrutiny, with monitoring stations in Mexico City, Guadalajara, Ciudad Juarez, and Veracruz. Safehouses are placed mostly along the Mexico-US border, with a few hiding places secreted in the forests of the Yucatan.

Central America is not as intensely monitored or protected by the Jihad. Safehouses can be located in the capitols of the Central American nations, and these are mostly only lightly staffed.

Europe

The center of European operations is located in London - by a strange coincidence, not far from the headquarters of MI6. Anything Jihad-related will end up relayed through the London office, and so it tends to absorb the bulk of the resources and personnel sent to Europe. As a result, the monitoring stations in continental Europe (located in Paris, Bonn, Barcelona, Warsaw and Bucharest) tend to be very lightly staffed - the Bonn station being almost totally automated. Safehouses, of course, are found in most of the major population centers in both Western and Eastern Europe.

Asia and Oceania

The Asian and Pacific Rim operations center is located in Sydney, Australia, a long-time source of Jihad recruits. Much like its counterpart in London, the Sydney office tends to draw most of the allocated resources to itself, leaving the other Asian stations fairly lightly staffed.

However, the Mundane political landscape requires that at least some of the main stations keep a full staff handy. The East Asia monitoring stations in Tokyo, Manila and Beijing have been required to keep a full staff, if only to maintain counterintelligence operations to keep the Mundanes off track. As a consequence, the monitor stations in India and Central Asia have been cut down to almost purely automated setups. Safehouses are available for Jihaddi on the run in the major East Asian cities and in Indian population centers, but Jihaddi are advised that several Central Asian safehouses have been compromised by Mundane forces, primarily in Afghanistan and the former Soviet republics.

South America

South American operations are run out of the Ecuadorian capitol of Quito. Unlike the European and Asian operations centers, the Quito office has not managed to divert all of the primary resources to itself, meaning the fully staffed monitoring stations can be found in La Paz, Caracas, Rio de Janeiro (a popular choice for assignment) and Buenos Aires. Safehouses can be found in areas ranging along the Amazon River and stringing along the coastline.

Of particular interest is the Jihad's combined staging base at Punta Arenas, Argentina. This base is meant to serve as the Antarctic operations center, and frequently sends out expeditions to watch the Ross Ice Shelf for signs of spongification. The Punta Arenas base is possibly the least desired posting in the entire Jihad, and Jihaddi have a traditional fear of crossing the wrong superior and getting travel orders for Argentina cut.



Known Jihaddi and
Enemy Installations
NORTH AMERICA

Africa

Africa is probably the least-watched part of the world by the Jihad, due to the near-total lack of inroads made by B'harne into that continent. Regardless, the Jihad maintains lightly-staffed monitoring stations in Cairo, Nairobi and Pretoria just on the principle that "it never hurts to be cautious."

Above the Sky

The Jihad, for all its overtechnology has only a few limited ventures into space operations. The single major space asset the Jihad holds currently is the TRES Corps space station Ithaca. Ithaca is the home of Zeta Squad, and even with them in residence the station is still mostly half-empty. No other JAOs have functional operations in space.

Before the X'hirjq Invasion, the Blood Jihad had constructed and maintained a mining and manufacturing operation on the lunar surface. Luna Base, as it was so (predictably) named, was totally destroyed during the Invasion, when the X'hirjq vaporized most of the surface facilities, killing the entire staff. After the Invasion, the ruins of Luna Base stood empty. The Blood Jihad's successor organization VRDET decided that rebuilding would be a waste of limited resources, and left the base as a monument to the terrible force of the Invasion.

THE TRIUMVERATE

After the collapse of Serp the Feral's coup attempt (see p. 16) and the rigors of the X'hirjq Invasion and the Pacifica rescue mission, the JAO leadership rearranged the central-command structure, removing total control from a single Praetor (as it was determined that no single person could provide proper leadership for the entire Jihad) and handing it over to a council of three ranking Jihaddi officers, calling the new central command the Triumvirate in classic Roman fashion.

The three Triumvirs are supported by three Adjuncts, one to a Triumvir. The Adjuncts act in the age-old tradition of vice-presidents and second bananas everywhere: providing a backup in case a Triumvir is incapable of attending a meeting.

The entire Triumvirate meets every three months to take care of the rubber-stamping at an undisclosed location, although they'll meet during a crisis when their leadership is needed.

The Office of the Triumvirate is responsible for co-ordinating inter-JAO operations, maintaining the JihadLink communications network, taking in money from Jihad dummy companies and keeping the vast majority of the Jihad a secret from the mundanes.

The current Triumvirate consists of Admiral Davies of TRES Corps, Commander Aris Merquoni of VRDET, and Captain Shadur T'Kharn of TRES Corps. The Adjuncts are Rear Admiral Katze Brenner of TRES Corps, Grand Admiral Kirk Felton of TRES Corps, and Archchancellor Joseph Schneider of the JPV.

Overall, the Jihad has roughly 25,000 people involved in the cause in some fashion. About half of these are men-at-arms; the rest work as technicians, researchers, teachers and liaisons between the Jihad and the mundane world.

JIHAD AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The Jihad has been composed of many different groups in the decade since it's creation. Most of these groups spontaneously formed and just as spontaneously dissolved back into the void. The most spectacular case of this happened in 1997, when the venerable Blood Jihad group simply... collapsed, leaving behind entire truckloads of equipment and a very confused subordinate staff (the leadership having just up and vanished within the space of 24 hours). Some JAOs, however, manage to find a particular niche and cling to it, no matter what the odds.

The SS Explain Star

The SS *Explain Star* occupies an... unique niche in the history of the Jihad. The ship itself is a modified VRDET interdimensional scout craft, crewed mainly by rankings from TRES Corps and brethren of the Church of St. Dino the Avenger, and operates totally independent from all three JAOs.

The *Explain Star* was designed and built by VRDET R&D director Malaclypse the Seeker, under circumstances that remain fairly hazy (Mal is on record saying about the *Explain Star* “remember kids, don’t drink heavily and operate a CAD/CAM autofactory.”). The ship fell under the command of a Commander LoS of TRES Corps, also under hazy circumstances that probably involved alcohol as well. Somewhere along the line, CosDtA wrangled co-jurisdiction of the crew, and things finally came to a head when LoS declared his ship “the last warship of the Bwahahahaharian Empire” and refused to answer calls demanding that he return the ship to the proper authorities.

As the only truly independent spacecraft operating in the Jihad today, the *Explain Star* wanders on patrol between Earth and Mars, watching for B’harnate or allied attack ships approaching from the Void, and blowing up the occasional stray rock.

TRES Corps

The largest of the functional JAOs, TRES Corps stands as the de facto “leader” of the JAOs (And of the Jihad, as a majority of the Triumvirate is composed of TRES members). TRES was formed as the military wing of a more esoteric group in 1993, as a supposed successor to the Knights Templar. The original TRES group dissolved within eighteen months, leaving only the TRES Corps as a remnant. From this beginning, TRES has grown rapidly, from a small group to the single largest military contingent in the Jihad today.

TRES Corps is divided into a number of separate Squadrons, each Squadron being semi-autonomous. Omega Squadron is commanded by the TRES CinC, and the other Squadrons are commanded by other Admirals. Zeta Squadron, the fifth active sub-group, is the Corps research and development division, responsible for most of TRES’ overtechnology.

The Corps is commanded by Grand Admiral Kirk Felton, a veteran of the assault on the Pacifica POW camp, former electronics technician and member in good standing of the Maenads. Admiral Felton took command after former Grand Admiral Melanie Davies went on an extended sabbatical in Tibet (or just hasn’t returned yet from a pub crawl in the north of England, according to latrine rumor).

TRES Corps’ central headquarters is a high-tech compound built in the Colorado Rockies, deep inside ski resort territory. The ski town of Winter Park, and the resort, lies to the south, while Corps HQ is accessible from a nearby private road.

Doberman Empire

The oldest JAO still functioning, the Doberman Empire has doggedly (if you’ll excuse the pun) hacked out its niche in the Jihad over the years. The Empire was the first military JAO to use large numbers of soldiers and weaponry in their battle plans (before the Empire was formed, the Jihad consisted mostly of small commando-style groups, acting in a much more covert fashion). The Empire’s devotion to large-scale combat caused a temporary fracture in the Jihad’s command structure, which eventually led to the formation of the Office of the Praetor (now the Triumvirate Office) and the semi-autonomous nature of the modern Jihad.

For most of its existence, the Doberman Empire had been the preeminent JAO in the Jihad. However, a series of devastating setbacks during the X’hirjq Invasion (losing several key global bases, as well as heavier casualties than any other JAO) caused the Empire to cede its leadership position to TRES Corps at the end of 1996. Although it is still recovering from the damage it took during the Invasion, the Empire still maintains a formidable military presence, second only to TRES in size and equipment.

The Empire’s commanding officer is Fleet Commander Aureli Invid Manticore Samhain, one of the few active Jihaddi who was recruited during the reign of the High Prophet and the Seven. One of the most decorated Jihaddi ever, Samhain is the reason that the Empire didn’t dissolve in the aftermath of the Invasion.

The Doberman Empire's headquarters is Base Delta, an underground base located somewhere in the southeastern United States, supposedly near the Ozark Mountains.

M.A.U.L.

Specialists in mundane mayhem and advanced tactics, this JAO has one of the best combat success rates on record, as well as the highest amounts of collateral damage on record.

Despite the Jihad's accepted policy of "try not to shoot where the mundanes can see you," MAUL always seems to end up on the wrong side of the news cameras every time they go out to fight the Hellwurm. MAUL's Mobile Heavy Infantry does most of the damage, as it consists mainly of top-of-the-line U.S. Army infantry and armor equipment. This is a blessing in disguise, actually, as it allows the various liaisons and other friends the Jihad has in the mundane world to pass off MAUL MHI actions as military maneuvers, or surprise raids on militia groups, or something that won't pass as too unusual in the average mundane mind.

Aggressive battle skills aside, MAUL's biggest claim to fame is the MAUL War College. The War College is a school devoted to the study of advanced military strategy and tactics, especially those tactics that can be put to use in the Hidden War. The War College has achieved a reputation for creating brilliant field tacticians, and many JAO officers have taken courses from there.

MAUL is commanded by General Most Holy (obviously a pseudonym — he won't tell us his real name), a long-term veteran Jihaddi and a respected commando force leader. He supervised the creation of the MHI and the War College, and is considered a major force in the modern Jihad.

MAUL's headquarters is located near the town of Peoria, Illinois. God only knows why.

VRDET (Verthandic Rangers)

VRDET occupies a unique place in the Jihad. While the larger JAOs focus primarily on infantry or armored combat, the Verthandic Rangers concentrate on scout and special forces commando operations.

The Rangers were formed from the ruins of an earlier JAO, the Blood Jihad. The Blood Jihad was a "traditional" infantry/armor military JAO, until the core leadership vanished one bright February morning. This disappearance caused the JAO to collapse overnight, leaving the second-string officers with a huge mess to clean up. During the cleanup process, the Blood Jihad merged with a small R&D group called Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow. With the pooled resources of the two groups, the Verthandic Rangers were formed.

VRDET's biggest claim to fame is their interdimensional strike range. Rangers can literally go anywhere in any universe they choose to. In order to keep their forces close to the action, however, the VRDET high command chooses to restrict interdimensional travel to simple Earth-based teleportation.

The Rangers are divided into Explorations and Research divisions, controlled overall by Operations Director Nexxus Kline. Director Kline was the second-string command officer left behind when the Blood Jihad collapsed. She is a competent, if somewhat eccentric administrator and an established combat veteran. The Explorations Division is run by Director Katze Brenner, a relative newcomer to the Jihad but still respected as an administrator and leader. Katze is also a powerful telekine and mage, talents that have helped her in several of her adventures with the Jihad. Research is commanded by Director Damocles, again a relative newcomer to the Jihad, but he has established himself as a steady administrator — something the frequently out-of-control VR Research Division needs badly.

Although not currently in control of anything related to VRDET, Professor Malaclypse is a formidable presence within the halls of VRDET. The Professor is the former director of the Evil Geniuses, an elder Jihaddi, a veteran of the X'hirjq Invasion and the mind behind VRDET's interdimensional technology. While nominally retired from active duty in the Jihad, the Professor remains in place as a senior advisor and "damned nuisance."

VRDET's headquarters is located under a mountain in the Sangre de Cristo range in southern Colorado, near the town of Alamosa.

Church of St. Dino the Avenger

The CoStDtA holds that Dino (of Flintstones fame) is the definitive purple dinosaur and that Barney has attempted to usurp this position using his powers of spongification to subvert peoples' minds. Because

of this, St. Dino has vowed to see Barney overthrown and have his rightful place restored in the hearts of the masses, thus, St. Dino the Avenger. Of equal standing in the Church's pantheon and friend of St. Dino is St. Rubble the Liberator (Barney, also of Flintstones fame), whose name has also been usurped and in addition to sharing St. Dino's vow to overthrow the Nagenta Demon and reclaim his name has also sworn to liberate those who have fallen under its evil thrall.

The Church is primarily dedicated to philosophical thought as opposed to military action to overthrow Barney, but they do support the military actions of their fellow Jihaddi in the more militaristically oriented JAOs. This support includes medical services, and the JAO's members are trained in both physical and magical methods of healing. Also, because of their focus on philosophical, nonviolent, life-preserving methods of action, members of the CoStDtA are sometimes sought by the Triumvirate and other JAOs as council for advice in the proper uses of their power.

The CoStDtA is a semi-public JAO, as they will welcome and help any who come to them for aid. Their existence is known publicly, although not widely because they tend not to evangelize. The full nature of their activities to fight Barney, however, is not. To those who know of them, they're probably thought of as sort of a commune-like group, a harmless if a slightly odd bunch who live on the lake and tend to keep to themselves. They have no official uniform, members wear whatever is usual for them; the only outward symbol of membership is a small pewter pin, their logo of St. Dino and St. Rubble with the motto "resvrgam" underneath; a consulate's pin is backed by a nine-pointed starburst while an acolyte's is plain. When not at the Church's headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan (the term church is used merely as a description of a group of people with a certain faith, beyond the headquarters which serves as a meeting place and living quarters there is no official church building or any similar thing) members are likely very scattered, either at other JAO headquarters (as some members belong to other JAOs) or simply travelling off on their own; they do have a fondness for amusement parks and ice cream though. Also, the Church, being in general a very relaxed and open-minded group of people is, to use another's term, "the medicinal herb supplier for Jihaddi with a loose grip on reality," though they tend to prefer the more simple "We get weed for the rest of the Jihad." Whether the Church grows this product themselves or has an outside connection is not known; the Triumvirate has decided not to question such things.

Jihad Praxeum Venificus

The only existing college of magic in the world, the Praxeum is also the newest JAO to be created. Dedicated to the study and use of pure magic, the Praxeum was formed in early 1998 to give Jihaddi mages training that they often sorely lacked — magic being mostly unknown in the mundane world, and mage-born Jihaddi not having any real chance to learn their limitations before being thrust into combat.

While still a young organization, the Praxeum has gathered the senior Jihad mages as instructors, and has created a curriculum that allows even the most ignorant mage to learn more about his or her powers. In addition, the Praxeum boasts one of the largest collections of intelligence data on the Hellwyrms and his minions in the Jihad.

The Praxeum is run by Arch-Chancellor Joseph Schneider, a skilled mage and scholar, although a relative newcomer to the Jihad. The Praxeum is still operating out of the basements of various other JAO headquarters, but is expected to have finished their campus in eastern Pennsylvania by the end of the year.

Subgroups:

In addition to the above JAOs, the Jihad also has a number of smaller organizations operating within the larger orgs.

Maenads of the Holy Albino: The Maenads are the super-elite warriors of the Jihad, hand-picked by the supernatural entity Feral Jackson to go forth and eliminate all Lyrans. Maenads (named after the ancient worshippers of Dionysius — and no, we don't know why) have traditionally been chosen from the upper ranks of the Jihad, especially officers with strong combat records. There have never been more than eight active Maenads at any given time.

All Maenads, regardless of origin, are given a transformational ability when chosen. This ability, called "warp-spasm," allows the Maenad to become a werewolf-like creature with retractable metal claws; the metal

being of the same composition as that of the Barney-Slayer, but without the sword's special enchantments. Maenads are also given a "holy mission" to seek out and destroy any Lyrans that cross their path (as Lyrans are very tough customers, this is one reason as to why Maenads are scarce).

The Maenads are a highly informal group, having no fixed meeting place. The nominal leader of the group is Slider the Feral, also known as Admiral J-Rock of TRES Corps.

WEDJEE: Originally a separate JAO, WEDJEE was absorbed by the Doberman Empire early in its career and now functions as the research arm of the Empire. WEDJEE is the oldest of the Jihad's R&D operations, and is responsible for much of the Jihad's current overtechnology, including the JihadLinker network.

WEDJEE maintains its primary offices at Doberman Base Delta, with smaller labs and such scattered through the American South, primarily in Texas.

Church of Grimace: The Church, a religious order composed mostly of Doberman Empire and TRES officers, worships Grimace, the big purple thingie in the McDonald's commercials. It is the Church's belief that Grimace is actually the Anti-Barney, and as such can tap into his power through prayer and study. While many of the more secular Jihaddi figure that the Church members have simply gone through too many combat missions, they must be doing something right, since the higher-ups in the Church have made reputations for themselves as warriors and healers.

The Church maintains chapels at both TRES and Doberman headquarters, while only initiates know where the central temple is located.

Inter-JAO Cooperation:

Despite the decentralized nature of most Jihaddi operations, there are certain things that require the JAOs to work together as a unit. These joint operations are often run by a designated group of officers from each involved JAO, who form the command staff and pass orders onto the troops from their JAOs. This is usually how short-term military operations are organized. Long-term operations, such as maintaining the JihadLink™ network, are put under the management of the Triumvirate Office, who then delegates authority as needed.

JIHADDI GEAR

Communications

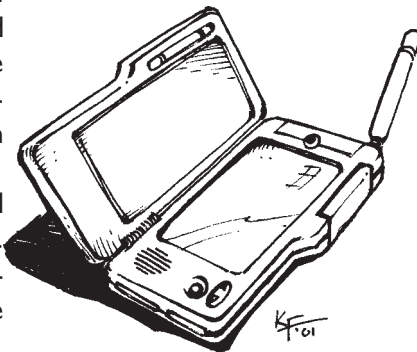
The JihadLinker

The JihadLinker is the primary communications device used by the Jihaddi on the street. Every Jihaddi, no matter how low ranking, is issued a Linker when first recruited, and the Linkers become heavily personalized as time progresses.

The standard-issue Linker is roughly the size of a modern TL7 personal digital assistant; a plastic case (actually high-tech Kevlar composite) about six inches across by four inches wide by two inches deep. The case unfolds to reveal a small keyboard and what looks like an LCD screen.

There the resemblance between a Linker and a PDA ends. The Linker is actually a Complexity 2 miniaturized communications platform, capable of connecting Jihaddi with voice, video, and e-mail, with minimal data loss. Linkers connect directly to the Jihad's private intranet (hooked up globally by a satellite communications network), from which they can access the mundane internet, send mail on the intranet, or call other Jihaddi. Calls can be either straight voice or video, although full video puts a strain on the Linker's power cell. The Linker can also be used as a remote terminal to various computer systems (it comes with the proper cabling, and emulator software is available on JihadNet. Interestingly enough, the most popular software download is the Sony Playstation emulator. Go figure).

Linkers, once assigned, are keyed to work only for their designated operators (usually through fingerprint/voiceprint or bioelectric scan locks). Built-in security features make sure that if a Linker is activated by somebody other than the designated user, it will self-destruct so the device can't be salvaged.

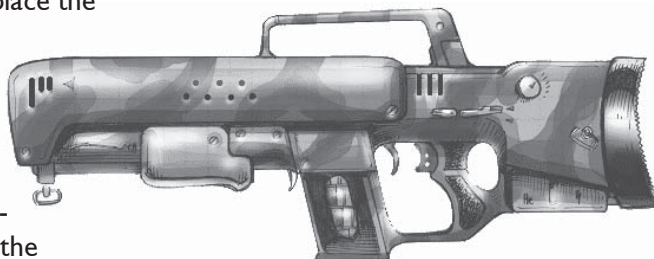


Weapons

X-Rifle

When first formed, the Jihad was armed with a collection of traditional TL7 slugthrowers and a number of exotic, unique energy weapons. While the slugthrowers remain the sidearm of choice for most of the Jihad, a slow movement has been gaining momentum to replace the TL7 guns with a more advanced energy weapon.

The X-Rifle prototype, as developed by WEDJEE in 1994, was less a rifle than a heavy infantry cannon, powered by a mid-size fusion reactor and capable of generating plasma shots using regular air. The design, while powerful, was extremely unwieldy, which proved to be a severe liability during the X'hrijq Invasion.



Responding to the call from TRES Corps for a more portable version of the plasma gun, WEDJEE technicians stripped the reactor and heavy intake/compression equipment from the gun, instead using a series of capacitors and high-frequency radio generators to excite a charge of gaseous hydrogen into a plasma state. The resulting weapon, still called the X-Rifle (and more worthy of the name than the original prototype) was paired with a four-round 40mm grenade launcher.

TRES Corps responded very favorably to the X-Rifle, and has since used it as their standard infantry weapon. Jihaddi from the other high-tech JAOs have also been using the X-Rifle, as the high magazine capacity and low maintenance requirements make it an ideal gun for field service.

Vehicles

The Van In Black

The Jihad, as a covert military force, is often unable to field the kind of large combat vehicles that make up modern fighting forces (MAUL being the major exception to the rule). As such, while tanks, fighters and other such and sundry hardware are kept in reserve, the Jihad relies on smaller disguised vehicles for basic troop movement and urban assault missions.

The basic Covert Action Assault Vehicle — better known by field operators as the Van in Black (ViB) — is based on the frame and body paneling of an average Ford van, the kind used by cable installers, plumbers, and other service personnel worldwide. The interior of the ViB however is very different.

A basic ViB runs on a specialized TL8 high-powered gas turbine engine, tuned to sound similar to a normal gasoline motor — and gives the ViB the raw power necessary to outrun anything found on the Mundane roads. The turbine powers an electric motor which turns the wheels. All of the major systems in the ViB run on the turbine. The frame and body panels are constructed out of carbon composite sandwiched between layers of Kevlar and titanium mesh for armoring. The interior is designed to be as modular as possible, with room for 8 Jihaddi in combat gear for transport missions, doors for weapons ports, and power outlets designed to take surveillance and communications equipment.

As the name suggests, the ViB is usually painted a glossy black, with smoked glass windows to prevent easy identification of the driver and passengers from a distance. When appropriate, logos of Mundane companies can be applied to the ViB. For example, surveillance or “spin team” ViBs sometimes will be painted with the logo of a local TV or radio news station, especially if the equipment involves using large antennae on the roof of the van.

Recently there has been a move to refit other Mundane vehicles in a similar fashion. To date, prototypes of covert action vehicles including a Toyota Echo, a full-sized semi with trailer, several species of SUV (the SUViB? Only time will tell...) and a Learjet have been built.

Computers

WEDJEE lapframe

In order to provide high-powered computers to Jihaddi in the field, the boffins at WEDJEE developed their CRAIT lapframe, a TL9 Complexity 4 portable computer with the equivalent computing power of a TL7 supercomputer. The lapframe is essentially the same size and outward design as a traditional Mundane laptop, and frequently 'frames are given fake brand labels in order to keep outsiders from suspecting anything is out of the ordinary.

Inside, the lapframe is very similar to the JihadLinker, the major difference being the 'frame is designed as a general-purpose computer as opposed to the dedicated communications systems inside a Linker. Lapframes are used primarily by science-minded Jihaddi to investigate enemy-related phenomenon, although they can prove useful in hacking Mundane computers. Dedicated lapframe processors are often used to run automated tasks in R&D facilities or inside specially-modified buildings.

The Stuff Mad Scientists' Dreams Are Made Of - Jihad Ubertechnology

Artificial Intelligence (TL11+)

With all the advances in computer technology available to the Jihad, it is not terribly surprising that artificial intelligences have been developed. In fact, it is probably more surprising that AIs are not nearly as common in the Jihad as they are!

Jihaddi AIs are traditionally the realm of WEDJEE, the original R&D group and fount for most of the common devices in use in the current Jihad. The WEDJEE AI code was developed by DE Fleet Commander Samhain (at the time calling himself Captain Midnight), as a way to provide for autonomous vehicles. The code itself is still highly classified, and nobody outside of WEDJEE knows how or even *why* it works. All that is really known about the WEDJEE AI code is that it is capable of generating sentient programs with unique personalities. Most of the AIs created by WEDJEE act as sysadmins for Doberman Empire bases or vehicles.

Non-WEDJEE AIs are found scattered through the Jihad, usually they are coded by senior research staff using a variety of programming techniques. Most follow the path of their WEDJEE brethren, becoming sysadmins or majordomos for Jihad bases.

The most interesting exception to this rule is TRES officer Cdr. Daniel Wood. Cdr. Wood is an artificial intelligence, but he is *not* the creation of any Jihaddi. While the story is unclear and at times outright contradictory, it appears that Cdr. Wood was the accidental creation of a group of Mundane cybernetics researchers that escaped into the Internet and eventually found refuge in a TRES database. Cdr. Wood currently serves as both Zeta Squad majordomo and (with the help of a modified combat mecha) infantry officer.

The Gateway (TL16)

Buried deep in the heart of the VRDET command center Mt. Blanca lies the ultimate expression of Jihaddi ubertechnology and the unbridled creativity of the human mind.

Inside a large chamber sits the world's only functional interdimensional wormhole generator — known simply as the Gateway. The Gateway takes up most of the chamber, leaving a stage in the center for people to access the wormhole. Mission control for the Gateway is in a nearby room with windows to look into the main chamber. From here the wormhole can be generated, connected to any known point (or lock on to a strong beacon signal) and monitored for signs of collapse. All this requires incredible amounts of power, so the Gateway is connected to the base's four fusion reactors, and even then can cause temporary brownouts through the rest of the base.

The Gateway is the brainchild of Professor Malaclypse (VRDET, ret.), who developed the initial theory for interdimensional travel while still working with the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow. Construction of the Gateway was delayed several times due to the X'hirjq Invasion and subsequent reorganization of the Evil Geniuses into VRDET. However, once the Gateway was completed, it became the backbone of the Rangers, giving them unprecedented mobility, far above that of the other JAOs.

Since inception, the Gateway has been brought to full power only a few times, the most notable of which being the rescue of VR Councilor Katze Brenner from the alternate-medieval nation of Marraketh.

Beyond that, the Gateway has been used to map alternate universes in search of the Jihad's number-one potential target: The home realm of the Hellwyrms B'harne.

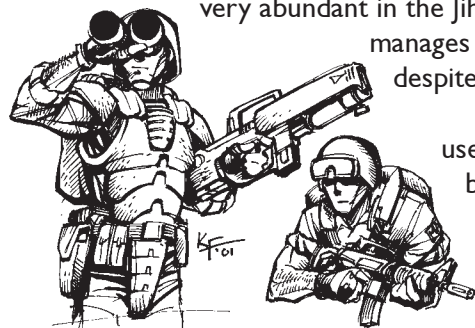
CHARACTER TYPES

Soldier

75 points

The soldier is the backbone of the Jihad. Since the Jihad is a military crusade first and foremost, a great deal of care is put into selecting members of the rank-and-file. Most of the Jihad's soldiers have had some background with the mundane military — usually as volunteers out of high school. Some are retired Army/Navy/Marines/Air Force, and work as teachers for the new recruits (see Instructors). Many, however, are adventurers who've stumbled upon the Jihad through random happenstance, and are asked to join the fight.

Soldiers, obviously, outnumber the rest of the types of Jihaddi hands down. Every single man at arms is different — magic, psionics, odd combat styles, and other things never found in a “normal” military unit are very abundant in the Jihad's standing army. Surprisingly enough, this... diverse group of people manages to work well as a single, cohesive group under combat conditions, despite all the differences they have when not working.



PC soldiers are, obviously, already standing members of a JAO, and use that JAO's ranking system. NPC soldiers are generally ranked using basic US Army non-commissioned ranks (Private 1st Class to Sgt. Major), on the presumption that PC characters are automatically “commissioned officers” in their JAO. Soldiers of either type wear the basic duty uniform of their JAO, and are equipped with the latest in overtechnology combat gear.

Attributes: ST: 12 [20] DX: 12 [20] IQ: 11 [10] HT: 12 [20].

Advantages: Ally Group / (The Jihad) [40 points], and 30 points from any of the following: Acute Hearing [2], Acute Vision [2], Alertness [5/level], Ambidexterity [10], Combat Reflexes [15], Common Sense [10], Damage Resistance [3/level], Danger Sense [15], Fit [5], Luck [15/30], Unfazeable [15], Very Fit [15], Voice [10], and Zeroed [10].

Disadvantages: Duty / (to JAO) [-15], Enemy / (Barney & Friends) [-30], Secret / (Member of the Jihad) [-20], and -30 points from Bad Temper [-10], Berserk [-15], Bloodlust [-10], Code of Honor [-5 to -15], Fanaticism [-15], Glory Hound [-15], Obsession [-5 to -15], Paranoia [-10], Post-Combat Shakes [-5], and Unluckiness [-10].

Primary Skills: Beam Weapons (X-Rifle) DX+3 [4]-15; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-11; Savoir-Faire (Military) IQ [1]-11; Tactics IQ-1 [2]-10.

Secondary Skills: Guns (Pistols) DX+2 [2]-14, Knife DX+1 [2 points]-13; and 10 points* from Armoury (Rifles and handguns), Aviation, Camouflage, Demolition, Electronics Operation (Sensors), Electronics Operation (Communications), Engineer (Combat), Forward Observer, Guns (Automatics), Gunner (Machine Gun), Gunner (Rocket Launcher), Hiking, Mechanic, Orienteering, Parachuting, Piloting (Helicopter, High-Performance Airplane or Light Airplane), Stealth, more points in Tactics, and Throwing.

Background Skills: Driving (Automobile) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11; First Aid IQ [1 point]-11; and a total of 5 points in Brawling, Guns (Any), Jumping, Knife, Swimming (P/A); Boating, Climbing, Diving, Short Sword (Any) (P/A); Judo (P/A); Karate (P/H); Survival (Any) (M/A); Strategy (M/A); or additional points in speciality skills.

**The general idea is to build a logical skill set, not a combat monster.*

Researchers:

93 points

As the war progresses, the Jihad needs to keep itself current with the enemy. To accomplish this end, each JAO has a sizable staff of researchers, devoted to creating new weapons, collecting and sorting through intelligence reports, and generally ensuring that the Jihad can defeat the worst that the Hellwyrms and its comrades can throw at them.

(NPC) Researchers are often recruited at occult gatherings, science-fiction conventions, or other places where large numbers of educated and intelligent people with an interest in unusual phenomenon gather. Often, the recruit will have learned of the Jihad through his own studies and interest, and be asked to join.

The average PC researcher often has a combat role as well (since most PCs usually end up in the middle of a battle), and, as usual, is ranked accordingly with the command structure of the JAO they belong to. NPC researchers are often unranked (as non-combat personnel, they have more of a “civilian” feel to them) and are involved in laboratory or library research into new technologies or the occult background of the enemy.

Attributes: ST: 10 [0] DX: 11 [10] IQ: 13 [30] HT: 11 [10]

Advantages: Ally Group (The Jihad) [40 points], and 30 additional points from Alertness [5/level], Ambidexterity [10], Composed [5], Intuition [15], Intuitive Mathematician [25], Language Talent [2/level], Lightning Calculator [5], Unfazeable [15] and Voice [10].

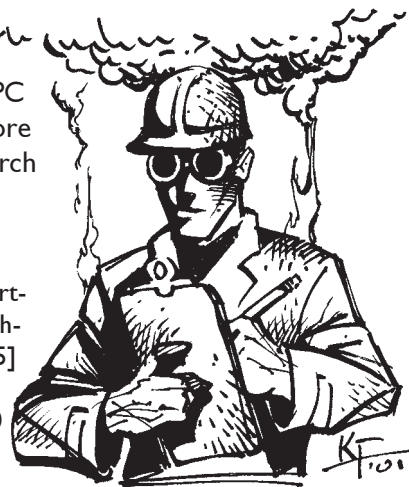
Disadvantages: Duty / (to JAO) [-15], Enemy / (Barney & Fiends) [-30], and -30 additional points from Absent-Mindedness [-15], Age (years over 50) [3/level], Bad Sight [-10], Curious [-3/level], Hard of Hearing [-10], Honesty [-10], Oblivious [-3], Obsession (The subject of research) [-5 to -15], Reputation (Bookworms & geeks.) [-5], Unfit [-5], Unluckiness [-10] and Weirdness Magnet [-15].

Primary Skills: Computer Operation IQ+1 [2]-14; Research IQ+4 [6]-17; Writing IQ+3 [8]-17.

Secondary Skills: Choose 8 points worth of skill* in any *three* of the following: Alchemy, Anthropology, Archaeology, Artificial Intelligence, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Computer Hacking, Computer Programming, Cryptanalysis, Cryptology, Diagnosis, Electronics, Engineer, Forensics, Genetics, History, Literature, Mathematics, Metallurgy, Nuclear Physics, Occultism, Paleontology, Philosophy, Physics, Psychology, Physician, Science!, Surgery, Theology, Weird Science, Xenobiology (Lyrn or Hellwyrn) and Zoology.

Background Skills: Driving (Automobile) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; First Aid IQ [1]-13; Guns (Pistol) DX+2 [1]-13 and 5 points from Beam Weapons (X-Rifle), Guns (Any), Knife, Short Sword (Any) (P/A); Judo (P/A); Survival (Any) (M/A); Tactics (M/H); or additional points in specialty skills.

**This will give you IQ+3 for (M/A) skills, IQ+2 for (M/H) skills, and IQ for (M/VH) skills. Also note that some of these skills have prerequisites*



Technicians:

87 points

When the research staffs develop a new way to blow up an enemy conclave, somebody has to build it. The Jihad's technical staff is small, but consists of some of the most skilled people on the planet today. Techs are recruited from many of the same places as the researchers are, but are put to the task of turning theories into workable hardware.

Again, as with the researchers, PC techs usually have combat skills as well as technical skills, and, again, are ranked within the command structure of their parent JAO. NPC techs, again, are much like NPC researchers, save for the fact that the techs build the stuff that the researchers design.



Attributes: ST: 10 [0] DX: 12 [20] IQ: 13 [30] HT: 11 [10]

Advantages: Ally Group / (The Jihad) [40]; Gizmo [5]; and 30 additional points from Acute Hearing [2/level], Acute Vision [2/level], Alertness [5/level], Breath-Holding (inventions sometimes start to smoke) [2/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Damage Resistance [3/level], Danger Sense [15], Fit [5], Intuitive Mathematician [25], Lightning Calculator [15], Luck [15/30], Rapid Healing [5], Unfazeable [15] and Voice [10].

Disadvantages: Duty (to their JAO) [-15]; Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-30], and -35 additional points from Absent-Mindedness [-15], Attentive [-1], Bad Sight [-10], Brontophobia (fear of loud noises) [-10], Curious [-5 to -15], Hard of Hearing [-10], Impulsiveness [-10] Oblivious [-3], Odious Personal Habit (“Never stops talking about latest invention.”) [-5], Reputation (Dangerous Mad Scientist) [-5] and Unluckiness [-10].

Primary Skills: Computer Operation (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-15; Electronics Operation (Any) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Engineer (M/H) IQ [4]-13.

Secondary Skills: Choose 8 points worth of skill in any *three* of the following skills: Armoury, Aviation, Battlesuit, Computer

Hacking, Computer Programming, Driving (Jihad Special Vehicle), Electronics, Exoskeleton, Hyperspace Physics, Mathematics, Mechanic, Metallurgy, Nuclear Physics, Physics, Piloting (High-Performance Aircraft), Research, Science!, Ship-building (Starship), Temporal Physics, and Weird Science.

Background Skills: Driving (Automobile) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; First Aid IQ [1]-13; Guns (Pistol) DX+2 [1]-14 and 5 points from Beam Weapons (X-Rifle), Guns (Any), Knife, Short Sword (Any) (P/A); Judo (P/A); Survival (Any) (M/A); Tactics (M/H); or additional points in specialty skills.

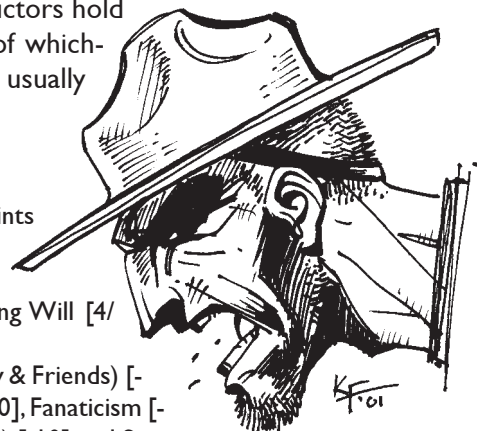
**This will give you IQ+3 for (M/A) skills, IQ+2 for (M/H) skills, and IQ for (M/VH) skills. Also note that some of these skills have prerequisites.*

Instructors:

98 points

Often, new Jihaddi are young and very inexperienced. In combat, this can be an incredibly dangerous situation — for themselves and the people around them. So, to cut down on the number of rookies getting themselves killed on their first mission, each JAO has a group of experienced officers (usually retired Army/ Navy/Marines/Air Force) whose job it is to train the younger recruits in the ancient arts of killing other living things.

At the same time, research and technical staffs have teachers as well*. In addition to getting the new people up to speed with the Jihad's existing technology (which is, on average, around a century ahead of current state-of-the-art, with few exceptions), the research/tech instructors hold frequent seminars to allow the entire staff to stay current structure of whichever NPC field they're involved in (Soldier, Researcher, or Technician), usually as middle-ranked or high-ranked members.



Attributes: ST: 12 [20] IQ: 12 [20] DX: 11 [10] HT: 11 [10]

Advantages: Ally Group / (The Jihad) [40]; Voice [10], and 25 additional points from Acute Hearing [2/level], Acute Vision [2/level], Alcohol Tolerance [5], Ambidexterity [10], Charisma [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Composed [5], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5], Imperturbable [10], Intuition [15], Strong Will [4/level], Very Fit [15], and Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: Bad Temper [-10], Duty / (to their JAO) [-15], Enemy / (Barney & Friends) [-30], and -30 additional points from Appearance (Unattractive) [-5], Bully [-10], Fanaticism [-15], Hidebound [-5], Odious Personal Habit (NEVER! STOPS! SHOUTING!) [-10] and Sense of Duty ("Train the fresh meat right or they get killed.") [-10],

Primary Skills: Bard IQ [2]-12; Guns (Any) DX+2 [1]-13; Leadership IQ [2]-12; Savoir-Faire (Military) IQ+1 [2]-13; Tactics IQ [4]-12; Teaching IQ [2]-12.

Secondary Skills: Choose a total of 24 points in the following skills: Acting, Beam Weapons (X-Rifle), Body Language, Boxing, Camouflage, Climbing, Demolition, Escape, Fast-Draw (Pistol), Fencing, Forward Observer, Gunner (Machine Gun), Gunner (Rocket Launcher), Guns (Pistol), Guns (Rifle), Hiking, Holdout, Intimidation, Judo, Jumping, Karate, Knife, Knife Throwing, Parachuting, Scrounging, Shadowing, Short Sword, Staff, Stealth, Style Analysis, Survival (Any), Swimming, Throwing, Tracking, Traps, Underwater Demolition and Wrestling.

Background Skills: Computer Operation IQ [1]-12; Driving (Automobile) (P/A) DX [2]-13; First Aid IQ+1 [2]-13; and 6 additional points, in Area Knowledge (Urban), Mechanic, Motorcycle, Running, Scuba, Skiing or additional points in specialty skills.

** Research and technical Instructors use the same template as a normal Researcher or Technician, but add the skills Bard, Leadership, and Teaching at IQ+1.*

Liaisons:

109 points

The Liaison (not to be confused with the Lyran Liaisons) walks a very fine (and oftentimes dangerous) line between the Jihad and the rest of the world. Liaisons are Jihaddi who operate safehouses and dummy corporations, or work as members of a mundane organization (such as the police or local government). The liaison's main job is to keep the Jihad's operations safely undercover, protect any Jihaddi who're dumb enough to get caught out in the open, and spread enough misinformation about the Jihad that nobody in the mundane world knows the truth.

Liaisons are usually people who still have families outside the Jihad, or some other obligation that prevents them from going completely underground. This makes the liaison something of a security risk, since should the enemy find out about a liaison and his/her loved ones, it could make life very dangerous for that liaison.

Attributes: ST: 10 [0] DX: 12 [20] IQ: 13 [30] HT: 12 [20]

Advantages: Ally Group / (The Jihad) [15], Charisma+2 [10], Danger Sense [15], Language Talent+2 [4], Strong Will [4]

Disadvantages: Duty (to the Jihad) [-10], Enemy (Barney & Friends) [-20], Secret (member of underground terrorist org; i.e. the Jihad) [-20].

Primary Skills: Acting IQ+1 [4]-14; Area Knowledge (wherever the Liaison happens to be stationed) IQ+1 [2]-17; Diplomacy IQ [4]-13, Fast-Talk IQ+1 [4]-14; Savoir-Faire IQ+1 [2]-14.

Secondary Skills: A total of 16 points from: Boxing, Brawling, Carousing, Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Detect Lies, Disguise, Electronics Operation (Any), Erotic Art, Escape, Fast-Draw, Forgery, Fortune-Telling, Intelligence Analysis, Interrogation, Intimidation, Judo, Karate, Law, Lip-Reading, Lockpicking, Performance, Pickpocket, Politics, Scrounging, Sex Appeal, Scrounging, Shadowing, Sleight of Hand, Streetwise, Stealth, Traps, Ventroliquism and Video Production.

Background Skills: Driving (Automobile) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; First Aid IQ [1]-13; Guns (Pistol) DX+2 [1]-14, and six points in any of the following: Forward Observer, Mechanic, Orienteering, Piloting (Light Aircraft), Powerboat, Strategy, Survival (Any), Tactics, or additional points in specialty skills.

Captain Miranda Delgado, TRES Corps

195 points

Miranda Delgado was born and raised in East Los Angeles. In high school she excelled at both her schoolwork and on the basketball court, which earned her a full ride scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley. After four years at Berkeley, in which she earned double majors in sociology and statistics, she graduated in the spring of 1994 and went to work for a middling sized corporation in San Francisco. Early in 1995, the company entered acquisition talks with another company, but Delgado became suspicious of the people from the other company because they did not seem like any businessmen she had run into before.

After a couple weeks of observation, Delgado approached the person from the other company who had been appointed to audit her department with her suspicions. He listened patiently, but didn't give any indications that Delgado had been right in her guesses. The next day, however, Delgado found herself in a chat with the head of the delegation and found herself recruited into TRES Corps that afternoon.

Delgado's skills at observation and analysis earned her a place in Delta Squadron, the intelligence arm of TRES. The few times she's been called to do something other than intelligence analysis, she has done well at those things, and maintained a steady progression through the ranks. She now holds the rank of Captain, and is in charge of overseeing one of Delta's four companies.

Attributes: ST: 11 IQ: 14 DX: 12 HT: 10

Appearance: Hispanic female, 27 years old, 6'1" and 152 pounds; brown eyes and black hair worn medium length. When not in TRES duty uniform, usually wears jeans and UC-Berkeley t-shirt, or business casual wear when working with civilian operations.

Advantages: Acute Vision [2]; Alertness [10]; Ally Group (The Jihad) [60]; Bilingual [5]; Composed [5]; Military Rank+5 (Captain, TRES) [25].

Disadvantages: Attentive [-1]; Broad-Minded [-1]; Careful [-1]; Duty (to TRES/the Jihad) [-35]; Enemy (Barney & Friends) [-40]; Light Sleeper [-5]; Phobia: Acrophobia(mild) [-10].

Skills: Administration-17; Area Knowledge(Los Angeles)-16; Area Knowledge(SF Bay Area)-16; Area Knowledge(TRES Corps HQ)-17; Beam Weapons/TL9(X-Rifle)-14; Broadsword-12 (2 points); Computer Operation/TL8-16; Desponge-14; Driving/TL7(Automobile)-12; Electronics Operation/TL8(Communications)-15; Electronics Operation/TL8(Sensors)-1; Guns/TL7-14; Identify Sponge Minions-14; Intelligence Analysis-17; Judo-12; Knife-13; Language(English)-15; Language(Spanish)-16; Leadership-15; Mathematics-15; Psychology-14; Research-16; Savoir-Faire(Jihad)-16; Sociology-16; Sports(Basketball)-14; Strategy-14; Swimming-12; Writing-15.

Quirks: Dislikes snow; loves woman's college basketball; meticulous planner; neat and orderly; quiet and introverted.

CHAPTER 3

BLACK HATS AND BASTARDS

El'Rahn waited. He waited as only a Lyran can. Wrapped in his deep purple robes, he peered through his mask at the slightly bloated creature enveloped in its artificial environment on the other side of his lab. "A Lyran's patience transcends even time," the High Mage had often counselled, "There is a moment for everything, the overeager will miss these moments, and thus fail to properly exploit them." El'Rahn knew this moment was fast approaching; still, he waited, almost immobile, silent and pondering.

Suddenly, almost unexpectedly, a muffled squeak from the creature signalled, at long last, the arrival of El'Rahn's moment. He rose finally and approached the creature, the words of incantations barely escaping his lips to make only the slightest of sounds as he carefully guided this creature he'd created through this, the final but most delicate stage of its development.

When it was done, El'Rahn carefully reached into the enclosed environment and lifted the new creature free, allowing himself only the slightest satisfaction as it survived outside the carefully controlled conditions its parent required. A wave of his staff toward the nearest wall activated a viewer which displayed the waiting face of one of his apprentices. "Prak'Al," he called the apprentice's name, knowing he had been waiting just as long for this summons as El'Rahn had for the birth of the creature he now held. "Come now, it is time."

"Yes, Master."

Prak'Al hated Earth. The entire planet somehow stank, he imagined, from the sheer inferiority of its occupants. He still had great difficulty accepting what he'd been told on ascending to the fifth circle, that such unevolved creatures could pose a threat to Lyra, but the High Mage had forseen just that.

"Welllllll, we're all here. Shall we start?" the gravelly hiss somehow managed to sound saccharine sweet at the same time. Prak'Al regarded the orange and yellow demon with distaste that his well-worn magenta mask concealed. Having to be on Earth was bad enough, having to keep company with B'harne's chief lieutenant was irritating, having to do both of these and interact directly with sponge minions in this awful overlit room was nearly unbearable. "Of course. At your pleasure," he replied in as even a voice as he could manage.

— from **Operation:SAMSONITE**



B' HARNE

B'harne, somewhat unsurprisingly, is the Jihad to Destroy B'harne the Purple Dinosaur's primary adversary.

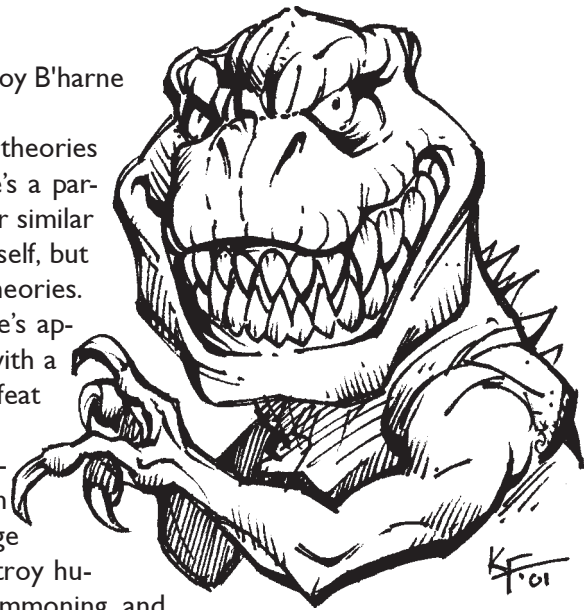
There are various magical, philosophical, and religious theories within the Jihad about what B'harne really is. Some say he's a particularly powerful demon, some call him a minion of Satan or similar religious figure, and some say he's a manifestation of evil itself, but his exact nature remains unknown beyond those various theories. This is because he has been slightly different every time he's appeared to directly face the Jihad; if once he is vanquished with a sword the next time powerful magic may be required to defeat him, or something completely unanticipated.

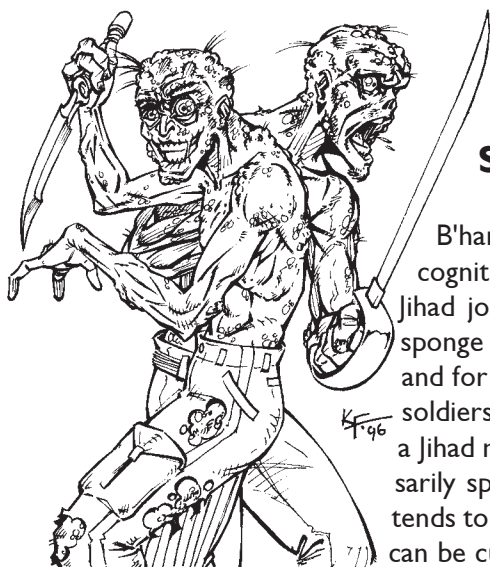
B'harne started as a nameless, formless, adversarial entity. This entity was given form and name when, after a vision that humans would cause his destruction, the Lyran High Mage Charn'El, attempted to summon a demon to help him destroy humanity. The demon Charn'El had selected resisted its summoning, and rather than be refused he forced it, when the beast finally emerged it was mangled, deformed, and a little too ripped up to suit the High Mage's purposes. Something about this failed summoning attracted the entity, and before Charn'El could close his portal it forced its way through, giving itself the name and form of B'harne. Charn'El, an opportunist if nothing else, struck a deal with B'harne and thus gained an ally in the quest to destroy or enslave humanity despite the failed summoning. Though he appears physically quite often, there must be some part of B'harne's formless nature that does not incorporate itself into his various manifestations, because he is always able to appear again if a particular manifestation is struck down. Eventually, B'harne will be somehow forced to draw even that remaining formless part of himself into a physical manifestation and while the resulting manifestation would be quite powerful, it would also enable the B'harne Slayer to destroy him completely.

Most prominent and most used among B'harne's abilities are mesmerization, or spongification as the Jihad calls it. B'harne's ability to mesmerize and stupefy humans is very strong, both through direct contact or intermediaries such as toys and television. This power is strong enough that a completely mesmerized/spongified human, a sponge-minion, will not only fight for B'harne but sometimes will completely forget whatever personality he or she might've had before. How he does this is not understood, it is some combination tone of voice, movement, and what he says; though there is also likely something intangible and possibly magical that helps him sway the will of human beings. As magic is part of his being rather than a force he draws from around him, B'harne is also quite adept in using many forms of magic, with spells that spongify among them. And though he is likely quite physically strong, he prefers to use sponge minions or other servants or allies in direct, physical confrontations.

BJ and Baby Bop

B'hee J'hay and B'haby B'hop, as they are alternatively known, are B'harne's chief lieutenants. Subordinate manifestations of the same adversarial force from which B'harne draws his corporeal form and power, their existence and power are an extension of his will. Their functions are many: they have skills in magic and mesmerization similar to B'harne's (but of lesser strength, they have been known to oversee important operations or lead troops for B'harne both individually and together, and working in conjunction they can greatly magnify B'harne's ability to mesmerize and spongify a large group of people. Because their entire existence is subject to B'harne's will, neither BJ nor Baby Bop can be truly destroyed until B'harne himself is; they can be struck down (and have been many times) with conventional or magical weapons, but will eventually return if B'harne still exists. When B'harne is finally and completely destroyed, BJ and Baby Bop will either disappear along with the power that sustains them or, more likely, their power will be greatly diminished and they will be easily defeated.





THE MINION HORDE

Sponge Minions

Sponge minions are humans who have become so enraptured with B'harne via his powers of mesmerization that they have lost a majority of cognitive ability; they're called sponge minions because of a longstanding Jihad joke about their brains eventually turning into sponge. The average sponge minion has very little reasoning capacity beyond "B'harne is my friend," and for that reason they appear most often doing very simplistic jobs. Foot soldiers, disseminators of propaganda, cannon fodder or a distraction against a Jihad military force, or sometimes simply just there. B'harne doesn't necessarily spongify for a specific reason, it's the primary means by which he intends to dominate humanity. Sometimes, if caught early enough, spongification can be cured and a sponge minion can be returned to complete functionality as a human being. There are many methods of despongification as the Jihad calls it, the vast majority of which involving completely isolating a sponge from B'harne's influence then inundating it with sensations that run contrary to B'harne's teachings; Jolt Cola, junk food, and loud music are very prevalent among the various despongification methods. Because it seeks to save humanity and not just blow up selective bits of it, the Jihad expends considerable efforts toward despongification.

Wyrms Minions

Wyrms minions are humans who have discovered the truth about B'harne's nature and, rather than go insane, become spongified, or fight him have decided to join him for money, power, ego, or simply out of sadism. They are far more dangerous than sponge minions as they have all their mental capacity, and the type of person who becomes a wyrm minion is often rather devious and at least somewhat lacking in compassion. Wyrms minions are given a large variety of jobs in B'harne's organization: many just perform functions they did in Mundania, others are used as officers to lead sponge minions, some help to oversee the Lyons Group or other special projects for B'harne, and a very select few are chosen for their intelligence, ruthlessness, dedication, command ability, and long-term service to be Liaisons. Liaison is the highest post a human can achieve in B'harne's organization; they often operate rather independently within the organization as there is no direct chain of command for them, but all know who they are and that an order from a Liaison is to be obeyed immediately or the consequences will be dire. Because of the extraordinary standards B'harne holds for one to wield such power for him, the number of wyrm minions even with the potential to be a Liaison is very small, and the number who actually hold the post smaller.

Spongification

Spongification is the process through which Barney enslaves his minions and keeps them otherwise under his direct control. This is usually accomplished through repeated viewings of the Barney TV show, along with singing the theme song over and over until the subject's brain begins to ooze out of his ears. It can also be done through magic, psionics, or a direct encounter with the Hellwyrm itself.

When under the gun of active spongification attempts (as opposed to a minion idly humming the theme song under his breath or something; this has to be an actual attempt to spongify somebody), make a Will roll every 2d minutes that you're in the area or the spongifying material is active. Each failure erodes your Will by 1. When your Will is 5 points below your IQ, you become Spongified (see page 84) and require either rescuing or a quick death. A critical success on any Will roll during this contest means that the attack has failed. A critical failure means that the attack has succeeded.

The Liaisons

Each commands an important unit of the Purple Forces. There are other humans of almost equal standing, but not quite as skilled as these. To be a "Liaison to Command for the Division of ____ (whatever) ____" indicates command ability, long-term service, and exceptional talent in the necessary skills.

They are the rank where the simple, centralized chain-of-command of sponge- and Wyrms- Minion forces ceases. Above them are only non-humans (primarily Lyrans) or humans who are so devoted to B'harnii (with, e.g., ritual oaths and such) that they have lost a substantive part of their humanity. Collectively referred to as "the Brass," these individuals work closely with the ultimate leaders of the Purple Forces and keep the Forces coordinated and under control. Despite having no clear chain of command (that humans would understand), Liaisons know that any order from them is to be obeyed explicitly and immediately, as it will *not* be contradicted by another unless conditions change... in which case the latest order is now to be obeyed absolutely.

Current Liaisons:

Kajj: A very traditional battlefield captain. Tall, slightly tanned, and bald as an egg but extremely tough. Foregoes most technological equipment in favor of hand weapons (bows, swords) and troops. He is skilled at commanding spongin troops and has a very high rate of success with them.

Arill: Arill cares nothing for command or wealth, beyond the necessities of a life of hedonism once B'harne is successful in subjugating humanity. He heads the R&D department, since he has a supremely nasty imagination that's impressed some Lyrans once or twice. Put a sword or other weapon in his hand though, and he's just as likely to injure himself as anything else.

Gherin: Unlike his fellow Liaisons, Gherin only possesses average intelligence. It is his proficiency on the battlefield that earned him his post, as well as his ability to train others nearly to that level of proficiency. His men are a tightly-trained, strong group of almost entirely wyrm minion soldiers as he despises sponges and uses them only in a last resort. Continued demonstrations of his ability and success of his ability as a strike leader maintain his standing as a Liaison.

Linna: The only current female Liaison, Linna's warm smile and down-home, motherly style only hide a warped and completely round-the-bend insane mind. She administers and maintains spongification measures like music, food, and other influences.

Winston: An actual public figure, and probably the most frustrating of the Liaisons to the Jihad due to his squeaky clean public image despite the amount of legal manipulation and maneuvering he uses to keep B'harne and Friends on the air.

Serevan: An organizer and paper pusher of extraordinary talent, Serevan can take control of any situation and reduce it to numbers and procedures. His orderliness is held up by the Brass as an example to the troops and to wyrm minions alike. Machinelike lack of care or empathy of any kind contribute to his cold, distant, ruthless, and quite accurate reputation.

Former Liaisons:

Rhyn: A technological genius of incredible deviousness. Manipulative and arrogant in the extreme, it was Rhyn who primarily orchestrated the events of Operation Home Front; his arrogance also led to his ultimate failure and death in that operation.

Faide: A misandrist female whose small taste for command led her to subtle jobs working behind the scenes in Intelligence or other support roles, which in her opinion were far more valuable and requiring of greater intelligence than some of the roles her colleagues played. Though the exact circumstances of her death during Operation Home Front are unknown to the Jihad, it is suspected she was executed by Lyrans.

Painter: A code name and the only one known. His true name and job are unknown to the Jihad, it is believed he was possibly an internal spy of some sort. As a result of his betrayal of traitorous allies to his superiors during Home Front he has been promoted from his Liaison position and transformed into an empowered disembodied spirit linked directly to B'harne; the reason for the promotion and the nature of his transformation are also unknown to the Jihad.

Weaponry and tactics

It has already been said that B'harne's primary method of conquering and dominating humanity lies in using his innate powers to very thoroughly brainwash/spongify people and eliminate resistance that way. B'harne by his very nature is entirely magical, before he existed on this plane he was formless in his own, and when he did manifest a corporeal form he was able to do so because he was attracted by great expenditures of magical power and used his own ability to manipulate magical energies to force his way here. So technology and technological solutions to problems are foreign to B'harne, and would never be considered the primary means to achieve a goal of his. B'harne has no standing armies or navies or space fleets or any formal military force of any kind. In fact, though he wields a vast amount of power and control over huge numbers of people and things, there are few any real meeting or congregation places for them. Most of his tangible centers of power are perfectly visible places of business and factories and other bits of Mundania that his various minions run. Whatever military B'harne has is used not as a means of dominance but purely in opposition to the Jihad, if for no other reason than that's the way they generally expect to be opposed; if the Jihad is fighting his minions and concentrating its might into forces which can only destroy those minions then it is not concentrating its might against him directly.

Such an oppositional force is assembled as needed from sponge and wyrm minions and/or allies and if it uses any technology beyond the most basic that would already be on hand that technology is assembled specifically for that force.

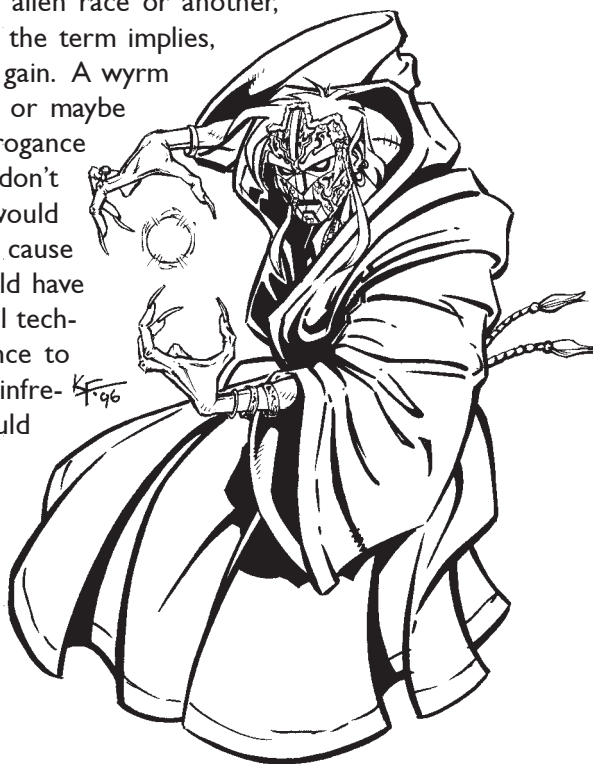
Character templates

Spongin: 25 to 100 points

Spongin are the most common element in B'harne's forces, and all are simplistic in the extreme. Even a "smart" sponge minion would only be capable of operating extremely simple machines, and most can merely simple follow orders. "Are you my friend?" and various things about B'harne being good constitutes most of what sponge minions would say; there is little character template for them because they have little character.

Mercenaries of the Wyrms: 100+ points, as needed

These are far more varied, as they serve B'harne either temporarily or on a long-term basis for personal gain rather than because they've been spongified. Wyrms minions mostly, they can be scientists, engineers, soldiers, businessmen, lawyers, occasionally one malevolent alien race or another, and some of the really nasty ones are even politicians. As the term implies, mercenaries working for B'harne are doing so for personal gain. A wyrm minion might join B'harne's cause for power, out of greed or maybe cruelty, general hatred for the rest of humanity, or even arrogance and the knowledge they're part of something most people don't know about. Depending on motivation and personality, they would give anywhere from superficial acknowledgement of B'harne's cause to extreme devotion. More independent mercenaries would have simpler motivations, most often money or possibly powerful technology or magic. They would have little to no real allegiance to B'harne or his cause, and humans of this sort are far more infrequent than wyrm minions. Various alien species, however, would more commonly be more independent mercenaries or even allies.



LYRANS

The Lyrans are a race of magic users originating from a planet called, of all things, Lyra, who are allied with B'harne. They have been ruled for many millennia by the High Mage Charn'El, who is immortal and possibly the most powerful wizard in the known universe.

Sometime between 1,500 and 2,000 years ago, Charn'El had a startling vision during what was otherwise a routine meditation. Charn'El saw in this vision that Lyra and its inhabitants would eventually be defeated and destroyed by humans, a relatively primitive and until then totally ignored race from a planet in an obscure and relatively unpopulated arm of a seemingly insignificant spiral galaxy. Startled by the vision and its content as he was, Charn'El was unwilling to completely ignore it. After careful consideration, Charn'El, showing the typical Lyran desire to not become personally involved in conflict, decided to summon a demon to destroy the race of primitives who somehow the universe thought were fated to destroy his people. After finally selecting a being he deemed to be of sufficient power, Charn'El went about gathering his power to summon the beast. In its latter stages, the summoning went awry, the demon resisted and was eventually mangled and killed when Charn'El refused to accept the beast's resistance and expended great energy in forcing it. Attracted by that expenditure of energy, the entity that would soon call itself B'harne took over and redirected the portal Charn'El had opened into a plane of existence much like B'harne's own, and used it to force his way into this plane. Never one to pass up any sort of opportunity, Charn'El disregarded the failed summoning and soon struck a bargain with the new and far more powerful creature to enslave humanity.

It was not long after that time, no more than a few centuries, that the Lyrans in one of their investigations of Earth first met and battled with the ancestors of the beings that would eventually call themselves the Maenads of the Holy Albino. Thus the mutual hatred between the Maenads and the Lyrans long predates the Jihad and is now ingrained in the psyche of each group.

Very recently, 1947 on Earth's Christian calendar according to the Maenads, the Lyrans opened a magical gateway between their world and Earth to supplant their normal methods of transportation; the Maenads call this gateway The Babylon Road. It is at that point that B'harne began to more directly influence humanity in preparation for its eventual subjugation and also a time when Lyrans began to assist or influence B'harne's campaign in greater numbers. At that time though, the Lyran presence on Earth was relatively small due both to its rare nature (Lyrans rarely directly involve themselves, previous visits had always been brief and only to gather information) and because the true significance of Earth and its population had only been divulged to a small percentage of Lyrans.

Weaponry and tactics

A Lyran's only weapon is his (or hers, not much way to tell behind the masks and robes) ability with magic. Lyrans are born with an innate magical ability, the very few who aren't are shunned outcasts and not even thought of as true Lyrans by their fellows. They consider technology beneath them, something used only by slaves and the other inferior life forms those slaves are sent to kill. If Lyrans need some sort of tool to do something for them or to aid them in doing something they find a life form which is suitable to the task and warp and mutate it to fit their specific needs, which invariably means the complete destruction of any culture the subject species might have had and continued existence only in mindless servitude to Lyra; for a higher-ranking mage, even a simple staff or mask is a living creature. Even their ability to mutate organisms on genetic, psychological, and spiritual levels has its roots in magic.

The most spectacular example of this sort of manipulation and mutation of other life forms to suit Lyran needs is what most perceive to be a Lyran space fleet. Lyrans have no space ships or fleet the way most would imagine it, they are not used to directly oppose other spacecraft or dominate space in any way, but transportation and quarters and as a magical tool. Long, long ago the Lyrans encountered an entire race of huge spacefaring beings with an innate ability to travel through space without technology and saw tremendous potential and opportunity in them. After defeating and enslaving them the Lyrans began to gradually change what they were, they were grown larger and given the ability to hold and transport Lyrans within themselves, all conscious ability was removed so that one would not be able to do anything without a Lyran mind to control it, their innate abilities were fine tuned, and, most significantly, their ability to store and focus

certain magical energies was greatly enhanced. These living vessels are now used by groups of Lyrans to combine magical ability and focus it into a vessel's innate ability for an extremely efficient method of magical travel. Groups of Lyrans (or for the rare eighth circle mage or Charn'El himself, single mages) can use them to travel vast distances with only having expended a fraction of the magical energy a more conventional teleportation spells and in far less time.

Character template

164 points

Attributes: ST 9 [-10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 10 [0]

Advantages: Animal Empathy [5]; Appearance - Attractive [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Magery+3 [35]; Unaging [15].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (serve the High Mage and the Lyran race to the best of my abilities, do not allow myself to look weak to my inferiors) [-10]; Duty (to the High Mage, almost all the time)[-20]; Intolerance (humans) [-5]; Paranoia [-10]; Vow (to destroy humanity) [-15]; Weakness (Owsenite-2, very rare, 1d per minute) [-10].

Skills: Alchemy-11 [8]; Body Sense-10 [2]; Breath Control-12 [12]; Flight-11 [2]; Illusion Art-12 [6]; Language (Lyran, M/VH)-15 [24]; Meditation-12 [12]; Occultism-13 [6]; Ritual Magic (Lyran)-11 [8]; Rune-Lore (Lyran)-11 [8]; Sacrifice-12 [6]; Spell Throwing-12 [2]; Symbol Drawing-12 [6]; Thaumatology-11 [1]; Theology-12 [6].

Spells: The stats above list a Lyran without his grimoire. The amount and number of spells a Lyran knows is determined by his circle:

1st Circle: 40 points in basic spells from the Animal, Plant, Air, Earth, Fire, Water and Protection colleges.

2nd Circle: 40 additional points in more advanced spells from the 1st Circle colleges, plus an additional 20 points on 1st Circle spells.

3rd Circle: 40 points in spells from Body Control, Communication/Empathy, Enchantment, Healing, Illusion, and/or Knowledge, plus another 20 points on 2nd Circle spells and 10 points on 1st Circle spells.

4th Circle: 40 points in spells from Light, Meta, Mind Control, Necromancy, plus another 30 points in spells for the previous circle spells.

5th Circle: All spells from previous circles should be IQ+2 at a minimum.

6th Circle: All spells from previous circles should be IQ+2, plus player-determined specialization in college (anything but Tech college) at IQ+3.

7th Circle: All spells from previous circles at IQ+3 minimum, plus specializations at IQ+4.

8th Circle: All spells from previous circles at IQ+4, plus advanced spells in their specialization at IQ+5.

The High Mage: Charn'El isn't so much an active character as he is, like B'harne, a force of nature. You can assume that he has *all* the spells in every college (except Tech) at an effective skill of 30. So far, all attempts to calculate

Charn'El and the Barney Slayer after Pacifica.

The Barney Slayer was broken in a battle between Lord Owsen and Charn'El at the conclusion of Operation Pacifica. When the battle finally ended, the Maenads succeeded in magically sealing Charn'El in some sort of dimensional pocket, but were unable to recover all pieces of the Barney Slayer. Because of their observations that the recovered pieces of the Barney Slayer are very slowly regenerating what has been lost, senior Jihaddi mages and scientists believe that the lost part is regenerating as well and, more significantly, that it is likely that that other piece was drawn into the dimensional pocket with Charn'El as the portal there closed itself.

The effect such an environment would have along with the presence of the Lyran High Mage on the blade and what it will regenerate into is unknown, but the JPV believes that a mage of Charn'El's power could not only greatly speed up its regeneration but remake it into a powerful magical tool for his own use, a "dark" Barney Slayer, for those of a more melodramatic bent. The full extent of what Charn'El could do with such a weapon can only be guessed at by even the JPV's most experienced magic users, one of the most probable guesses though is that it would enable him to far more easily escape from his interdimensional prison.

Charn'El's actual point cost have broken our character creation software.

Lyrans are nasty, mean bastards for the most part. They are complex beings with multifaceted personalities and much diversity and individuality between them, but cruelty, manipulateness, arrogance, and extreme tenaciousness are in the very foundations of Lyan culture, and most Lyrans will display these traits almost to a fault. It is their unwavering belief that the Lyan race is the universe's most superior lifeform, often citing the immortality and power of their undisputed ruler as the only proof needed of their superiority. In accomplishing their goals, which they regard not only as supreme but generally as the only which have any importance at all, they very rarely personally involve themselves, preferring to use allies or other beings they have enslaved and mutated to fit their needs. Though tenacious to a point most would consider obsessive, Lyrans are also quite patient, and would think nothing of waiting years for a plan to develop or for a goal to be achieved, especially if it meant keeping themselves from becoming directly involved in a conflict. As a result they will almost invariably be background characters in a story, mysterious wizards always in the shadows plotting and manipulating events and sending enslaved life forms and allies to do their bidding.

BESTIARY

Loved Ones

The Loved Ones are unusual creatures, bipedal lizards with mottled purple and pink skin and vaguely humanoid facial features. They apparently have some sort of direct connection to B'harne, but the nature of the connection isn't as yet understood. Loved Ones have most often been found in the darkest parts of enemy strongholds, usually guarding or serving spongin colonies. Although they seem to understand human languages, they don't actually *speak* them, instead communicating in a series of sharp clicks, grunts and squeaking sounds. A Loved One will defend itself and any spongin in sight to the death - and the creatures do not surrender at all - with a variety of bladed weapons (for some reason they're not fond of guns).

Jello Beasts

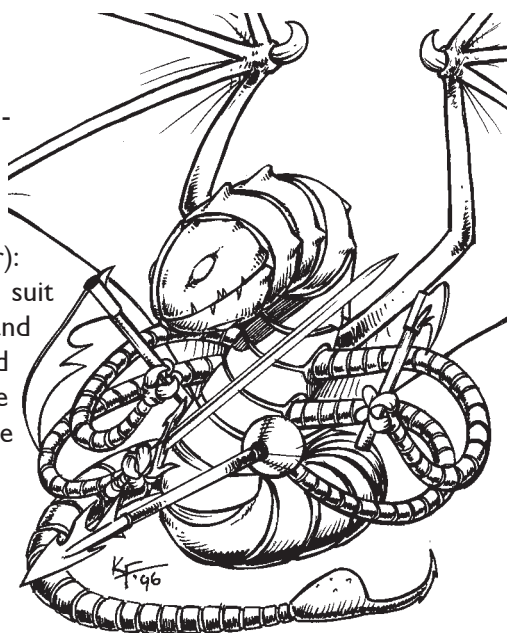
Jello beasts, as the Jihad calls them for lack of any other name, are a race of creatures allied with B'harne for their own reasons, which are unknown. They're shapeshifters with large, gelatinous bodies (from which their names are derived) that vary in color and can, given time, assume the texture of nearly anything around them. They have surprising strength for a species whose bodies contain no rigid structural material whatsoever, and also can have anywhere mid-range to very powerful psionic abilities, can generate energy blasts of varying strengths with their bodies, and have the ability to rather quickly bend the mental and physical capacity of captured humans to their will.

Saethrians

Saethrians are twelve to fifteen foot long winged and tentacled serpentine creatures. Long ago they were a very powerful race of warriors who fought against the Lyrans, eventually lost, and suffered the fate of most races that war with Lyra and lose (which to the Jihad's knowledge constitutes all of them thus far): they were enslaved and manipulated down to a genetic level to suit the needs and whims of the Lyrans. Independent intelligence and magic resistance bred out of them, they are now shock troops and commandos for the Lyrans; mindless but clever soldiers whose only ability and purpose is to kill with single-minded abandon at the command of a Lyan.

Barney Bots

Heavily armed and armored mechanized units created in B'harne's image most likely by wyrm minion engineers. Massive



things, they are crewed by three humans and in addition to a very formidable arsenal of offensive weaponry, they carry large and powerful speakers that are used to broadcast B'harne's war chant on the battlefield. They are both communications centers for spongin troops and used to lead other mechanized forces on a battlefield.

Notes for creating critters

The vast majority of random (hostile) creatures in the Jihad Universe fall into one of the four categories demonstrated above: beings which have been dominated and spongified by B'harne, an independent race or group which has allied with B'harne for their own reasons, those that have been defeated and thus enslaved and mutated by Lyrans, and the technological creations of human wyrm minions. Choose which of those is best for the story the prospective whatever will appear in, define the abilities it needs for its role in the story and the Jihad Universe in general, and depending on its significance the story and the JU create a supporting background for it. Something that's going to be either a McGuffin or will play a close supporting role will need at least as extensive a background and development as a PC character, while something that only has a brief appearance and is largely insignificant to the plot as a whole will just need a minimal explanation and documentation of its existence.

Mikey Crawford

25 points

Mikey Crawford is the oldest and luckiest sponge-minion in Barney's army. Mikey has survived more direct encounters with the Jihad than any other minion in history, and despite this still returns to "play with his Jihaddi buddies."

Where Mikey comes from isn't exactly known - he first appeared in the vicinity of Montreal in 1992 as part of an infiltration force sent to undermine the city's universities. When a NEBULA strike team took out Mikey's compatriots, he managed to evade death by slipping down into the steam tunnels beneath McGill University. When he emerged, he was rewarded by his master with command of the second attempt to infiltrate Montreal.

This particular dance continued through to the X'hirq invasion, as Mikey slowly but surely became more and more famous in the Purple Forces as the Man Who Could Not Be Killed. He even managed to gain a small amount of respect from his Jihad adversaries - but only a small amount. Mikey played only a minor role in the invasion, mostly in keeping the other sponges out of the way of the wyrm-minions and alien warriors. For his efforts, Mikey was crowned Supreme Commander of Barney's Special Friends in 1997.

Today Mikey stays behind a play-desk at the Church of Barney HQ in Washington, D.C., directing Special Friends in their activities over the phone. He also harrasses the Jihad on a regular basis using a captured Linker. Since no wiser minds in the Purple Forces have managed to figure out how the Linker works, all Mikey can do is use it to talk to his "bestest buddies," who tend to ignore him 90% of the time.

Attributes: ST 9 IQ 8 DX 10 HT 12

Advantages: Administrative Rank+5 (Leader of Barney's Special Friends) [25]; Ally Group (the Special Friends) [30]; Hard to Kill+2 [10]; Patron (Barney) [45]

Disadvantages: Easy to Read [-10]; Enemy (The Jihad) [-80]; Semi-Literacy-2 [-5]; Short Attention Span [-10]

Skills: Acting-7; Driving (Automobile)-8; Fast-Talk-8; Guns(Pistol)-10; Guns(Rifle)-10; Intimidation-6; Karate-10; Orienteering-8; Shortsword-9; Singing(Hellwyrms Chant & related songs only)-14; Stealth-8; Strategy-5; Survival(Urban)-10; Tactics-6.

CHAPTER 4

From his office on the second level of VRDET HQ, Malaclypse the Seeker, mad scientist at large and all-around Mysterious Person™, was practicing the ancient art of “pretending to work.” This was not to say that he wasn’t being even remotely **productive**, simply that he wasn’t working at it. In front of his desk, several viewscreens floated unsupported. In the center, a collage of screens showed various terrain maps, each screen displaying a different country. To the right, a fair-sized display was running the latest episode of Babylon 5. Mal was alternating between paying attention to the screens and making notes in a thick book entitled *SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE: 5th Standard Edition*.

One unused viewscreen flared, the screen displaying multicolored fractal spirals, from which a shadowy figure regarded Malaclypse’s back.

“Seeker, report,” it boomed. Mal didn’t flinch, twitch, or even turn around.

“Oh, hello,” Mal said evenly, “what can I do for you today?”

“You can give me a report. The Five are getting anxious, and you **know** what happens when they get anxious. There are some concerns that the Project may be in jeopardy, and your... reluctance to submit critical information on a regular basis has not consoled them.”

Mal sighed. “Look stupid, in the first place, the information needed for the Project isn’t available to the last damn decimal place. Second, if I go looking for the info, high-ranking Jihaddi or not, **somebody** will get suspicious. Finally, the Project has been moving along for nearly ten thousand years, it sure as hell can wait six weeks for my reports.

“Tell the Five that I’ll have a report, along with as much information on known military capabilities as I can locate without arousing suspicion, within the next week, barring accident. Will that keep the Five from panicking and doing something stupid like, say, destabilizing global economy or weather patterns?”

“I believe it will, Seeker. I suggest that you get that information to them. Otherwise, I might have to show up in person.” The flames died down, and the Watcher vanished. Mal turned around, made sure that the brazier was burning low, then pushed a key on his desk.

“*yawn* Yeah, yeah, like that’s a threat.”

—from **The Marraketh Connection**



ALIENS, SPIES & OTHER PARTY ANIMALS

In the previous sections, we covered the primary antagonists in the Hidden War — the Jihad and Barney's Purple Forces. We also took a quick look at the world outside the War, where the mundanes manage to remain oblivious to the world around them. Between these sections, we've covered the majority of people involved in the Jihad Universe.

However, there are a few groups that live in the shadows and on the edges of Mundane civilization. These people are not active participants in the War, preferring to sit on the sidelines and wait for a clear victor to emerge. Their goals are not the same as the Jihad's, but sometimes they intersect favorably..

THE ILLUMINATI

"The Jihad is a distraction from the real work. No, that's perhaps somewhat uncharitable. The Slayer is important. The Praxeum is important, the duck is important, as are the research divisions of your Jihad. The soldiers, the guns and the bombs and the rest of it are illusions; sound and fury intended to distract the Ancient Enemy. We know that people are dying, and we regret it. But it must happen, and it must continue to happen. It is cliché to say that humanity's future depends on it, but sadly life often likes to emulate clichés."

Introduction

The oldest and most important of these groups has gone by many names over the course of human civilization, but the name that has stuck in current times is Illuminati. The Illuminati is not totally unlike the secret cabal of Mundane conspiracy theories. While their *direct* control is not as extensive as the theorists would like to believe (extending only to a few select groups, such as the Freemasons, the Federal Reserve and the Science Fiction Writers of America), they have a great deal of *indirect* influence over the physical, mental, and spiritual development of the Mundane population.

The Illuminati has existed, in one form or another, since the fall of Atlantis over 25,000 years ago. While the Illuminati's documents are rather sketchy about the actual founding of the group, it appears that the original Illuminati was formed in order to preserve the (rather advanced) knowledge of the Atlanteans. Over the years, the Illuminati has refined and added to their store of Atlantean knowledge, and used the subsequent product to guide the Mundanes toward a specific goal. This guidance is called the Project by the higher levels of the Illuminati, and the final goal is known only to the absolute highest levels of the group, the five Illuminatus Prima.

Along the course of the Project, the Illuminati have picked up connections into the Mundane world —

Writing Illuminati agents inside the Jihad

First of all, there are only a handful of Illuminati agents currently working inside the Jihad. Agents act as normal Jihaddi for all intents and purposes, unless asked to report or otherwise act by their superior in the Illuminati. They would have limited access to Illuminati resources and connections (mostly for emergencies).

The agent's most important role is as an information gatherer. The Illuminati has a great deal of interest in the research divisions of the Jihad, and much of the information passed on is of an R&D nature. The agent in this case will have some form of connection to the research labs, which will allow him to siphon information to the Illuminati on a regular basis.

On rare occasions, the agent may be called upon to do something a little less passive than data gathering. This may mean sneaking away from an Op group to perform some obscure task, or something more eccentric and dangerous. Any really large-scale tasks delegated to agents inside the Jihad should be discussed with the JU 2.0 staff and the current GM first, in order to figure out the ramifications.

Of course, getting caught is the biggest fear of an agent inside the Jihad. Unless the agent is placed high enough in the Jihad's command structure, an agent who is found spying on the Jihad will be in seriously deep trouble, especially if he doesn't reveal whom he's spying for. In this case, the Illuminati may attempt to set up a jailbreak, but if it can't be pulled off without exposing the Illuminati, the agent may just be left to rot. Agent PCs should be extremely careful about their activities.

after all, guidance would be difficult at best without any contact with that which you're supposed to guide. As stated above, these connections are tenuous at best, mostly involving having certain people in the right office at the right time to rubberstamp some bit of paper. Only where direct control is beneficial to the Project or the continued survival of the Illuminati will a takeover occur (It is an exercise for the student to figure out what the Illuminati is doing controlling the SFWA, for example).

However, the Illuminati does like to maintain the *appearance* of having a great deal more direct control than they actually do — especially in places where they have little to no control to begin with. This is mostly done for the purposes of defense. Misdirection is one of the strongest weapons in the Illuminati arsenal; after all, they've managed to keep themselves out of the public spotlight for the last 25,000 years. By throwing their enemies into watching or taking action against a group that isn't controlled or even affiliated with the Illuminati, the Prima can keep them harmlessly occupied for as long as necessary. It also comes in handy when recruiting new blood, as the sheer number of organizations "controlled" by the All-Seeing Eye certainly gives the recruit an ego boost for joining. Of course, it's always a letdown to learn the truth of the matter later.

Relations with the Jihad & Barney

To understand the Illuminati's relationship with the Jihad, we must first take a look at the Illuminati's stance on Barney's forces. According to certain Atlantean documents still in the Illuminati's possession, a being not totally unlike Barney was present within several years of the final destruction of Atlantis. This creature was called "The Enemy" by the Atlantean documents, and has hence been amended by the modern Illuminati to "The Ancient Enemy."

To the modern Illuminati scholars, there is enough of a resemblance between the Ancient Enemy and Barney to suggest that they are related, if not the same entity. This information, combined with the sudden presence of a large number of Lyran magi on Earth in the last half-century, has led the Prima to conclude that history is soon to loop back in on itself, and the Ancient Enemy has returned to undo all that the Illuminati has strove to accomplish in the past 25,000 years. This, it must be noted, is not terribly far from the truth behind Barney's goals. As such, the Prima have authorized an acceleration to the Project, in an attempt to reach the goal-point before Barney's minions have gained enough strength to destroy Mundane civilization.

Why so few aliens?

At first glance, there would seem to be barely any alien beings in the Jihad Universe. As a rule, there are plenty of aliens running around the JU — it's just that barely any of them come to Earth. While this might put a crimp in the plans of some role-players, the aliens have a number of good reasons for avoiding Earth and the rest of the solar system.

First of all, the Hidden War isn't as hidden off-Earth as it is on. Conflict on the level of Jihad v. Barney tends to keep aliens away from the solar system for fear of causing the War to spread. Most of the local alien species see the damage that might happen if the Jihad was to take its fight into deep space, and thusly refuse to get involved, and furthermore do their best to keep the entire Sol system separated from the rest of the galaxy.

Because of the agreed-upon blockading of the Sol system, only aliens with specific business on Earth show up on a regular basis. The Greys & Salusians are the only races who have any permanent installations in the solar system (mostly diplomatic & scientific stations), and even those are very lightly staffed. As a general thing, both Grey and Salusian operatives in the Sol system do their best to keep their people as uninvolved in the War as they possibly can, and go about their business with a wary eye cast on the participants.

Other races (ones not involved in the blockade agreement, freebooters, culture pirates, etc.) who feel like wandering around our solar system stand a good chance of running into the *Explain Star*. The crew of that noble ship, with nothing better to do and a great deal of time to do it in, tend to enjoy stopping and boarding every unauthorized ship (read: anything that moves and isn't an asteroid) that crosses their path. After the sixth or seventh boarding action by a bunch of pirates flying a rocket-powered rubber duck, even the most stubborn of alien races gets the point and stays the hell away from Earth.

Here is where the Jihad comes in. The Prima, in their attempt to complete the Project, have more-or-less authorized the existence of the Jihad, as a source of new data for the Project, as a future recruitment base, but most importantly as a delaying tactic.

In other circumstances (i.e. if the War was not as serious a threat), the Illuminati would not tolerate the existence of a heavily-armed paramilitary society like the Jihad. The Illuminati has had difficulties with similar groups in the past (the most recent large conflict being with a group of German necromancers during World War II), and if the Jihad had shown itself to be a serious threat to the Project, it would have been eliminated, quickly and without mercy.

As it is, the Jihad has proven itself a worthy foe of the Ancient Enemy, and until the Project is completed, the Illuminati can use the Jihad to keep Barney occupied until such time that they are ready to confront Barney directly. By placing a small number of agents within the Jihad (into high-ranking positions, no less), the Prima have assured themselves that even if the Jihad succeeds before the Project is complete, the Jihad will not become a threat — it may even become a subordinate member of the Illuminati.

Of course, the average Jihaddi doesn't know any of this; it would cause as much panic inside the Jihad as the Jihad's existence would create in the Mundane population. Only the few select agents of the Illuminati know anything about the Jihad's role in the scheme of things, and not all of them know the *whole* story.

For several thousand years now, they've worked behind the scenes,

*They laugh when we buy Dockers — we've all **got** designer genes!*

*They know if you'll get the girl or pass the S.A.T.,
It's kinda like The Truman Show combined with D&D.*

—Tom Smith, "The Illuminati Polka"

Character template

The Illuminati agent can be the quintessential Man in Black, or he could be the guy sitting across from you in the computer lab. The Illuminati recruits from all walks of life, looking for potential ability as opposed to current wealth or power. Agents, regardless of looks, have connections that nobody else is supposed to have, and can arrange things quite handily if they feel the need. The Illuminati agent is the ultimate NPC, lurking in the background and offering to help a party of Jihaddi in distress — for a small price, of course. PC Agents are either outsiders, acting the role of the Mundane unless things get sticky and force a team-up with the Jihaddi party, or they're undercover agents inside the Jihad, the guidelines for writing such are in the sidebar.

ALIENS

The Hidden War has the potential for incredible ramifications away from the Earth. After all, should Barney win the war, it is likely that he would turn his attention towards other worlds to conquer.

As the conflict between the Jihad and the Ancient Enemy grows, it draws the attention of a loosely-knit group of alien races. This group, known (more-or-less) collectively as Galactic Civilization, or simply Galactics, maintains a long-distance watch on Earth, to observe the course of the Hidden War.

And occasionally, a handful of them will come down to Earth...

X'HIRJQ:

"Every action, thought, and deed by every X'hirjq for the past 400,000 of your years has served this one purpose without error. It is religion, as humans understand it, the base of our culture and reason for our survival. It is what defines us, give us purpose, and demands our actions."

The X'hirjq are a mysterious race of nomadic aliens who have been wandering the Galaxy for the better part of half a million years. They are best remembered for their invasion of Earth in the fall of 1996, when they

engaged the Jihad at the behest of their temporary ally, Barney. X'hirjq are between seven and nine feet tall, heavily muscled reptilian beings with the prerequisite sharp teeth, claws, and the lizard's tail. As a race, they possess strong psychic and magical powers, and have a sizable amount of TL 11 and TL 12 devices with which they can defeat almost any foe. X'hirjq value honor above all other things, and desire nothing more than a good, clean fight (or a challenging hunt).

The X'hirjq Invasion of 1996, while initially inspired by Barney, was in fact an attempt to test the inhabitants of Earth for worthiness; the X'hirjq Empress wanted to know if humans were worthy of living in what is, apparently, a "sacred" solar system. Very little is known and less understood about X'hirjq motivations, although it seems that humanity passed the Empress' test, as the invasion was cut short and every X'hirjq vanished again into outer darkness within a month of the invasion's start. Nothing has been heard of the X'hirjq since that time, not even rumor.

SALUSIANS:

"We'd love to help you, really. But if we make a move, the rest of the Galaxy might decide to kill you all out of hand. So ultimately we're doing you a favor by staying out of this. Sorry."

The Galaxy is home to a sizable number of sentient races. Most of the advanced ones are linked together in a loose confederation that's known as Galactic Civilization. Most Galactics aren't aware of the events happening on Earth; only the species that live in our near vicinity have any knowledge or interest in the Hidden War. Of these, the local superpower is the Kingdom of Salusia.

Physically, Salusians are upright bipeds averaging around 6' in height, with somewhat canine features in the leg articulation and facial features, but otherwise the Salusians look very humanoid. They are covered in short black/dark brown fur (white or light tan around faces with a stripe running across the collarbone and down the chest). Salusians also have manes of longer fur varying in coloration (black, white, brown, red) running down the head and back of the neck.

The Kingdom itself is a constitutional monarchy, and considered by its neighbors to be one of the more "fair" minded and tolerant members of Galactic Civilization. Salusians in general have most of what we would call the "usual" human emotional traits, along with a quirky sense of humor and a deeply refined sense of irony. Most Salusians who come into contact with humans end up liking them. Probably because of the sense of humor.

Salusian technology is TL10 in most things, approaching TL11 in biotechnology. Salusian biotech can create surface (and sub-surface) cosmetic alteration to make Salusians look like humans, and vice-versa. While naturally unable to breed together, the same biotech can engineer human/Salusian hybrids that can (in theory, albeit considered a proscribed technique and — supposedly — has not been tested yet. Of course, some rules are meant to be broken...) breed true with each other and members of either species.

Relations w/Jihad & Barney:

The Salusians are friendly neutrals vis a vis the Jihad. The Salusian government recognizes the threat posed to Civilization as a whole by Barney and is prepared to defend themselves if necessary, but as leaders in the local spiral arm, they also recognize the danger of letting the War spread unchecked through indiscriminate contact with Earth.

Salusian diplomatic & cultural attaches have been on Earth since shortly after the first Moon landings in 1969 (it all started as a university field trip to watch primitive spacecraft in action and ended up as a full-time posting after a group of Salusian grad students assisted the *Apollo 13* crew in returning to Earth after the accident... but I digress).

Because of the threat to the rest of the galaxy (and also attempting to head off the rest of the Galaxy's preemptive sterilization of Earth before things have a chance of getting worse), the Kingdom of Salusia has sponsored a three light-year radius quarantine zone around the solar system. If things spread beyond this zone, the Kingdom will be willing to pitch in and help the Jihad, but not before.

Although it's not generally known to the Salusian public at large (and certainly not to the Mundanes on Earth!) several human/Salusian hybrids have been born and currently live scattered (mostly) around the

Northeast US. The hybrids (at least the ones living among Mundanes) look human on the surface, although there are plenty of internal differences. A first or second-generation hybrid, being already on the edge of normal life, may eventually end up either in the Jihad or a group like Planetary (see below).

GREYS:

"You... interest us. Normally we would not bother with contact. There is something here we must continue to study."

You've undoubtedly seen the pictures. Thanks to Mundane pop-culture, they're the most recognizable "alien" form found on Earth today. However, most of the rest of what pop-culture has to say about the Greys is amazingly inaccurate.

The real Greys are not on Earth in any large numbers, nor do they abduct random rednecks from isolated trailer parks to conduct experiments on. Most Greys on Earth are starship crew or research physicists, and "buzzing" the locals is considered bad form.

Grey civilization is very old — it predates the existence of almost every other known Galactic civilization. For all their abilities, the Greys have never been expansionist in any way. They seem content to cultivate their homeworld and the other planets in the Zeta Reticuli system, without putting much thought to colonizing other star systems. The Greys have achieved a mature TL12, and have been so for at least 10,000 years. The Greys are highly respected by the other Galactics, especially for their near-impossible defeat of a X'hirjq invasion force 2,000 years ago.

The Greys have been on Earth since 1947 (one thing UFO pop-culture has gotten right), when a research ship was dispatched to investigate readings of an unusual wormhole developing in the Sol system. On a low-altitude pass over the supposed wormhole, the ship was damaged by a Lyrans defense system, and crashed several hundred miles away in the New Mexico desert (again, something reported accurately by the

Solo warriors

Aside from the groups mentioned in the main text, there are a small number of individuals who are fighting the Hidden War on their own, away from the Jihad, the Illuminati, or any other group. These individuals, or "solos," are placed, willingly or otherwise, into the most precarious position possible in the entire conflict.

Solos are people who, for one reason or another, have cause to fight Barney or the Lyrans, but have no connection to any group. Some solos are expatriate Jihaddi, former members who left for varied reasons (disagreement with authorities, personal vows, psychotic temperments, etc.) but have not given up the fight. They wander around the world, striking at their enemies whenever they can, expecting to die at every moment.

In fact, most solos *do* die — the average life expectancy of a solo who has taken up arms without the support of others is less than a year. Only the wisest, strongest and most dangerous solos become veterans, and there are no *old* solos. The solo lifestyle — which involves taking on entire armies of otherworldly beings single-handed — tends to quickly take its toll on the solo's mind, body, and available resources. Due to this, solos as a rule are not the most psychologically stable of people.

Solos tend to have some amount of personal wealth, that they would use as a bankroll for weapons, equipment, headquarters, weapons, clothes, weapons, food and weapons. However, some solos will liquidate all of their possessions in favor of simply dropping out of sight and living in the underclasses of the world, where they keep alive by performing less-than-upright jobs for less-than-upright people. Solos of this type tend to have a very loose moral framework.

If a solo has had enough of fighting alone, or is approaching the end of their supply base, then they may approach the Jihad and ask for admittance. The Jihad has taken in solos in the past — many distinguished Jihaddi, including the Original Seven, started their careers as solo warriors — and as long as the solo agrees to follow the Jihad's chain of command, they will be accepted and respected by other Jihaddi.

Mundanes, but little believed).

The surviving Greys were rescued by the United States government, and since that time, the Greys and Terran powers (mostly Illuminati agents using the US as a cover) have had a limited scientific exchange program going. In exchange for allowing a small contingent of Grey scientists access, the Greys will slip a few small advances into human technology — nothing fancy, mostly computer-related, or microelectronics.

Relations with the Jihad:

The Greys, as a rule, are a deeply isolationist people. Only their curiosity about the Lyran dimensional gate has kept a Grey presence on Earth. Like the Salusians, the Greys are aware of the Jihad's existence, but unlike the Salusian pro-Jihad stance, the Greys are firmly neutral. However, they are interested in the possible connections between the Lyrans and the wormhole. As a rule, unless one side or another starts shooting at the Grey delegation on Earth, they will not help or hinder anybody in the Hidden War.

. . . AND OTHER PARTY ANIMALS

While intruders from the stars hover above the landscape, watching both Mundanes and Jihaddi with avid interest, others move in between the “normal” world and the shadows. These people all have a vested interest in the activities out on the bleeding edge of human existence. Some of them are fairly harmless, some are possible sources of help in the Hidden War.

And some just don't like us at all...

ANCIENT ILLUMINATED SEERS OF BAVARIA (BAVARIAN ILLUMINATI):

“We are the shapers of human destiny. Those who would attempt to usurp our power will find us quite formidable opponents.”

While the true Illuminati works deep in the shadows of human society towards the completion of the Project, the AISB work in the Mundane realms to further their own personal power.

As all good conspiracy theorists will tell you, the Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria were founded in 1776 by one Adam Weishaupt, defrocked Jesuit and professor of law at Ingolstadt University. Weishaupt had conceived a plan to unite Europe under the leadership of a “rationalist” cabal, with himself naturally at the head. To this end, he formed the original AISB with a number of German freethinkers, and ran a mostly public organization until 1785, when the Bavarian government found out about Weishaupt's ultimate goals and shut down the public fronts of the Illuminati.

Of course, you can't keep a good conspiracy down, and the Illuminati went underground, slowly but surely infiltrating as many political movements as possible through the late 18th Century. It wasn't until the mid-1800s that the AISB had achieved any real sort of power in Europe and the Americas, however. By the beginning of the 20th Century, the AISB had managed to take control of a large portion of the political and economic structure of the Occidental world, and had made serious inroads into controlling several East Asian and African nations.

Interestingly enough, the AISB has often eschewed the use or even investigation of paranormal or “fringe science” phenomenon. Consequently, the AISB is only marginally more advanced than the Mundane governments it rules, currently standing at an early TL8. This is partly because of the AISB's hyper-rationalist dogma originally set down by Weishaupt, which dismisses everything that can't be explained “scientifically.” But a good part of this blind spot is due to agents of the true Illuminati, who have managed to keep the power-hungry AISB under control this way since the French Revolution.

Relations with the Jihad & Barney:

The AISB considers the Jihad to be a bunch of upstarts, a group of power-mongers like themselves, who are trying to build an impressive hoax in order to seize control of the Mundanes the AISB considers to be *their* rightful servants. The Jihad's current activities in co-opting certain members of the American Congress

have not made the AISB any less paranoid.

As such, the AISB are distinctly hostile to anything they can pin down as Jihaddi in nature, although they will not make any direct assaults (usually because the Jihad can easily outgun even the best-equipped AISB soldier). The Jihad, in turn, is dimly aware of the AISB's existence, and attempts to avoid their close scrutiny much like they would for any other Mundane organization.

The AISB, affected by their particular form of Mundane blindness, doesn't believe in the evil of Barney or the Lyran forces. This has played quite nicely into the hands of the Enemy, especially those wyrm-minions who work mainly in the Mundane world, as it's in their (supposedly) mutual best interest to foil the Jihad at every turn.

PLANETARY:

No matter how well the Jihad (or the Illuminati, or the AISB, etc.) try to keep things totally undercover, things will be discovered.

Living on the very fringes of Mundane society, an underground network of the most unlikely individuals has sprung up, dealing with the scattered information and discarded technology the various conspiracies running across the world have left behind them.

This network (called "Planetary" by the younger members, after a recent comic book series dealing with "mystery archaeologists") is made up of a loose coalition of conspiracy theorists, arms dealers, information brokers, hackers, crackers, and UFO enthusiasts. The theorists are interested in using the data gathered by Planetary to expose and destroy The Conspiracy (that is, whichever The Conspiracy they're convinced is to blame for the world, any resemblance to the actual Secret Masters being mostly purely coincidental). The arms dealers and info brokers use Planetary on a far more pragmatic and amoral basis, looking for new weapons and secrets worth selling on the open market. The members of the hack community who have joined the Planetary network have done so more out of a love of the thrill of going places they shouldn't, doing things that they aren't supposed to. The UFO watchers, of course, use Planetary to figure out "what's really going on."

The group has no set meeting place, or even a set organization. Members typically have recognition signals (usually consisting of a gesture or key code phrase), and usually know at least one place where members can meet personally and haggle for artifacts. Meeting places are often businesses owned by Planetary members, or highly public areas, train stations or public parks, where the risk of getting killed out of hand are less. For more shady deals, members use the network to locate only the best, most quiet back alleys from which to swap money for hardware.

The main information network is set up — like most things in the Age of Information — using the Internet extensively. Members have at least one secure, encrypted email account through which data swaps can be arranged. Rumors of alt.marketplace.planetary are wholly unsubstantiated, and are most likely a hoax put on by a member hacker. Really.

Relations with the Jihad and Barney:

Both sides are very well aware of Planetary, although the network is itself mostly ignorant of the Hidden War. While the network as a group has large sections of the puzzle available, no one member has managed to fit together the whole puzzle, and Planetary is far too fragmented to ever be able to comprehend the Hidden War as a group.

The Jihad often exploits both this fragmentation and the wealth of knowledge Planetary represents. An observant Jihaddi with contacts in the Planetary network can use them to chivvy almost anything from a handy member. The best use of the network involves finding a place to lie low for a night, to get a floorplan for a high-security government facility, or arranging a meeting with weapons dealers to score a few quick guns.

The Enemy, on the other hand, is more interested in the transfer of information and disinformation. Wyrm Minions with previously established contacts in Planetary do their best to spread tweaked propaganda around the network. A group of crackers working for Liaison Winston has managed to subtly convert a Planetary-connected cell of UFO cultists to the enemy cause, creating a group of near-Sponge Minions by

altering the data they collected to suggest that B'harne was one of their Space Brothers. Planetary's wide variety of individuals makes it a good recruiting ground for the Jihad as well. Almost anything can come out of the group, and sometimes does.

INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF MAD SCIENTISTS:

"For us, the laws of physics are mere guidelines, there to confine the unimaginative. Hey! Don't touch that button—"

Existing out on the fringes of mainstream Mundane science, the International Order of Mad Scientists works to advance the cause of human understanding of the universe... preferably by disassembling portions of it in the most creative way possible.

According to fringe legend, the Order was founded in 1898 by Nikola Tesla, considered the God-King of modern mad science, and an immortal Leonardo Da Vinci, for reasons that remain shrouded in mystery. Regardless of the truth of this story, the Order has certifiably existed for the whole of the 20th Century, attracting scientists and engineers whose theories have been dismissed by Mundane authorities as mere crankery.

The Order has mechanisms in place (mostly funded by patent royalties from successful members) to help keep experiments running, but the most important function the Order performs is the annual Mad Science Convention. The convention provides a place for fringe science aficionados from around the world to exchange notes, learn the latest developments and otherwise relax from the rigors of a world that doesn't like them much. Every year at the convention, the assembled members of the Order decide which of them gets to win the coveted Victor Von Frankenstein Award.

Relations with the Jihad & Barney:

The Order, per se, doesn't have any real knowledge of the Enemy or the Hidden War. However, they do have a general understanding of what the Jihad is, and what it's supposed to do.

More to the point, the Order is very much aware of the Jihaddi research and development organizations, and frequently invites R&D staff members to join. Occasionally, Jihaddi who had some interest in fringe research in their pre-Jihad lives will already have a membership. The best example of this is VRDET's Professor Malaclypse, who was a fringe scientist of some merit before joining up with the Hidden War.

CHAPTER 5

I suppose I should give you the grand tour. What you see before you is the nerve center of a TRES propaganda office. You know the fancy name, but that's what we do, wot?"

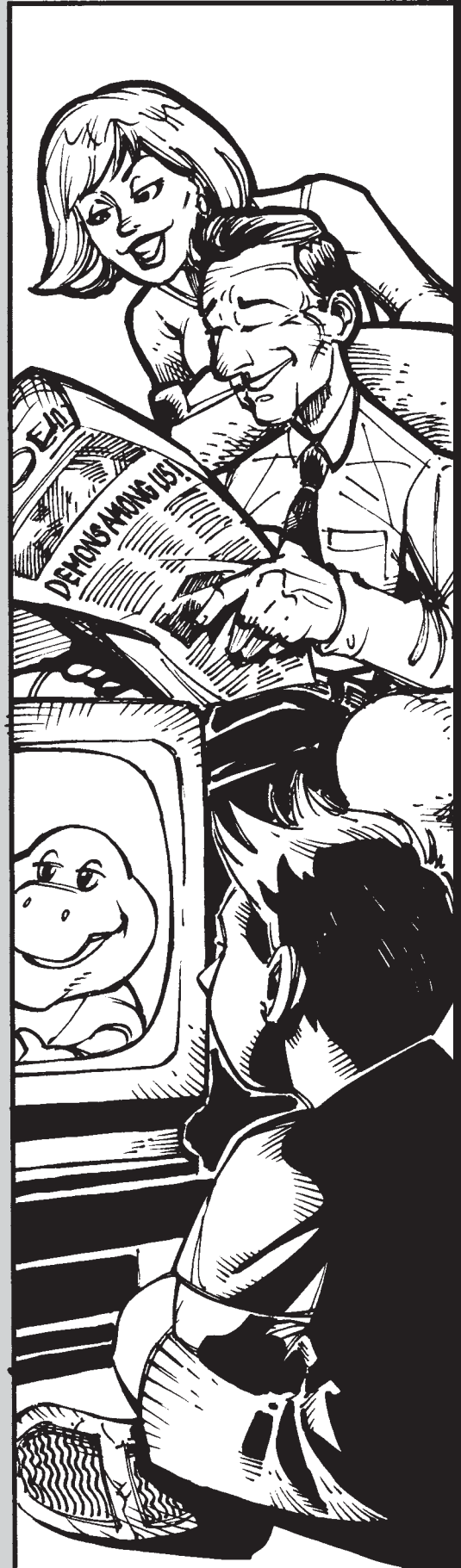
He gestured. "We handle most of the Pacific region north of Oregon here; by and large we're organized like any other advertising agency, except the things we advertise, by and large, don't exist. Graffiti is big right now, we've gotten quite good results from that." Joan gave him a sharp look. "Hey, it works. Our job is quite simply to provide a counterpressure to B'harnate propaganda, and that's done most effectively by forcing people to think, and to notice the obvious. The more people think about the world around them, the better off we are."

"I'm not very familiar with the methods used. I am here in part to evaluate those methods and see if they can be adopted elsewhere."

"Yes, well, they're not that hard. A little sneaky, perhaps, yet they work." He scratched his face. "We have one person in charge of newspaper advertisements; he has been placing small, 'mysterious' ads in local newspapers as an experiment to see if people notice those things - it's a pilot program at the moment, but he feels it could be ramped up considerably." Muir picked up a piece of paper on a desk as they passed, reading aloud. "'Depressed confused male seeks neurotic unpredictable female for depraved and meaningless relationship. Fetishes involving handcuffs, whipped cream, role playing, silk scarves, inflateable sheep, cute purple dinosaurs, kaz, plastic forks, jelly beans, skoh, or ripe avocados a plus. Send email if interested. No weirdos, please.'" He peered back over his shoulder at a man grinning at him with a mildly frightening air. "Stuff like that in the personal ads, for instance. Gets people a little riled up. Michael tends to be a touch over the top, but you can't be Jihaddi without being a little unstable."

"Anyhow, madame, what we do largely is to stir up as much conflict, tweak as many oversensitive noses, and mock as many overstuffed political figures as possible. What this accomplishes, in theory, is a large-scale inoculation to spongification; it's as close to a cure as we can come up with. It seems to work, as spongification resistance in the Pacific Northwest is higher than anywhere else in the world." He spread his hands. "And it gives one a certain satisfaction to actually say things that no one else is willing to say."

—from "On the Offensive" by Rob Bos



THE STATE OF THE EARTH

Earth in the year 1999 is, on the surface, very much like Earth was in 1999 in the “real” world. The Cold War has finally stopped being a daily reality and is rapidly becoming something taught in history classes. The world on the whole is enjoying a state of relative peace and prosperity for the first time in decades. The Internet boom is in full swing throughout the West, as investors begin looking to computers and communications as the future of humanity.

This doesn't mean things are perfect, by any means. Low-level wars are being waged throughout the Third World, and the spate of ethnic violence in the former Yugoslavia has suddenly flared up. Politicians in the most powerful nation on Earth have gone strange with media overexposure en masse. The environment is on the wrong side of a desperate holding action, poor people are getting poorer while the rich get richer almost everywhere you go, and above it all terrorist groups are starting to make a big comeback in the Middle East.

Everybody's waiting for the next shoe to drop, or the hammer to fall. The Millennium is less than a year away (never mind the pundits who are complaining about the correct date being 2001, not 2000) and everybody's expecting something Big to happen when the clock strikes midnight. Whether it's Hell or Heaven on Earth, everybody in the world is waiting to see what happens next. It's a time of great atrocities and great acts of grace, a time of incredible turmoil as the world prepares for the next century.

In short, it's the perfect time for the Hidden War to be fought. The Mundanes are all full of their own problems, leaving the Jihad and the Enemy a perfect opening to work in. As long as the Mundanes don't know about the war, both groups can operate with impunity, so it's in their best interests to keep the war well away from the Mundanes. They may be mundane, but they still outnumber us millions to one.

KEEPING THE SECRET

A Word of Explanation

Just to make things exhaustively clear, here are the exact reasons why the Jihad and its mission must remain a secret:

To begin with, there's the issue of crowd mentality. The very concept of a popular children's television character really being a creature of galactic menace isn't the sort of thing that allows people to remain calm. Given this, there are two options: tell the public and watch the mass hysteria, or handle things with a small group of trained, capable individuals. Guess which one the Jihad uses?

Given the Jihad's mission, a lot of the techniques and technologies used aren't known to the mundane world. We're talking magic, psionics, ultra-high technology virtually everything that makes the Jihad tick is either highly rare or nonexistent in Mundania. Revealing the existence of these would, once again, trigger crowd mentality, and bad things would result.

And finally, there's the issue of legality. Much of the covert work the Jihad does as a matter of course is either illegal or very questionable. Letting mundane authorities know about this activity would most likely result in either JAO shutdowns and freezes (needless to say, bad) or massive bureaucratic action (arguably worse).

Jihad coverup operations

So, how does the Jihad keep from letting the mundanes know about their actions? Well, it's really a lot simpler than it looks. The main way the secret is kept is via one of the oldest tricks in the book: covering tracks.

Although the Jihad is rarely lucky enough to choose battle locations, they do have the ability to clean up after themselves. Jihaddi, whether specially trained or merely selected from the roster of the most convenient JAO, are expected to come into especially 'dangerous' areas (in other words, areas that may have had lots of witnesses, were uncomfortably close to urban areas, or were otherwise prone to detection) to go defuse the situation. This may involve searching out witnesses, checking police records for recent reports of Jihad-like activity, or whatever else the cleanup crew deems necessary. In other words, cleanup and track-covering after battles is very subjective, depending on the battle it just needs to be done.

Another important facet of cleanup and secrecy to remember is the issue of sponge minions. They may

seem to come from nowhere, but they're really missing people for every sponge minion, there's probably a family searching for them. With this in mind, the benefits of desponification over killing are obvious; if you kill a sponge, you have a dead missing person, and the investigations resulting from this may not shine favorably on the Jihad. With a desponged minion, though, you have a missing person who's probably going home, which means one less mundane search team. Fewer mundane search teams means fewer Jihaddi who have to work cleanup and more Jihaddi who are ready for active duty.

But there are some times when local cleanup just isn't enough. Some especially large or ill-planned Jihad battles may end up catching the attention of the federal government, and that's when the real shadowy organization stuff starts.

The Government Bestiary

Like all good Shadowy Organizations, the Jihad has all sorts of assorted operatives and affiliates in the offices of the federal government. Most of them, as normal human beings and very good civil servants, have blended in nicely; unless a Jihaddi knows exactly where to look, they appear to be simple mid-level bureaucratic workers, utterly unnoticed but still managing to see all, hear all, and mysteriously stop reports of purple dinosaur violence before they get high enough to do anything.

For most intents and purposes, Jihaddi on spin duty will probably be able to find a mid-level operative in any major federal government office where it's needed. However, for the higher levels, simple infiltration isn't enough. That's when the Jihad begins the system of bribes.

The Jihad bribes government officials from behind the screens of false organizations; the officials aren't exactly sure of the organization's motives, but that's not really important. What's important is that every major statewide and even a couple city politicians in Colorado are bribed; each of them is under the impression that there's a different corporation paying the bills, but they all know what to do. With their help, most of the higher levels of the government never learn anything about the Jihad, even that which slips through the

The Jihad Files

The pop-culture TV phenomenon The X-Files, launched shortly after the Jihad began, has tackled every single form of conspiracy theory known to Man, and made up a few of their own. So naturally there have been episodes involving the Jihad, though the name "Jihad" has thankfully been absent.

Early in the second-season mythology, the show aired an episode titled "Die Hand Die Verletzt," where Mulder and Scully track apparent "witch killings." The rituals shown on screen were amazingly similar to known Lyran rites, and a little investigation by a Jihad spin team learned that the episode was patterned on an incident which occurred in 1987 in upstate Wisconsin. Naturally, individuals on both sides were somewhat disturbed.

Jihad lore appears again during the fourth and fifth seasons, as Mulder and Scully cross paths with a group of "alien hunters" equipped with beyond-state-of-the-art weapons and tracking gear. Mulder's hunt for the Truth (with a capital T) was often stymied during those seasons by the "Hunters" wasting the alien/government conspirator before he could ask any questions. As television went, the Hunter arc varied between pretty bland to pretty godawful. Still, for some unknown reason the mysterious alien hunters became cult figures in the X-File fan community.

What Chris Carter knows (or doesn't know) has never been conclusively proven. Jihaddi telepaths have pronounced him free of Enemy influence, and have suggested that Carter has merely pieced together various bits of Jihad lore already in the conspiracy-theory mainstream. However, Psychic Research students at the JPV have suggested that some of the details of Jihad lore may have been left behind in Carter's brain by the telepathic scans, possibly indicating that the producer/writer is in fact a latent sensitive.

Whatever the rationale, references to Jihaddi technology or tactics have not appeared since the end of the fifth season, as the X-Files moved into trying to focus on alien invasions, men smoking cigarettes, and who's sleeping with whom. Overall quality and credibility has plummeted, and for everybody in the Hidden War, that's a good thing.

fingers of the other operatives.

As a final note, certain more militaristic JAOs have different individual setups for coverup and cleanup, because their operations are more likely to fall into the public eye. In this case, the JAO should have an individual plan for such events that they'll use.

THE JIHAD IN MUNDANE POP CULTURE

Leaked Secrets, Conspiracy Theory, and Everything

For all of the cleanup, for all of the care, not even the Jihad can be sure of everything. Though nothing huge and catastrophic has leaked out yet, small things have: abandoned technology, minor evidence of activity, weather balloons, or whatever has been released to the mundane world through sheer oversight. Needless to say, these things have almost always fallen into the hands of those most able to appreciate them: conspiracy theorists.

Fortunately for the Jihad, though, the conspiracy theorists, UFO nuts, and the like don't know this stuff's true origin. Even if they did, they'd probably be in denial; they attribute it all to their pet cause, whether that's the gray aliens, the Men in Black, or the Chupacabra. Because of this, various pieces of Jihaddi tech can be found in museums and headquarters of various secret conspiracy societies and institutions; this runs from JAO standard issue weapons, which according to theory may belong to anyone from the Jackbooted Guvmint Thugs to the Invaders from Planet Q, to entire vehicles and spaceships purported to belong to supernatural entities. (At least one Doberman Empire *Arioch*-class battlesuit is in such a position.)

As a result of all of these leaks, various aspects of Jihad procedure and activity have leaked into the canons of conspiracy groups. Those Jihaddi who enjoy pop culture extrapolations of conspiracy theories may be surprised to see familiar weapons and technology featured in the arsenal of completely different foes! However, since the integration of Jihad ideas into conspiracies is scattershot at best, there's no danger of anything unified being pieced together from this.

The important part of this is that, for all of the tiny details that have leaked out, the big one is still firmly secret: the Jihad is the only organization that knows about B'harne and his plans. The idea has lurked into popular humor, which may or may not make the situation better; although it destroys any mainstream credibility the Jihad might have, were it to need such credibility, it does mean that most evidence about B'harne will be laughed off as a hoax by mundanes.

BARNEY AND MUNDANIA:

Ironically, Barney has, for differing reasons, much the same attitude toward the mundane world that the Jihad does. While the Jihad would like to expose Barney for what he is but knows it could not credibly do so and would thus lose its ability to fight him if it tried, Barney knows that the majority of the world's ignorance of his true nature is what enables him to so easily spongify humans. The old saying that the devil's greatest trick was convincing the world he doesn't exist very much applies to Barney.

Keeping the secret

Barney's most effective method of concealing his true nature closely follows another old saying, he hides it in plain sight: Barney and Friends. Even the majority of the public that doesn't like Barney's TV show consider it harmless, just another saccharine kids' show to be mostly ignored. The creation of the Babylon Road coincides with the nascence of television technology; seeing its potential to influence people on an unprecedented scale on Earth, Barney began to subtly influence the direction and content of this technology and the massive industry it eventually generated and finally in the early 1990s culminated that long effort with direct use of his own image on Barney and Friends. And with Barney and Friends, he not only managed to reach a large number of the most vulnerable and impressionable minds available, but instantly created for himself the most innocuous of all possible images with those he didn't immediately reach. The end result is that the vast majority of all humans would consider the idea of Barney as any sort of real and threatening or malevolent being laughable at best.

Television is Barney's primary means of concealment, but not his only. Realizing the nature of both

Earth's major religions and secular communities to dismiss or even ostracize smaller religions of differing beliefs that crop up within the larger communities, Barney through either direct or indirect intervention began to create several smaller religions of this type at a very early date. When bits of the truth about Barney's nature crop up through incidents that can't be otherwise explained, there are various occult or alternative religious groups who identify some small part of the incident with whatever their mythos happens to be and latch onto it with religious fervor, thereby gaining its immediate dismissal along with whatever group is trying its hardest to keep it from being dismissed by the majority of the public. Barney has a multitude of ready and willing "cleanup" groups to help him keep his secret who don't even know the secret they're helping to keep. And these groups, with a constant supply of what they perceive as proof of their beliefs, never question any of it; one of the most widespread and successful of this sort of group was actually founded by the very Lyran who lead the contingent of mages to open the Earth end of the Babylon Road and still never had even the beginnings of suspicion as to its true nature or purpose.

The most direct method Barney uses to maintain public ignorance of his nature is another thing which is ironic in its similarity to some Jihad methods: the direct control of influential humans by seducing them into becoming wyrm minions (who have widely varying knowledge about who and what they're really loyal to), subjecting them to direct mental control, or more subtly controlling them with bribes from a network of commercial interests. Governmental institutions, commercial corporations, or various independent organizations can be directly manipulated with minimal or no threat of exposure when money they have is needed in another place, something unusual needs to be overlooked, places are needed for manufacturing, or one of Barney's interests in the entertainment industry needs to be protected.

LONG-TERM INTERACTIONS WITH MUNDANIA

The Jihad

Other than its cover-up activities, the Jihad's main long-term activities concerning Mundania are slight. There are, however, questions of money and supplies, both of which are needed to continue the fight.

The Jihad makes its money off of investments and assets held in Mundania. Investments include diversified low to medium risk funds and stocks, CDs, and municipal bonds. They are managed to produce income after inflation and selected to minimize tax burden. New recruits will occasionally have significant assets to bring to the Jihad, but this is not accounted for in budgets. Other assets include actual corporations that the Jihad has set up for specific purposes. One of those purposes is, of course, to add funds to the Jihad's treasury. The other is to provide safehouses in Mundania. The safehouse provides a place of refuge for Jihaddi on the run (from the enemy or from Mundane law-enforcement), places from which to monitor spongification within a specific area, staging bases for international Jihad operations, and so forth. The Jihad owns hundreds of small companies like this all across the world, in a number of different businesses.

The Jihad also has a series of investments in some of the less-than-legal parts of the global economy. Jihaddi operatives are actively involved in smuggling operations, most often gunrunning and "soft" drugs (marijuana, hashish, various psychedelics, etc.). The money involved in these activities is actually relatively minimal (the Jihad makes more on a daily basis playing the markets, anyway), but the connections made in the underworld are far more valuable than the money involved. The Jihad's underworld connections provide extra safe areas and other resources for field operatives caught out in the open; mention the right names and you've got a bed for the night, anonymous transportation, false ID, or any number of other things readily available in such circles, no questions asked.

There has been some considerable debate in the Jihad's upper ranks about the morality of the Jihad's illegal activities. Some Jihaddi have taken a stance that the group should be as upright as possible, while others have taken a more pragmatic stance. Currently, the Triumvirate has leaned towards the pragmatic stance; this may change as the membership changes, however.

The B'harnese Forces

What about the Purple Forces and Mundania? Why, for example, hasn't "Barney & Friends" simply been pushed off of PBS? With all the Jihad's government contacts, why hasn't the license been denied, or charges

of some sort brought against them?

Answer: The Purple Forces have a section dedicated to exactly this purpose. There is no ammunition for a license denial. Every i is dotted, every t is crossed. Any inspection of the studio reveals nothing untoward, even if five minutes ago the place was filled with sorcerous runes packing spongification by the pound into the broadcast signal.

Remember, Mundania would not be best pleased to learn of a demonic presence in their midst. Mob riots might not make for good Jihaddi planning, but they don't help kids get hooked on the Fiend, either. Thus, Jihaddi clean-up crews may actually find themselves working *with* Sponge- or Wyrminion crews on certain cases, although typically there will be a brief (and very quiet) struggle after which the surviving crew does its job. (The dispute is over methods. Sponge crews typically spongify witnesses and reprogram them, for example.)

Finally, a few bribed officials make sure that PBS keeps broadcasting the show regardless of any complaints that do get through.

Sample Shell Operations

ETI Technosystems: ETI is a producer of specialized electronics and software for the consumer and industrial market. In truth, ETI is one of several Jihad-held companies that trades (less-advanced) Jihad technology for cash. The company is based out of Alamosa, CO, perviously a sleepy ranching town that is slowly becoming a model of post-industrial prosperity.

IJT, Inc.: The International Jihad Treasury holds many of the Jihad's mundane financial assets. Based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, the IJT is a "black box" investment firm which acquires funds for the Jihad and distributes them under the guise of charity work and other non-profit outlays.

Verthandi Import/Export: This New Mexico-based company does a modest business transporting exotic goods around the Americas, but more importantly it provides covert transport for Jihaddi equipment and operatives, as well as maintaining supply caches and boltholes for Jihaddi caught out in the open.

Templar Mining, Inc.: Based in San Francisco, the Templar Deep Sea Mining Corporation is a publicly-owned operation, with the JAOs as majority shareholders. Templar Mining provides 10% of its daily production to the Jihad to maintain the resource base for the production of war materiel.

The Church of Barney: The primary enemy face to the public, the Church presents itself as a stereotypically dippy New Age religion, while insinuating into everything it possibly can. The Church's proper headquarters are in Washington, DC, but "temples" can be found in almost every major city in the United States. Also, the Church has a compound in the swamps on the Texas-Louisiana border near the town of Port Neches. The place, known by the locals as "the Loony Bin," is being cautiously investigated by the police, fearing another Waco.

FunCo Toys: This company produces most of the toys, dolls, playsets and all the other many types of merchandising available based on the Barney & Friends TV show. The vast majority of the enemy's legitimate funds come from FunCo products. The Chicago company has, as such, been completely taken over by wyrminions.

Happy Time Studios: The "official" production studio of the Barney show, Happy Time also does a brisk business renting out sets to television shopping channels, televangelists, direct-to-video movie producers and other similar members of the bottom rung of entertainment society. The studio's main stages outside Dallas have plenty of clients, as well as plenty of Barney episodes to film.

There is one figure, currently the Liaison who goes by the name of Winston, who does all of this publicly. He frustrates the Jihad to no end, because they can't just kill or kidnap such a public figure, or even present any evidence that could justify a public investigation of his activities.

The Purple Forces make their money off of merchandising, PBS fees, revenues redirected from other divisions of the Lyons Group, and black-market sales of looted and stolen goods from battlefields and sponged people's possessions. Also, there is a public (if weird) "Cult" of B'harnii, which solicits donations and usually takes as much of new members' money as possible. The mastermind and organizer behind the cult, Winston, keeps his role as such secret. The cult encourages donations and support from causes. They do certainly get kids and troublemakers off the streets - it's just that they don't keep them out of trouble afterward.

BASIC MUNDANE CHARACTER TEMPLATES

So, you want a mundane onlooker? A relative or friend of a Jihaddi? A conspiracy theorist or other sinister plotter? Well, here's how you do it. As with all character descriptions, you should include a physical description: height, weight, hair and eye color, age, clothing worn, and other such niceties. This is fairly essential for those trying to write your character, so don't skip it.

All of these archetypes are meant to be 100-point characters; after all, they aren't called Mundanes for nothing. Points may be spent as the player sees fit, although Mundanes as a rule will not have knowledge of TL8+ science or technology beyond what they've read about in science-fiction, and buying an Unusual Background means the character isn't Mundane; the whole point of being a Mundane is you have *no* unusual backgrounds whatsoever! Secret Advantages (**GURPS IOU** p. 20) or Secret Disadvantages (**GURPS IOU** p. 23) are allowed, but make sure the GM knows in advance if you have something specific planned for that Advantage/Disadvantage. GMs are wily creatures at heart, and love to fiddle when given an opening, so be on your guard.

Witnesses

Unless the witness becomes the main focus of a story or Op, you don't need much here. Things you will need, however, include:

- How exactly the character witnessed a Jihad action. Did they have the bad luck to be hiking through the woods near a sponge minion camp on the day of a siege? Are they a relative or friend of a sponge who went searching one day, only to find them in the midst of on-duty Jihaddi? In other words, why is the character in this position?
- The character's basic reaction to what they saw. This can be anything from contacting law-enforcement authorities to hiding and running for their life to actively seeking Jihaddi or B'harnates. Whatever the character does, it should have coherent motives and reasons.
- The character's rough personality and any skills that may come up in the writing (latent magic capability, weapons skill, or anything else that may prove useful in writing the character). This is a writing aid. Be specific!

Allies

This includes characters like a Jihaddi's mundane loved ones and other assorted mundanes the Jihad may contact. If you're writing profile about a Jihaddi who has close mundane loved ones (at least, those who'll probably come up in the story), writing one of these for those loved ones would be highly useful. Once again, you'll need information on physical attributes, personality, and skills, but you'll also need some others:

- The character's exact relation to the Jihad. Any specific Jihaddi that the character is associated with should be mentioned here, along with their relationship.
- How much, precisely, does the character know about the Jihad? This should be kept to a minimal level barring extenuating circumstances, no mundane would know that much about Jihad workings but one closely associated with a Jihaddi would know that that Jihaddi is involved in something unusual.

- What the character's reaction would be to learning about the Jihad and its workings. In other words, if the character was placed in a witness-type situation, what would they do? After all, anyone too close to a Jihaddi is far more likely to learn some piece of the truth than a more random Mundane.

Enemies

This is the realm of conspiracy theorists and those other people who may fight against the Jihad although they may not know their enemy as such. You'll need the basic character information, as well as:

- Full details on how the character found out about Jihad activities. This is essentially character history, and it should be similar to that provided for a witness character.

- What exactly *does* the character know about the Jihad? Have they found any Jihad technology? And if so, what is it, and do they know how to use it?

- If they don't attribute what they've seen to the Jihad itself (which is quite likely), who do they attribute it to? This highly depends on the character's precise conspiracy theory; different characters could attribute the same incident to the UFOs, the Men in Black, the government, or strange weather.

- Given a chance to act against the Jihad, what would the character probably do?

CHAPTER 6

Pupp barreled into the Hall, ran up the stairs to the stage, and proceeded to trip over the top step. Landing smack on his face, much to the gleeful entertainment of the now-not-so-bored assembled mages, Pupp let go of the data pad he was carrying. The pad nearly bonked the ducking Katze on the head, and somehow managed to land on the podium in the center of the stage.

The AC struggled to his feet, and moved over to the podium.

"Right. Quiet down now! It wasn't that bloody funny!"

He waited for the laughter to die off, and righted his official pointy-hat.

"Okay now, we're here for a reason today. Many of you have shown great achievements in the not-quite-year that we've been around. Today, we're going to honor you."

He pressed a button on the podium, and turned around to watch a screen descend from the ceiling. He rolled up his sleeves and made some complicated hand gestures. The JPVers in attendance were surprised to see a diagram of the JPV ranks appear in a blueish-white glowing text.

"Now, for those of you who are not aware of our so-called ranking system, here it is. We rank from one through nine, and various geometric shapes are assigned to the numbers." He chuckled and idly waved a hand.

"These," pointing to an almost identical diagram which had just appeared, "are the Lyan rankings. You'll notice they also use one through nine, and are arranged as 'circles.' Essentially, our system is copied from theirs, but with some mocking involved."

He waved a hand, and the diagrams both disappeared. They were replaced with the JPV logo, two hands seemingly casting a spell to create the sun flanked by the words: 'Wisdom, Knowledge, Vigilance.'

"Those of you who will be honored today have shown that you embody those words that we use for our motto." He pointed at the screen. "Wisdom, Knowledge, and Vigilance."

He waved Katze up to the podium. "As Ms. Brenner announces your name, please come up and receive your new emblem for your robes."

—Transcript of a JPV initiation ceremony, 1 August 1998



The Jihad to Destroy Barney roleplaying games have traditionally been a very freeform activity, somewhere between a diceless roleplaying game (ala Amber), a MU*-style computer game, and a writing circle. While we provide rules for the GURPS system throughout the book, for a very long time the group didn't use a tabletop roleplaying system to create the stories that make up the Jihad Universe.

In this chapter, we've put down most of the old "unwritten" rules and guidelines used in Jihad Universe freeform roleplay regarding the mechanics of the universe itself and how to play around with it without going over the canonical boundaries. Most of this material isn't all that critical to running a Jihad Universe campaign in freeform or tabletop format, but we consider it a valuable resource for both players and GMs looking to get a more in-depth handle on the game world.

CANON, CANNONS AND POINTY HATS

In a lot of the text, we make continual references to "the canon." For somebody who isn't familiar with internal politics and history of the Jihad to Destroy Barney, this can get fairly confusing. As the current revision of this book is intended to allow people who aren't familiar with the internal workings of the Internet group to use this as a role-playing resource, we need to get a few things clear right off the bat.

What is "The Canon?"

The contents of this book are considered the canon of the Jihad Universe 2.0. This is the base setting, depicting the game as it exists as of April 2004 in real life and May 1999 as it is in the game world. This chapter will provide the basic guidelines as to how this world works, specifically how science and magic work, as well as providing a general guide to creating characters for the Jihad Universe. The following chapters will provide additional detail as to the main players in the Jihad Universe.

Canon is solely defined at the discretion the players and GM (or writers and Line Editor, depending on how you look at things) of the Jihad to Destroy Barney. It's the primary campaign, which means that they get to set the tone. Additional books may be released advancing (or changing) the canon as the nature of the game - and the players - changes.

Why the emphasis on canon?

There's a long, boring story involving a series of internal Jihad political struggles connected to this, (The GM's Apologia at the very end of this book covers some of this for the morbidly curious.) but the short form is that at the time Jihad Universe 2.0 was started, the in-group game was very chaotic and difficult to understand even by insiders. The decision was made to create a bottleneck for "official" game materials in an attempt to clear things up a bit. That decision ultimately resulted in the contents of this book.

Do I need to get the Jihad's permission to run JU2?

No. In earlier versions of this book, it was intended solely for people who were already members of the Jihad to Destroy Barney, and there were a number of dire imprecations about using it outside the context of the Jihad group. We've removed these from this version (We think. We hope.) with the intent of creating a more general role-playing book.

As it is, you do not need to ask permission of the Jihad group to use JU2 as a resource, any more than you need to ask permission of the writers of *Rifts* or *In Nomine* or *Silver Age Sentinels* to use their books. We do, however, hope that if you use JU2 as a resource you'll let us know about it so we can link your game/stories from the jihad.net homepage.

How can I get my game added to the canon?

Be a member of the Jihad to Destroy Barney.

No, really. That's pretty much it. The core writing group of the Jihad to Destroy Barney - along with a smaller number of individual writers - are the ones who create the canon and set it. However, it should be noted that as of this writing (04/2004) the group is not actively seeking new members, and new members have for the most part stopped seeking us out. We're still available, though, and the GM is willing to listen to any pitch so long as it's entertaining.

If you're thinking of making a pitch, here's a few things you should do:

First of all, be sure to read this book through and make sure you're not duplicating things we've already written.

Then, write up a short sketch of the idea in general. This can be anything from a few paragraphs of a story featuring your idea to a brief timeline of how it fits into the Jihad Universe. The important part of a sketch is to get as much information as you can into it. Don't, under any circumstances, just submit something that's lifted whole cloth from an existing fictional source. Stuff like "Barney finds the One Ring," or "Captain Kirk joins the Jihad" can make for a funny one-shot story, but it's not something that the Jihad group is interested in adding to the canon.

When you've got your sketch ready and willing, take it over to our message board at <http://www.jihad.net/phpab4d> and post your sketch with the header "Audition." We'll take it from there, and probably have lots of questions for you.

Credit where credit is due...

The characters, concepts, stories and whatnot used in the Jihad belong to their creator and traditionally cannot be touched unless the original creator has given permission.

For purposes of JU2 as a public gaming resource, all characters, items and situations profiled or mentioned in this book still belong to their creators, but permission has been given for their general use. As a matter of form, if used elsewhere and posted publicly, users should provide credit to the creator when possible, or to "The Jihad to Destroy Barney" if you can't figure out who the creator was.

PROFILE WRITING

Jihad roleplay, being mostly freeform, was never really based on the concept of character points. Instead of rolling up a character, Jihaddi traditionally just wrote up a character profile. This sounds a great deal easier than having to puzzle out a character sheet in **GURPS** or **AD&D**, right?

Well, it isn't. Creating a freeform roleplay character can be just as tricky as creating one for a tabletop game. In this section, Brother Fireball provides a guide to writing up a JU character that's easy to use for everybody involved in a game. There are two basic steps to getting a character into Jihad role-play, generation and then profiling....

Character Generation

Make a reasonable character, if not human than at least with some human-seeming qualities; immortals and all-powerful types of almost any kind are



rejected out of hand. Everyone has someone better than them at a given talent, and Munchkins should never be forced to demonstrate someone being better.

A character with interests in specialization should not have more than one specialty. For example, being a world-renowned mage capable of building a supercomputer with match sticks, a roll of aluminum foil, and silly putty looks silly.

Now it's time for another episode of "Good Idea, Bad Idea."

Good Idea: "A wide variety of magic to choose from, but very little of it fully controlled. One bit of magic she can control is the ability to open a portal to virtually any destination. The portal can get her there instantly, but she loses time with each use of the portal ranging from about a minute (for short jaunts) to 15 minutes (for a trip halfway around the world). She has all the vulnerabilities of normal humans, and is a poor non-magical fighter."

One or two interesting skills which she is adept at, with plenty of room for the character to grow and be developed in stories should be the character's owner want.

Bad Idea: "He is a competent hand-to-hand combatant, Mech pilot, aerospace fighter pilot, marksman with both handguns and rifles, and a decent swordsman. He is very well acquainted with commanding a large fighting force, and has had experience with both land and aerospace combat command. He possesses extremely powerful psionic abilities..."

Now that's just too much, looks kinda silly doesn't it? And that's only a small excerpt from the rather bland skills listing in that particular profile.

The prohibitions against creating a character based on yourself that run throughout most fanfic circles don't really exist in Jihad role-play. A vast majority of the characters are at least partially based on the people that play them, just don't give yourself too many extra or enhanced abilities.

Try to come up with something reasonably original. Just as you shouldn't steal technology from another fictitious universe and import it to the JU, you shouldn't steal people; a Jihaddi jedi or terminator or romulan or Highlander-style immortal or whatever would just end up looking lame. There are some exceptions, just using more vague concepts from outside sources can be acceptable. There have been Jihaddi vampires, dragons, werewolves, elves, and characters from various tabletop rpg's that've all successfully integrated into the Jihad Universe.

Good Idea: "Can become insubstantial at will. Can change appearance at will. Can absorb energy attacks, magical or otherwise."

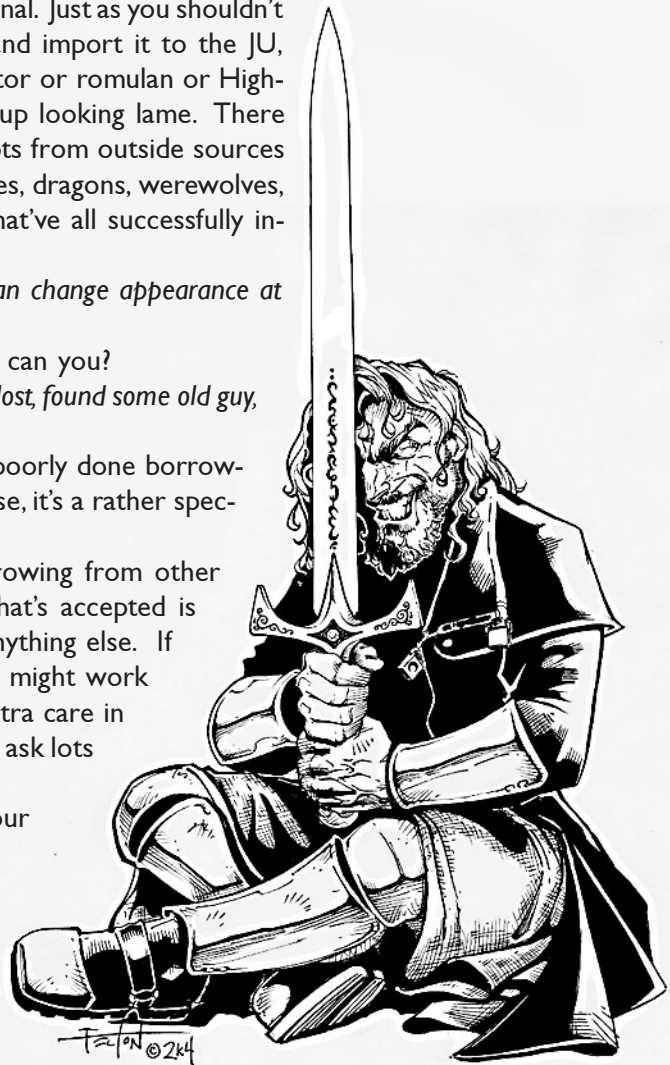
Can't even tell which fiction that's lifted from, can you?

Bad Idea: "Went hiking in the mountains once, got lost, found some old guy, studied Jedi stuff, found my way home."

Honest, that's not a summary. It's not only a poorly done borrowing from another (very well known) fictitious universe, it's a rather spectacularly bad job of profile writing too.

Another note on excessive abilities and borrowing from other fictitious universes: A big reason that most of it that's accepted is accepted has to do with good writing more than anything else. If you've got one of those sorts of ideas and think it might work you can go ahead and try it, just be sure to take extra care in your character generation, profile, and story writing; ask lots of advice.

You need some sort of explanation as to why your character has joined the Jihad (and "just sorta dropped in" won't cut it, it's just being sloppy and lazy and won't make for good role-play). Maybe your character's a conspiracy theorist type who discovered some of the Jihad's secrets and was inducted that way, or maybe you've got some outside grudge against Barney or Lyra in whatever dimension you



In re: Munchkins

Earlier versions of this book had, among other things, a number of dire warnings and rules regarding the use and abuse of the rules for the purpose of powergaming. Or in simpler terms, being a munchkin.

Most of these warnings and rules have since been removed, as they were really meant to correct problems with the internal freeform game that have long ago been solved. Beating people who aren't in the internal group over the head with the No-Munchkin stick seemed well... a bit insulting, really.

As far as munchkinism in and of itself goes, well... frankly we're not fond of it, but as vices go it beats acting out hyper-violent fantasies with loaded weapons, so we'll let it slide. As far as munchkinism goes in the freeform roleplay, our rule of thumb is "if it's written well, we'll be more likely to let it go through than otherwise." We figure that if your players are bright enough to create a munchkinistic character and then play it well, they should be allowed to.

It's open season on nitwits who like to max out their stats and act like the Punisher instead of actually roleplay, though.

(For more on munchkins, their habits and methods of controlling the evil little buggers, we highly recommend ***The Munchkins Guide to Power Gaming***.)

happen to come from. This also helps to create a more well-balanced character, one with some sort of outside life that isn't just killing spongin or Lyrans or various other things 24/7. Parents/friends/relatives/pets killed by Barney has started to become a little overused though, so if you do that type of story just be careful you don't end up sounding cliché.

Good Idea: Kidnapped by a scientist loyal to Barney and altered for use as a living weapon against the Jihad. Rebelled, managed to escape, and joined the Jihad to use what he'd been made to fight the horrors he'd seen.

Creative and original. Can be said briefly but also lends itself well to a more detailed origin story. One of my favorites and better than anything I've ever come up with.

Bad Idea: "After one such tour, he found himself channel-surfing and wiped out when he hit the B'Harnii and Fiends television show. So disgusted by what he was witnessing something snapped."

Something like that could be a possible start, but it's very thin. This is more of a real life reason than a roleplaying one. As J. FoxGlov often said, Barney is very easy to hate.

If you do use preexisting Jihad canon in your character's background, be sure to run your idea by the JU2.0 staff or whoever owns the particular bit of the Jihad Universe you want to use to make sure that idea doesn't violate any canon. Your best bet is to actually read through the released canon sections, especially the "Planetary" fringe movement (in the chapter on third parties), as it can accommodate a good number of diverse ideas and provide an easy "in" from the Mundane world.

Good Idea: A thief caught in the middle of a battle between spongin and TRES Corps forces in the midst of attempting to steal an artifact the spongin wanted for a weapon. Injured in the fight that also kills his best friend and partner, he is rescued by TRES and ends up joining their ranks to fight the newly discovered (to him) Purple Menace and avenge his friend's death.

I like this. Creative, original, establishes discovery of the Jihad and reason to join using just the most common and easy to write parts of canon.

Bad Idea: "but he is reluctant to divulge any details about his life before he jumped into the solar system in a stolen Lyrans space fighter"

Hehehe, this is bad. Unless you're a group of Maenads, you wouldn't steal a Lyrans ship, you would maybe get within sight of a Lyrans ship before the lower-circle Lyrans mages guarding it caught you and spent a few decades torturing you just to impress a superior. Or the ship would eat you.

Along that line, reading through some of the profiles of current Jihad characters before you get too far into creating your character is a good idea, not only just to see what other characters look like and how people have developed them, but so you don't unknowingly do something too many other people have done and end up looking cliché.

Profiling

You write a character profile to define him/her/it/them within the Jihad Universe canon and also to help others understand and possibly write about your character.

As with all other writing, grammar is god. Care should be taken for description, development, history, etc. Good writing, and hence good stories and role-play, depend on solid character development.

Good Idea: “Personality notes: [She] is stubborn as hell. She only listens to you when she wants to, and will often disagree for the sake of being ornery. Has a horrible temper when she gets upset or frustrated.”

Great. Brief but still descriptive; the sentences that should be short are short, the sentences that should be longer are longer. The profile goes on, but just this bit very quickly and easily establishes an image of what the character's like. And the spelling has been checked. (special note: contrary to what your eighth grade teacher told you, starting a sentence with and is kosher, you just have to know what you're doing.)

Bad Idea: “Nearly always in a pseudo uniform, generally wears a Black vest w/ lots of pockets over a Gray Long sleeved shirt, Woodland camo BDU pants, pistol belt, Black leather combat boots.”

This person never learned sentence combining, or proper capitalization. Compare that with “Prefers clothing which looks as if it could be part of some sort of uniform. A black multipocketed utility vest worn over a grey shirt and BDU-style camouflaged pants with standard-issue black combat boots are his normal.” A bit more wordy perhaps, but it does far more to evoke an image. As with several other things, grammar problems can be fixed easily. Review your own writing a while after you've written it, and also find a couple other people to review it for you.

Also important is how you write a profile, that it's structured properly to give the right information in the right way. Just lists of abilities, skills, attributes, and weaknesses are pretty lifeless and boring and don't really give that much useful information about the character (listing your character's abilities and such is important, but it has to be incorporated into a profile the right way, it doesn't make up a good profile on its own.)

A good way to get a good profile down is to think of your character in the third person. Try to think about what you think other people should know and what you want them to know in order to write about your character and role-play with him/her/it, not necessarily everything you've personally thought up about the character. When in doubt about something to include in your profile, ask yourself “Do I want people I role-play with to know this about my character when they write?” or “If I was writing about somebody else's character, would I want to know this?”

A suggested format is the one I used for my character available at <http://egad.narf.zort.poit.net/profile.html>, written from the perspective of a Jihad-wide personnel department. Give some important statistics for the character (with some explanation and description), write a short history, then use a 3rd person analysis to cover personality and anything else that didn't come out in the rest of the profile (such as weaknesses, they come out much better written about as personality traits than just listed somewhere). This format isn't a requirement though, just a suggestion for those who might be having trouble because it worked well for me.

That covers one Good Idea...

Bad Idea: “Profile: A slightly out of order character history that relies heavily on context that isn't written into the profile (this sort of thing is common, but gives no information that would be really useful to somebody writing about the character). “Skills: He has a shrewd business sense and a great understanding of economics. He can understand several languages. He is a skilled marksman. He is a competent swordsman. He is a skilled pilot.” (While marginally useful information, the profile I took this from was only slightly more descriptive and less bland.) “Other abilities: Blah blah blah...” (Now this is just silly, a second bland skills list) “Weapons/paraphernalia: ...” (Another list, with a little explanation this time. This sort of thing can occasionally be made to work but usually doesn't, most of the time it works better when integrated into other parts of the profile).

Read some of the profiles out there for yourself; it should become quickly apparent which work and which don't, and what sort of format would suit you best.

Usually, your character needs a history. If your character's background changes from story to story, it not only gets confusing for the reader but it makes for pretty bad role-play. At the same time, don't spend all your time developing your character's personal history, only a minimum is required to fit a profile into Jihad canon. If you have a more complete, detailed personal history for your character, that's great, but it's usually better off in a separate origin story.

And when you have a draft of your profile done, find a couple people to look at it and edit it for you. Not just somebody who'll read over it once and say it's fine, but people who are going to seriously review it for you, people who are going to be critical about grammar and willing to tell you if you created a munchkin. Your profile will benefit the same as anything else you write, if you've got people who are willing to critique it somewhat harshly and if you do a few revisions based on that critique.

Writing and role-playing is about being creative, having fun, and enjoying yourself. Other players and writers should be able to get a feel for your character's nature after interacting, or reading about it.

MAD SCIENCE, MADDER ENGINEERING

The Mundane world as of 1999 is transitioning from a mature TL7 to an early TL8, but outside of certain government and corporate research programs the only real evidence of TL8 equipment is in the form of the ever-expanding Internet and related spinoff technologies, such as MP3 audio players and the first beginnings of ubiquitous computing.

The Jihad, with its high concentration of powerful and somewhat loopy R&D people, has achieved a base technology that is obviously more advanced than the outside world. Most of these obviously are military in nature, with communications, vehicle technology and medical tech bringing up the rear. The average Jihaddi has access to equipment between mature TL7 (The tracked vehicles and artillery so beloved by members of the MAUL Mobile Heavy Infantry.) to an early TL9 when it comes to communications gear like the JihadLinker.

Most standard issue Jihaddi equipment is a nice and mature TL8, verging on TL9. A few specialized items, like the Jihad's large computer systems, are a full TL10 or above. The X-Rifle standard-issue energy longarm for TRES Corps, for example, is a TL9 plasma weapon (**GURPS**ites can treat it like a standard TL9 blaster rifle, UT51 or B209.) but due to the complexity of the production, it's the only standard-issue TL9 weapon available to the Jihad. More common are weapons like TL8 laser pistols or even high-quality TL7 slugthrowers - after all, you'll never have to worry about running out of power for a Colt automatic. The critical thing that keeps the Jihad from producing more high-TL items is the constraint of the war. Because the Jihad is running with a fairly limited resource base - and is unable to access the wider resources of the mundane world - they don't have the time or the materiel to expend for large amounts of high-TL production runs or any real theoretical work. TL11+ prototypes, while they do exist, are often hand-built and the personal property of a researcher or technician.

Superscience

There are things in the Jihad that do transcend the limitations of the expedencies of war. These are the products of superscience. Most of these devices are singular in nature - only the inventor really understands how (or why) the device works. In extremely rare cases, the devices can be mass produced. That usually doesn't lead to anything good.

During the early years of the Jihad's existence, new members tried to come up with the absolute perfect superweapon to defeat B'harne (this period is called the Age of Amuck Scientists by the current research teams). Some of the more bizarre devices from this period — such as the BurgerMasterBlaster, a TL15 matter-transformation device that converted any organic target into a bacon cheeseburger — can still be found in the dusty corners of TRES or DE armories, although if a player manages to find one, he/she may be hounded to death by embarrassed WEDJEE scientists who want the abominations they created to stay buried.

Tech and the Bad Guys

The Purple Forces tend to stick with whatever gear they can scrounge from the mundanes or the Jihad - B'harne stands for the stifling of innovation, after all. The Lyrans stand above B'harne's immediate minions, of course, using their advanced magical powers to warp lifeforms into doing their bidding. This is a TL(4+8) divergent technical path for the Lyrans, due to the fundamental incompatibilities between human science and magic. (see page 76)

USING MAGIC FOR FUN & PROFIT

Magic, the Theory and Practice

Magic is based on an energy field (called for purposes of simplicity "mana" after anthropologist J.G. Frazier) that is closely tied to living things. The field tends to be stronger where there is a great diversity of life (like the Amazon basin) or where a disaster has killed large numbers (such as Hiroshima, Dresden, the Cambodian killing fields, Krakatoa, etc. There's the possibility of strong "fossil magic" surrounding the Chixilbub crater — where the comet that killed the dinosaurs hit). The field also tends to condense along lines and nodes — usually the result of generations of use by sentient beings. Many high-mana sites like Stonehenge are the result of ancient Celtic peoples focusing power on the site, which was already saturated with mana before the site was designated.

Magi (people who use magic) have a genetic predisposition and sensitivity to mana flow. While people without the required metagene can learn theory, they cannot actively manipulate magical forces w/o the assistance of a mage.

Magi are capable of increasing their abilities through regular practice and training. With enough time any

Artifacts

Magical artifacts in the Jihad Universe fall into three general categories:

1. An object which amplifies magical energy.
2. An object which filters/reduces magical energy.
3. An object which has a spell or function attached to it magically.

Artifacts generally are created mysteriously, and no-one knows exactly where they come from, the stuff of legends, etc. They may even be guarded by some nasty monster... for Jihad purposes, the character should have (or have had) to go through some awful ordeal to obtain it. Any artifact of reasonable power will likely be very old, dating back to the time of Merlin or further, and thus be extremely rare.

Magical objects, and/or magical tools (whatever you want to call them) are generally regular non-magical objects "enchanted" by a very experienced mage. (i.e. A spell is attached to it to perform a function.) Example: A wizard's staff can either be an artifact (if this mage is lucky enough to have found a natively magical material to make it from) or an enchanted object (This would apply to approx. 90% of mages in the JU, as Earth doesn't generally have many magical materials.) Enchanting Mundane gear is possible, but requires n+1 times more energy to imbue to a complex device (car, plane, computer) than to a simple device (sword, chariot/oxcart, basic gun).

mage can reach the theoretical limits of human magic, generally considered to be as powerful as the legendary mage Merlin (who *may* have existed, but records are fragmented and contradictory). A particularly ambitious mage may exceed those limits under the right conditions (peak physical condition, standing on an exceptionally strong mana node), but the price paid usually involves the death of said mage, often very messy death at that.

In general, Jihaddi mages are mostly inexperienced, thanks to a general lack of magic in Mundania. Experienced magic users are rare, and *powerful* magic users are *extremely* rare. Like all general concepts, there can be, and often are, exceptions to the rule.

The Lyrans, a race that have deep roots in magic, are capable of casting just about any spell an expert human mage can by the time they ascend to the 5th circle. The Lyrans have an innate understanding of magic that humans are unable to grasp, and are able to use that knowledge to do impressive feats of magic. Any specialized abilities are found and honed to full and regular use by the time the lyran reaches 6th circle.

Magic and technology are currently incompatible, and will remain so for a long time to come. Both systems attack the problem of manipulating the universe from different angles, and use very different systems.

Using modern physics and mathematics to describe mana interactions is like trying to translate Beethoven's 9th Symphony into mathematical notation *and still make it understandable by musicians*. (Important emphasis.) In theory this can be overcome with the use of advanced quantum math, but for OOC purposes, this math has yet to be developed to any useful level and is unlikely to be developed during gameplay.

Spells

Some spells might demand rituals, simply because they are too much for a person to do on the fly — to remember, or to perform without mistake. It's rather like requiring someone to play a symphony by himself, but allowing him to use a synthesizer to record each track separately on metronome and overlay, checking and re-editing, before playing the final product.

Spells depend on the available ambient energy as well as the physical strength of the spellcaster; a magi in good health standing on the Serpent Mound in Ohio will be able to cast more and stronger spells than a wounded magi stuck in a low-mana zone like Gary, Indiana.

The average magi will be able to perform a few simple spells right off the bat, most importantly Detect Magic and a few simple elemental spells. With training and perseverance the basic “combat mage” spells like fireballs, shield spells, etc. can be learned and used with relative ease in all but the most heavily low-mana areas. Specialization, combined with obsessive training, can create elaborate rituals that - if the correct components are handy - represent the ultimate peak of human magecraft.

In a few extreme cases, magi have been known to create spellcraft of extraordinary power and scope under conditions of heavy duress. The situation has been compared to incidents of “hysterical strength” that allow humans to do incredible things under similar circumstances. As yet, nobody's figured out how to duplicate the situation reliably without sticking the mage into a life-or-death situation, so the question of how it works remains unresolved.

Types of Magic

Combat magic is somewhat freeform, but based on memorized words, gestures, or similar menomynics acting as a focus for the mage's willpower. Such spells tend to be simple attack or defense types, with as much power as the mage dares throw behind them.

Ritual magic involves longer, more intricate spells, planned out as thoroughly in advance as possible. There are a number of schools of ritual magic, all of which disagree with each other. Rituals are used for complex work, and often require multiple mages to work properly. Ritual schools include:

- **Sacred Geometers:** Mages who use Pythagorean geometric mysticism, the Egyptian pyramids, or networks of “ley lines” (mana paths) to do magic.
- **Shamanic:** Mages who follow the traditions of pre-industrial societies, such as Celtic or Native American religious ceremonies.
- **Neo-Shamanic:** Mages who follow a middle path, blending modern neurology and theoretical physics with traditional shamanic rituals (and the use of psychotropic drugs).
- **Neopaganist:** Another middle-path school based in elements taken from pre-Christian Europe, often involving nature rites. Neopagan mages tend to mix fictional (and often erroneous) elements with remnants of actual rituals to create a unique form of magic.
- **Hermetic:** Magic and ritual based on Victorian distortions of Eastern and Greek philosophy. Alister Crowley and Helena Blavatsky are the prime examples of Hermetic thought.
- **Rationalist:** A totally new school founded in the Jihad Praxeus Veneficum, intending to try and condense magic into purely scientific terms.
- **Taoist:** Magic based on the writings and philosophy of Hung Mung, Lao Tzu and the Chinese thinkers that came before them.
- **Synergists:** Another new school from the JPV, the Synergists attempt to collect *everything* from the known schools and create a working understanding of magic from that.

CHAPTER 7

The following call was taken on the Art Bell Show, September 11, 1997. WEDJEE sound technicians have matched the voice to a known Jihad informant from the West Coast:

MALE CALLER: Hello, Art?

ART: Yes?

CALLER (SOUNDS FRIGHTENED): I don't have a lot of time.

ART: Well, look, let's begin by finding out if you're using this line properly or not.

CALLER: Okay, in Area 51?

ART: Yes. Are [sic] you an employee or are you now?

CALLER: I'm a former employee. I, I was let go on a medical discharge about a week ago and, and... (chokes) I kind been running across the country. Damn, I don't know where to start, they're they're gonna, they'll triangulate on this position real soon.

ART: So you can't spend a lot of time on the phone, so give us something quick.

CALLER (VOICE BREAKING UP WITH APPARENT SUPPRESSED CRYING): Okay, um, um, okay, what we're thinking of as aliens, Art, they're extradimensional beings, that an earlier precursor of the space program they made contact with. They are not what they claim to be. They've infiltrated a lot of aspects of, of, of the military establishment, particularly at the Area 51. The disasters that are coming, they, the military, I'm sorry, the government knows about them. And there's a lot of safe areas in the world that they could begin moving the population to now, Art.

ART: So they're not doing, not doing anything.

CALLER: They are not. They want those major population centers wiped out so that the few that are left will be more easily controllable...

ART (FRAGMENT): ...discharged...

CALLER (SOBBING, THEN FRAGMENT): I say we g.....
<Transmission was cut off at this point.>

At this time, investigation has not revealed any enemy presence within the United States military, although it may very well be masked beyond our normal means of penetration. We suggest that a team be assigned to investigate this more closely.

—Classified Doberman Empire report to Commander Samhain, 20 October 1997.



MARCHING OFF TO WAR, HURRAH

So. You've read through all of the rules, the history of the Jihad, and all the other information. You're all fired up to run your own campaign in the the JU.

How the hell do you do that?

That's what this section is for.

MAL'S HANDY-DANDY TIPS ON WRITING JIHAD CAMPAIGNS

The Jihad, like Life, is never easy to cope with. In the past, all the Jihad's roleplaying has been done in prose format — the characters write the story according to a plotline set down by the GM, instead of doing real-time gaming the way most RPGs are devised. Now, in this chapter (and scattered through some of the others) we provide information on running a Jihad game for the GURPS system. If that's what you want to do, then the information should be helpful. If, however, you want to do a prose campaign, we'll provide some tips on running one properly.

0) Know where you're going before you set out. You may not know how the whole thing is going to end up, but you should at least have some idea of the campaigns goal, prominent bad guys, prominent good guys, time scale, that sort of thing. Make notes, because they are your friend. Having a great concept is knowing the rough destination, but that's not enough to make a good story. Fill out your concept before you start shopping for players.

1) Cut down on redundant segments. If you look at *The Marraketh Connection*, *Operation Pacifica*, etc. you'll see a lot of segments where the same battle/scenario is replayed with a slightly different point of view. Avoid this. Get people who're in the same thing together and consolidate segs. Having the different POV is often a good thing, but cluttering up a newsgroup or web board with fifty different 2KB stories from fifty different people is considered poor form. It's best to have just one 100KB story with the all the pertinent players contributing.

2) Have framing pieces... spots along at the beginning, end, and through the length of the story where you (as GM) keep the plot moving. They don't have to be long, and they don't have to be filled with tons of the dreaded expository dialogue; just remind the readers that there is a central storyline. This is

very helpful when your players are taking their sweet time getting past the introduction.

3) Keep the story fast-paced. This ties back to #1. You want to keep the readers *interested*, something that the big Ops really failed at, because they got bogged down in excruciating detail and too many segments. If you have five or six big-assed multi-author story segs, it'll read faster and most likely be better written than a twenty small single-author segs.

4) Set and be a hardass about deadlines whenever possible. Accept delays based on real-world problems if they arise (as a rule of thumb, reality should always take precedence), but if the story/seg/section is not mission critical, don't be afraid to pass that author over.

5) Never have more authors than you could successfully run a tabletop RPG with. That's what you're doing in essence, after all — roleplaying without the dice. Table RPGs get difficult to play past 6 players / 1 GM. So 7 should be the top player/author limit. However, you should use as many other people as NPCs as possible, to give the Op the proper feel.

6) Expect the unexpected, and plan accordingly. Over the course of the story, your players may come to you with an interesting digression they want to add to the story. Since you are writing for an audience, you should be willing to indulge digressions. While it's nice to keep the story moving at a good clip, if speed is making you boring you ought to slow down a little. Or conversely, one of your players may devise a better ending to the story than the one you came up with. If this happens, swallow your pride and go with the better ending. Prose campaigns, like traditional RPG campaigns, are organic creatures, and the players *should* be able to influence the story. The GM Is Always Right, but sometimes he's wrong.

These are just basic tips for getting together a prose campaign. There are other things, of course, but most relate to rules of grammar, spelling, characterization and other literary devices. We recommend looking up *Strunk & White*, or the *Associated Press Style Book* for further suggestions on how to improve the quality of your writing.

DEFINING THE GAME

When GMing a Jihad Universe campaign, you set up what the world is going to look like to the players and how they will interact with that world. These are things that you should figure out before you start recruiting players. The Jihad as presented in this book is the “canon” version. That is to say, it’s the version as played by the members of the Jihad to Destroy Barney that exists out here in the physical world. As such, the base setting is tricky to change, at best. However, this should not stop you from taking a different look at the JU. Starting from a different POV of the same subject can lead to a very different game than the traditional Jihad campaigns.

This book is both a mirror and a prism. All sorts of possibilities are refracted through it. Make the most of it.

Character Involvement

The world of the Jihad is pretty well set, so the GM (with a little help from the players) needs to decide the role the PCs play in the Jihad Universe. Are they part of the System, or on the outside looking in?

Seeking the Jihad

The Jihad can be glimpsed at a distance from here, as the PCs are trying to find the group and figure out what’s going on. The Jihad’s role may change from game to game, or over the course of many games as the players learn about the Hidden War and the available sides.

Joining the Jihad

The heroes may even learn enough that the Jihad welcomes them into their ranks. The 401k is decent enough, and you get to travel. Conversely, the PCs may be Jihaddi from the start; it’s a strange world out there, and the Jihad stands by its men. And women. And aliens. And whatever.

Fighting the Jihad

The again, the heroes may not approve of the Jihad. Even if you *aren’t* a member of the Purple Forces (which is also an option here, by the way), the Jihad makes for an intriguing enemy of all the outside world considers good and pure. It does, after all, consist of a massive terrorist organization that is responsible for numerous incidents of vandalism, assault and murder all over the world. And to top it all off, the Jihad lies to outsiders — and justifies their actions by saying that

Mundanes can’t handle the truth.

Genre

The genre of the game is the most basic type of story you’re telling, and sets the direction the game will be pointed in.

The baseline Jihad Universe setting is written to spec with a Conspiratorial Fantasy genre: The world is a lot stranger than the average person knows, and only by digging deep and asking a lot of questions will the players ever get to the bottom of it all. Once the heroes cross the barrier between the Mundane world and the Jihad’s world the Fantasy element kicks into high gear, throwing the players into a world where dragons and rayguns exist side-by-side (in some cases, the dragons are *using* the rayguns!).

Setting the Tone

The tone is how you’ll approach the genre of your campaign, helps set the overall goals, and what kind of flavor you add. Each tone is like an adjective; you can use as many as you like, but it’s a good idea to avoid too many in one shot.

Action: Boom boom, baby! The classic “hack and slash” setting, featuring high-speed pursuits, John Woo gun battles, martial-arts action, desperate battles, explosive climaxes, deathtraps and narrow escapes. Action works well for military or special-ops games. Chasing wyrm-minions through the back streets of LA, guns a-blazing, things like that.

Camp: Take every cliché you’ve ever heard, and run with it. Drama and swashbuckling permeate the surroundings, Capital Letters are thick upon the ground, and every hero and villain gets a dying soliloquy. Played either for laughs or for sheer sense of wonder, camp is for just letting go and enjoying the world in black and white (or maybe a rich plaid).

Cinematic: Realism takes a hike and the perfect scene is everything. Directed by Jerry Bruckheimer with an unlimited effects budget and all the great Hollywood stars, there’s always just a few seconds left on the bomb, the hero’s girlfriend gets jumped by spongin, and the whole thing is set to a sweeping soundtrack featuring Howard Shore and Hans Zimmer. Just remember not to be the plucky comic relief.

Dark: The world is going to hell, and all Barney does is speed it along. The Jihad may be able to stop him and Charn’El for taking over, but the Mundanes are all corrupt anyway. The Lyran plans may *not* be the worst thing to happen to the world after all, and the Jihad will learn the price for neglecting their own souls to stop the evil...

Gritty: The game doesn't quite conform to reality — after all, in a realistic game extradimensional aliens don't exist and most of the Jihad's devices don't work — but realism gets first shot at everything. Shoot a spongin and go to jail. Barney's evil works on the shadowed streets the Saetherians slither through. Joining the Jihad means abandoning your friends and family, and wetwork leaves deep psychological scars.

Illuminated: You're not cleared for that. Fnord.

Silly: Not even bothering to play it straight at all, silly campaigns take the strange and twist it into laughs. Joining up with the Jihad to protect the penguins of the Ross Ice Shelf from the evils of Barney, magical girls created in R&D accidents and other like things can happen in a silly campaign. See **GURPS Discworld** for a more exhaustive description of silly campaigning.

Superheroic: Similar in nature to the cinematic tone, but with a lot more color. Full-fledged four-color action involving parahumans, regular humans with superscientific devices, the aliens they fight and the civilians who have to get out of the way. Suspense, action, and good clean fun with a simple but effective narrative thrust is the core of a superheroic game.

Technothriller: It's all about the chrome-plated HK 99s. The technothriller takes cues from the action and cinematic, but there's always time to stop and lovingly inventory all the toys in detail. Building the perfect X-Rifle, devising a ritual to stop a lyran sorcerer in his tracks, or springing the perfect ambush on a group of spongin soldiers — that's the fun in technothriller gaming.

Scale

Setting the scale is important, especially in a Jihad campaign. The scale will usually determine time, place, available resources and the worst nasties the players will have to deal with.

Historical

A good deal of the nitty-gritty of the Jihad's history has been lost over the years. Despite the work of Dr. Carmichael (p. 8), there are a lot of blank spots. Anything could have happened, but we really don't have details. This details the pe-

riod 1990-96, the formation of the early Jihad and the organization of the first JAOs, but adventures involving Lyrans and the ancestors of the HellWyrms can stretch back as far as Atlantis 25,000 years ago.

The Operation

This is the classic form of the Jihad campaign, a huge all-out battle with the forces of Good and Evil clashing. The trigger can be something small (a chance encounter with an enemy base in *Operation HomeFront*) or something truly cosmic (the Multiversal Doomsday Device in *Operation WorldWalk*). Either way, almost the entire Jihad will get involved in an Operation when things finally come to a head. Operations are the most challenging form of campaign in the JU, so GMs should be prepared in advance and ready for the players to shift gears unexpectedly in midstream.

Skirmishes

When only one JAO has to deal with a problem, it's a skirmish. This can be a globetrotting adventure or set in the back alleys of a major city. All the sides are treading a great deal more carefully than usual when fighting here, and all the bloodshed is kept out of sight of the news cameras. This is the arena of the Liaisons and the spin teams, who keep the wheels of war running relatively smoothly.



Downtime

When slam-bang action involving the movement of armies gets a little tiring, it's good to drop down a gear and engage in a quiet little story. Short character interaction between battles in the Hidden War, the occasional investigation into unusual activity and maybe a "What I Did On My Summer Vacation" story or three, set anywhere in the Jihad Universe during the current time period.

Power Levels

The Jihad Universe can support an impressive range of power levels, from innocent bystanders to nigh-invulnerable superheroes.

Oh Shit! Run! It's **Godzilla!**: <100 points

At this level, the PCs are the classic Expendable Extras; the guys who run screaming from the scene of the disaster, the nameless spear carriers that die under the Hero's (or the Villain's) guns. In short, the perfect sponge minions. Now, you know and I know that your players aren't necessarily going to go for PCs that have less than 100 points — although stranger

things have happened, especially with **GURPS Bunnies & Burrows** fans. Still, it might be interesting to play ordinary Mundanes that have to run away from danger, eventually becoming aware of the whole stranger world around them, and maybe wanting to get some payback in. Mundane dependents of Jihaddi PCs (spouse, kids, pets, etc.) would work well here as well.

Something's Happening Here: 100 points

At this level, the PCs are all talented Mundanes who've been hipped to strange happenings. Planetary members searching for clues to who dropped that power-armor in the middle of downtown San Diego, Mundane adventurers looking for archaeological artifacts of power, and the traditional "person seeking vengeance against mystery beings who offed a loved one" are all viable character templates at this level. These adventures tend to emphasise investigation, if only because the players aren't quite powerful enough to charge into a situation and wreak havoc.

Jihad Rank Structure

Rank	Jihad High Command	Doberman Empire	TRES Corps	VRDET	MAUL	JPV	Barney's Purple Forces
8	Triumvir Praetor	Fleet Commander	Grand Admiral Admiral, 2nd In Command	Operations Director Explorations Director Research Director	Commander In Chief	Arch-Chancellor 1st Parallelogram	B'hame Cham'El
7	Triumvir Adjunct	Commander	Admiral Vice Admiral Rear Admiral	Deputy Director Director Emeritus Field Commander	Colonel	2nd Torus	Bhab'ii B'hop 8th Circle Lyrans 7th Circle Lyrans
6	Liasion Coordinator Inspector General	Centurion	Commordore	-	Lieutenant Colonel	3rd Dodecahedron	Bhii-Jhaa 6th Circle Lyrans 5th Circle Lyrans Lyrans Liaison
5	Senior Liaison	Warrior	Captain	Senior Operative Senior Technician	Major	4th Cube	-
4	Quartermaster	-	Lt. Commander	Field Operative Technician	Captain	5th Diamond	Thinker
3	Liaison	-	Lieutenant	-	Lieutenant Lieutenant j.g.	6th Rectangle	Wym-Minion First Friendly Boss
2	Deep-Cover Operative	Trooper	Lieutenant j.g.	Junior Operative Junior Technician	Sergeant	7th Oval	Second Friendly Boss
1	Apprentice Liaison	-	Ensign	Trainee	Corporal	8th Square	-
0	Independent Operative	Recruit	Recruit	Recruit	Recruit	9th Triangle	Special Friend (Sponge-Minion)

The Corps Is Mother, The Corps Is Father: 150-200 points

Here, the PCs have more than likely joined the Jihad (or are in the process of joining), and are undergoing training in one of the main tracks. This is the “grunt level” of the Jihad, and anybody who doesn’t measure up *fast* runs a risk of getting killed. Missions at this level are divided between combat and investigation; sending out a few grunts to do forward observation isn’t an uncommon event. This power level can also start to support heavy magic-users, psis, or other parahuman characters.

Who You Gonna Call: 250-300 points

At this level, PCs are mid-ranking Jihaddi in good standing, often commanding a group of lesser-ranked members and/or newbies. Here the more impressive PC concepts can come out to play: Heavy-duty human wizards, martial-arts masters, pulp-hero engineers, interdimensional travellers and agents of the Illuminati. The mayhem from here on out gets set to overdrive and never looks back.

Badasses in Black: 400+ points

Now we’re cooking with liquid hydrogen. PCs at this level are all high-ranking members of the Jihad, people who have been around the block an uncountable number of times, as close as the players will ever get to becoming Secret Masters themselves. Here, the PCs are leading entire divisions of JAOs into mortal combat with Lyrans sorcerers, Mikari armadas and the dread HellWyrms himself.

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES AND SKILLS

ADVANTAGES:

Ally Group (The Jihad) *see p.C119*

You have a friend in the Jihad. Actually, you have a lot of friends in the Jihad, and they all have very big guns and will come and help you at a moment’s notice!

Jihad Ally Groups are based on 100-point NPCs and will appear on a 9 or less *all the time* – even deep-cover Liaisons can count on that if they feel a need to call in backup. The size of the group will depend on the character’s Rank level; A Rank of 2 or less will bring

a small group, a Rank of 3-5 will bring a medium-sized group, and a Rank of 6 and higher will bring a large group.

Example: Grunty McBrock, mean and cold Independent Operative for the Jihad, gets himself into a serious corner and calls for backup. As a Rank 0 Jihaddi, his backup will consist of three or four random agents pulled off the nearest watchtower. On the other hand, TRES Grand Admiral Felton (Rank 8) can call for backup and receive the entirety of TRES Omega Squad and air support from the nearby MAUL airbase. As always, it’s good to be the king.

Divine Favor (Feral Jackson) *see p.C136*

Maenad characters can, in a pinch, call for help from their demigod Feral Jackson. Jackson however doesn’t always like to be called, and will not respond well (-1 to all reaction rolls, -2 if it doesn’t involve Lyrans) if called for a non-trivial reason.

If the GM feels like it, Jackson’s Divine Favor may be held as a secret Advantage should the character be considered a candidate for Maenadship.

Divine Favor (Grimace) *see p.C136*

Members of the Brotherhood of Grimace can call on the Lord of the Fries (Don’t look at me like that, I just report this stuff.) in a tight situation. Grimace, however, is not somebody who is summoned lightly, and doesn’t always come when he’s called, so treat him as an infrequent Ally (roll a 6 or less) unless Barney himself is in the area. If Barney is nearby and the Brother knows that, any attempt to summon Grimace will automatically succeed.

Divine Favor (St. Dino) *see p.C136*

Members of the Church of St. Dino the Avenger can call on their patron saint for aid in an emergency. The saint will respond in person if the situation is dire enough, but for less-dire problems St. Dino is more likely to create a distraction by remote, such as causing every television within 2d hexes to start playing *Flintstones* reruns. Abusing the privilege of calling on St. Dino’s protection may result in the awarding of the Weirddness Magnet disadvantage.

Hard to Sponge *+5/level to +15 (0 for Mundanes)*

You have a natural resistance to the effects of spongification; it takes more than a few dozen repetitions of the I Luv You Song to break your mind. Characters with this advantage get an extra +2 to Will rolls

against spongification per level. Mundane characters (which aren't going to deal with sponges or spongification on a regular basis) can take this advantage for zero points at the GM's discretion.

Illuminated *see p. C138*

Illuminated characters instinctively *know what's going on*, so they make lousy Mundanes. An Illuminated character doesn't have to be a member of an Illuminated organization, but it's likely that the organizations will seek that character out as a potential member. The Jihad prizes Illuminated people as master strategists in the Hidden War — they know instinctively where the enemy is plotting, and where to strike.

Military Rank *see p. B22*

Rank is respected by members of the Jihad (an automatic +1 Status for any superior-ranking Jihaddi meeting another), although that respect may not necessarily equate to respectful behavior.

Unusual Background *see p. B23*

An Unusual Background is almost standard procedure for most Jihaddi PCs. Looking through character profiles dating back to the Golden Age, it's hard to find a character that *didn't* have one form of Unusual Background or another. GM's option to let less powerful characters have Unusual Backgrounds, but for ex-Mundane characters the cost should be *at least* 15 points.

DISADVANTAGES:

Enemy (Barney and Friends) *see p. B39*

Barney may love you, but he has a funny way of showing it...

High-ranking Jihaddi may take Barney and his minions as formidable (-30 to -40 points) enemies, who will always show up on a 9 or less. You may adjust that point value depending on how often your character is involved in field work. Lower-ranked Jihaddi who deal more with the minions than the generals may decrease the point cost as needed.

Example: A team of rookie Dobermans may regularly cross swords (on a 12 or less) with the local cell of sponge-minions (a -10 point Enemy group), so they would have a -20 Enemy in that sponge cell. Meanwhile, Most Holy, enigmatic commander of MAUL, leads his troops into combat (literally; they're often racing just to catch up to him) against the Purple Forces' best armor divisions (a -30 point Enemy) quite fre-

quently (on a 12 or less), thus making Barney & Friends a -60 point enemy for MoHo.

Spongified **-60 points**

You are completely under the thrall of the Demon Lord B'harne, and are completely unable to think for yourself. A character with this disadvantage has the cumulative effects of Cannot Learn, Chummy, Confused, Dull and Extreme Fanaticism. You cannot buy this disadvantage off without somebody else despongifying your character.

Recovering Sponge-Minion **-5 points**

The character has just recently come out of an extended period of spongification, and has yet to re-adjust to their normal IQ. Creates a -1 penalty to all IQ-related rolls and +10 for any attempt to respond while the character is afflicted. This disadvantage can be bought off after 3d days and a successful Will roll.

Vulnerability: Spongification **-5/level to -15**
(0 for Mundanes)

For whatever reason, you have a natural susceptibility to the siren call of B'harne's spells; you will fall into spongification far faster than the people around you. Characters with this disadvantage get a -2 penalty per level on Will rolls against spongification. Mundane characters (which aren't going to deal with sponges or spongification on a regular basis) can take this disadvantage for zero points at the GM's discretion.

SKILLS:

Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle) (Physical/Easy)
Defaults to DX-4
(other Gun skill)-4

This is the ability to use the Jihad's primary infantry weapon, the TRES X-Rifle plasma blaster. Add 1 to your skill for an IQ of 10 or 11, and 2 for an IQ of 12 or better. Modifiers: -2 if you're used to a similar weapon (e.g., the Blood Jihad make of laser pistol that's been your close companion since you started adventuring); -4 for an X-Rifle that's in poor condition; -4 or more if you're used to 20th-century handguns and not Jihad-make energy weapons.

Desponge (Mental/Hard) **Defaults to IQ-6**

This is the ability to remove the influence of B'harne from an affected person. This skill is different from the Desponge spells in that no magic is required, only an understanding of the spongification process

and the most common mental antitoxins (rock music, high-sugar/fat foods, caffeine, etc.). On a successful skill roll, you can desponge a single individual with the speed of the Instant Desponge spell. A critical success will also desponge any other minions that happen to be within 2d hexes! A failed skill roll will not affect the target.

Recognize Sponge-Minion (Mental/Average)
Defaults to IQ-5
Prerequisites: Psychology

You can see sponge-minions! The telltale mannerisms of the average spongin are revealed clear as if they were wearing a big neon sign on their foreheads. On a successful skill roll, you can determine if the person you're looking at is a sponge-minion or not. On a critical success, you will determine the spongin status of everybody within sight. However, on a critical failure, you will mistakenly tag a non-sponged person as a minion, and act accordingly.

Savoir-Faire (Jihad) (Mental/Easy)
Defaults to IQ-4

This is the skill of knowing how the Jihad works; the customs, traditions and regulations of his JAO and the Jihad in general. It also details the unwritten rules: what's acceptable and what's not, even if there's no regulation about it, how to horse-trade for specialized equipment, how to rise in the ranks and why VRDET really keeps that slacker elf on the Mt. Blanca night desk.

Ritual Magic (Lyrans) (Mental/Very Hard)
No default
Prerequisites: Magical Aptitude+2, Thaumatology-15 or higher

This skill allows you to understand the spiritual and intellectual basis of Lyrans rituals. Lyrans magic is very literally millennia more advanced than anything humans have created to date, and as such it is incredibly difficult for a human mage to understand. On a successful skill roll, you will know exactly what is being attempted. On a critical success, you will know the exact particulars and will be able to attempt the ritual yourself.

For a human performing a Lyrans ritual, roll against Ritual Magic again - a critical success will mean the ritual worked. A success will not trigger the spell but will also not affect the mage or the surroundings. A failure will mean the ritual backfires on the mage, causing 1D6 damage. A critical failure will mean a

catastrophic backfire, causing the mage to explode and 3D6 damage to everything in the surrounding area (the room, bystanders, objects, etc.).

Symbol Drawing (Lyrans) (Mental/Very Hard)
Defaults to Ritual Magic(Lyrans)-4

This is the art of understanding and creating Lyrans magic symbols as used in their spellcraft. This skill determines the character's knowledge of the symbols and his ability to draw them; people with the appropriate Ritual Magic skill may understand the symbols, but may be unable to draw them properly.

The symbols help in conducting rituals. For every 2 points by which the practitioner makes his Symbol Drawing roll, add +1 to the ritual conducted over it. Symbols must be redrawn each time it is used for another ritual. Lyrans symbols can be drawn with non-traditional materials (and considering the "traditional" materials used by the Lyrans, this is a very good thing indeed), but they are usually less effective: +1 for every 3 points of success.

Xenology (Lyrans) (Mental/Hard)
Defaults to IQ-6

This is a basic overall knowledge (at least what the Jihad has been able to determine; see Chapter 4) of the Lyrans species: biology, history, culture, mores and psychology. This information is extremely limited in the Jihad Universe, as the Lyrans come from so very far away and don't leave much in the way of talkative captives (if they leave captives at all — Lyrans are nasty characters). A successful Xenology roll will give +1 to any Tactics or Strategy roll if the opposing force is believed to be led by Lyrans. Maenads get an automatic +1 to their Xenology rolls, as the servants of Feral Jackson have much more familiarity with the Lyrans than normal humans or parahumans.

Xenology (Barnoid) (Mental/Hard)
Defaults to IQ-6

This is a basic overall knowledge (even sketchier than the Lyrans information) of the extradimensional entities that Barnoid has imported from wherever he came from originally. This includes M.E.N.S.A.Ns, Jello Beast creatures, the Hellwyrms' subordinates and even Barney himself. As above, a successful Xenology roll will give +1 to Tactics or Strategy rolls in combat situations involving any of these creatures.

NEW SPELLS:

Gradual Desponge

Lets the caster remove the spongification effect from a person gradually. After one hour of exposure to this spell, target is fully and permanently relieved of the effects of spongification. As a side bonus, the subject gains a permanent +1 to save against future attempts at spongification.

Duration: 5 minutes

Cost: 1 to cast; 1 to maintain.

Time to cast: 5 minutes

Prerequisite: Wisdom

Instant Desponge

Regular

Removes the effect of spongification from the target very, very quickly. Target does not, however, gain the +1 bonus to save against future spongification attempts.

Duration: 10 seconds

Cost: 4 to cast; no maintenance

Time to cast: 10 seconds

Prerequisite: Gradual Desponge

Mass Desponge

Area; Resisted by

IQ

Lets the caster attempt to desponge large numbers of people at one blow. Each sponge in the area affected is given one chance every 10 minutes to roll against their natural IQ to shake off the effects of spongification. Has the additional effect of engaging **all** beings in the area who fail a save vs. IQ — and the caster automatically — in some naturally-desponging activity: music, discussion, etc. Nonsponged beings shake off the effects in seconds; sponges must wait until desponged or until the spell ends, whichever is first. Expensive, complex, dangerous, and less certain of result, it is of use in limited situations, but can have dramatic effects when used appropriately.

Duration: 10 minutes

Cost: 1 per hex to cast; 1 per hex to maintain

Time to cast: 5 minutes

Regular

GURPS Time Travel/Alternate Earths

World-jumpers have something of a tendency to accidentally fall into the JU. Most often stay and join up with the Jihad. On rare occasions, Jihaddi have fought enemy actions on alternate worlds, although with the Earth-only bias in effect these battles have been brief at best, and often connected to personal agendas of individual Jihaddi (see *The Marraketh Connection* for an example).

In the Infinite Worlds campaign (in **Time Travel**),

the JU is a Quantum 3 alternate world, surveyed by Infinity but not garnering any serious attention; the Hidden War hasn't been made manifest in front of the I-Cops. If it *should*, though, Infinity will want to know whether or not Barney is a serious threat to Homeline. If they learn that VRDET has a method of crosstime travel that *doesn't* follow the accepted parachronic physics, then things may get very interesting.

GURPS Atlantis

The Atlantis frames presented in **GURPS Atlantis** don't exactly

match the Atlantis presented in JU2, but the information is helpful for those who wish to search for the ruins of the sunken Atlantis, and perhaps clues to the Ancient Enemy. The possibility of Atlanteans still living is remote, but a creative GM might have some different ideas...

GURPS Illuminati

The Jihad and its enemy fit nicely into a "warring Secret Masters" Illuminati game. Using the Illuminati as presented in the text or something more traditional is also an option. The Hidden War also makes for an interesting turn of events for a traditional game... imagine what the PCs would do if instead of finding the Bavarians, they found Barney hiding behind events?



GURPS Space

The galactic ban on travel to Earth effected thanks to the War isn't 100% perfect; between the Greys and the Salusians, there's still a fair amount of covert extraterrestrial activity going on.

Also, it's not unimaginable that the Jihad may attempt to make a long-distance strike against the Lyran homeworld. Such an attack would be more symbolic than effective tactics, but a space strike mission would suck up a lot of the Jihad's technical resources for a non-inconsiderable amount of time.

GURPS Illuminati University

If the leaders of the Jihad *aren't* Illumni of IOU...

On a halfway more serious note, IOU is the sort of setting that can exist in some out of the way corner of the JU, and is perfect for any PC requiring an Unusual Background to round out their character. The War may sometimes crash the campus, but more often than not, the two sides can manage to coexist peacefully — well, “peacefully” as defined by IOU, so the bloodfeuds are kept to a minimum.

GURPS Black Ops

Argus and the black ops make for a good “second-string” group, dedicated to keeping the mundanes safe from evil aliens. The Greys have more of an agenda than previously claimed, and there are other conspiracies running around the Jihad may not be aware of.

The average black op may be a little overpowered for a JU game, but in a ten round match with the Jihad's finest.. they'd probably call it a draw. Use Argus sparingly, if at all.

GURPS In Nomine

Now for something that's *really* challenging...

There are two ways to play this. If you favor **In Nomine** over the Jihad, then B'harne is a high-ranking Balseraph of Nybbas (Demon of the Lowest Common Denominator), backed up with some very high-powered Vapula gadgets, and the Jihaddi are Soldiers of War/Sword/Faith/Lightning, commanded by senior non-Wordbound Servitors of their respective Superiors.

That's one way. If you favor the Jihad setting over **In Nomine**, then B'harne might not necessarily be part of the conflict between Heaven and Hell, perhaps being a particularly powerful ethereal (After all, Barney is a dinosaur from our imagination) looking to move up in the world, and the Jihad may be a group set up by both Celestial realms to combat this upstart third threat.

And you know, a *lot* of the Jihad ubertech looks suspiciously like *Eli's* craftsmanship...

GURPS Technomancer

Technomancer is a good setting for a more “overt” Jihad. The main bases sit firmly in the normal-mana zones created by Trinity, and with Barney's demons running about, the Jihad would be a larger, more organized group of monster hunters. It's a pretty aggressive change from canon JU, though, and would be better for a one-shot “warped reality” game than for an extended canon campaign. Not to say that a JU/**Technomancer** crossover campaign isn't impossible, but it'd take some serious work.

GURPS Supers/International Super Teams

Setting the Jihad in the IST universe is just adding more grist to the mill. In a world of supers, the Jihad may be somewhat redundant. Or it could be the UN Special Covert Operations Group, fighting horrors even the IST supers would have trouble confronting, with their special blend of magic, powers and superscience.

GURPSY2K

Y2K is the book on post-apocalyptic gaming, and if the PCs should FUBAR in particularly impressive fashion, a game in a **Y2K** setting where the Jihad *lost* the war could be very entertaining. Further crossovers with **Time Travel** are possible here as well, as the players try to find a time machine that will take them back and correct mistakes.

CAMPAIGN SEEDS

Okay, so you want to run a story/realtime game, but don't have the time to really come up with a good, original storyline. So, in the interests of your sanity, we've come up with a few mini-adventure plots to help you out.

Return to the Pacifica Adventure!

VRDET's WorldWatch satellite network has picked up a series of odd disturbances out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, near where the Lyran island stronghold of Pacifica sank in 1996 (incidentally, where a fair percentage of the remaining Jihad Old Guard were either MIA or KIA). The PCs are sent out with the latest in Zeta Squad/VRDET R&D/WEDJEE underwater combat and exploration gear (Scuba mecha, anyone?), to find out What's Going On.

Is it Lyrans trying to salvage the citadel? Equipment-strapped spoungin looking for remnants of Lyrans biotech? Or is it something... else?

Classic Jihad: The Blair Barney Project, or Yeah, We Know It's A Ripoff

Unless you've been living in a cave for the last couple of years, you know the story: Three students making a documentary vanish in the Maryland woods, and a year later the footage is found. What they **didn't** tell you was that those unfortunates didn't find a witch or a ghost, they instead stumbled on a nest of enemy soldiers — and the less said about what happened next, the better. The PCs are a team of rookies from the Doberman Empire, commissioned by the Fleet Commander to find the mutant spoungin and wipe them out. But the FC didn't expect that a low-ranking Lyrans magus was riding herd on the creatures...

In Memory Yet Green

Cleaning up after a raid on a spoungin base, tantalizing clues are found, providing some idea of where the Blood Jihad vanished to in the aftermath of the X'hirjq invasion. Immediately the PCs are told by the Triumverate, in full official capacity no less, to follow the trail until they either run out of leads or find the Blood Jihad. Of course, this could be a trap, set up by the Liasons, but the only way to find out is to follow the road...

The Enemy of My Enemy

A group of TRES irregulars, cornered and outgunned by a group of wyrm-minions, are rescued by a shadowy figure, who then turns on the Jihaddi! After the fight, the PCs learn that their erstwhile "rescuer" is (or was, depending on how frisky the PCs got during the fight) a member of The Order of Asissi, a secret cabal of warrior/monks, devoted to cleansing the Earth of "inhuman creatures." Of course, since a good number of people who qualify as "inhuman" are Jihaddi, this naturally puts the Order on bad terms with the Jihad. Can the PCs (or some other group of PCs) manage to make peace with the Order to fight the common enemy? Or will the Jihad forever have to watch it's collective back against an ambush by rampaging monks?

CHARACTERS

Included here are a group of characters from the Jihad Universe, already in progress. These characters all have players, but they can show up as NPCs (or PCs if the specific players are interested) in any game.



WILLIAM J. KEITH

Admiral, TRES Corps

ST 10 IQ 17 Move: 6

DX 12 HT 14

Damage: Thrust: 1d-2 Swing: 1d

Advantages:

Ally Group (The Jihad) (90);
Jihad Rank +3: Squad CO, (30);
Alternate Identity (Howard Dunham, number-cruncher at low-profile tech firm in San Francisco)(5);
Alternate Identity (Joe Phillips, traveling salesman, home in Houston suburb)(5);
Contact: Senator Gramm, R-Texas (base 4, fairly often, usually reliable)(8);
Contact: Li Taifeng, practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine in Chinatown, doctor to the underworld (6);
Mathematical Ability(10);
Voice(10);
Composed(5);
Magery 3 (35);
Psionic Resistance 20, (40);
Ally (Kit: 100-pt. psionic entity, almost all the time) (15);

Disadvantages:

Enemy (Barney & Fiends) (-80);
Bad Sight(-10);
Honesty(-5);
Duty (to Jihad): (-15);
Secret (member of the Jihad, extra disadvantage since he's frequently in Mundania) (-10);

Quirks:

Hates making clothing decisions, thus frequently in uniform when not undercover;
Refuses all drugs and alcohol, rather unusual in the Jihad.

Skills:

Beam weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle)-14; Beam Weapons/TL9 (Mathattackicus)-15; Guns(9 mm pistol)-14; Karate-10; Staff-15; Leadership-17; Strategy-16; Tactics-16; Law(identity construction, background checks)-14; Acting-16; Area Knowledge(San Francisco)-16; Area Knowledge(Houston)-16; Diplomacy-16; Streetwise-15; Writing-17; Computer Operation/TL9 - 17; Electronics Operation/TL9 - 16; Computer Programming/TL9 - 15; Mathematics-18; Physics-17; Research-17; Teaching-16; Singing-16; Swimming-11; Chess-17; Go-16; Driving-10; Ritual Magic(known Lyran constructs)-14; Symbol Drawing(Analytic School)-15; Thaumatology-15; Psionics-14; Magic Jet-12; Spell Throwing-12.

Spells:

Body Control: Touch-18; *Communication & Empathy:* Message-18, Communication-17; *Air:* Purify Air-18, Create Air-18; *Earth:* Seek Earth-18, Shape Earth-18; *Fire:* Ignite Fire-18, Shape Fire-18, Create Fire-18, Fireball-18, Heat-18, Cold-18; *Water:* Seek Water-18, Purify Water-18, Create Water-18, Shape Water-18, Ice Sphere-18, Freeze-18; *Enchantment:* Enchant-17, Suspend Enchantment-18, Remove Enchantment-18, Spell Stone-18, Staff-18, Powerstone-18, Scroll-18; *Healing:* Lend Strength-18, Recover Strength-18; *Illusion:* Simple Illusion-18, Complex Illusion-18, Perfect Illusion-18, Know Illusion-18; *Knowledge:* Detect Magic-18, Seek Magic-18, Identify Spell-18, Analyze Magic-18, Seeker-18, Measurement-18, Memorize-18, Recall-18, Wizard Eye-18, Invisible Wizard Eye-18; *Light & Darkness:* Light-18, Continual Light-18, Darkness-18, Blur-18, Colors-18, Glow-18, Sunlight-18, Flash-18, Shape Light-18, Light Jet-18, Sunbolt-18, Invisibility-18, See Invisible-18; *Meta:*

Remove Curse-18, Delay-18, Ward-18, Great Ward-18, Reflect-18, Hang Spell-17, Conceal Magic-18, Suspend Spell-18, Suspend Magic-18, Counterspell-18, Dispel Magic-18, Spellguard-17, Drain Mana-17, Restore Mana-17, Suspend Mana-17, Displace Spell-18, Scryguard-18, Magic Resistance-18, Spell Shield-18, Spell Wall-18; *Mind Control:* Keen Eyes-18, Keen Ears-18, Keen Nose-18, Alertness-17, Rear Vision-18, Wisdom-18, Gradual Desponge-17, Instant Desponge-17, Area Desponge-17; *Movement:* Apportation-18, Haste-18, Glue-18; *Protection & Warning:* Weather Dome-18, Force Dome-18, Utter Dome-18, Utter Wall-18, Deflect Missile-18, Catch Missile-18, Return Missile-18, Block-18, Shield-18, Missile Shield-18; *Sound:* Sound-18, Thunderclap-18, Voices-18, Great Voice-18, Silence-18, Far-Hearing-18

Total Points: 500

Will started out in the science labs, but upon becoming informed of the existence of magic in the universe, was driven to learn all he could about this new component to his world. He turned out to have quite the knack for it, and made it his MOS. In particular, he's trying to learn all he can about the Lyran magical tradition and develop defenses against it, leaving the troops open to do their job without fearing supernatural attack. If he survives the war, he hopes to oversee the gradual introduction of magic into the Mundane world, although he's well aware that the major powers in the Jihad probably have strong objections to this. Failing his first goal, the establishment of a strong tradition to preserve the information uncorrupted until such time as it may be released will do.

The Admiral worked his way up from Ensign rank in TRES. His first major command came pretty much by necessity in Operation: HomeFront, and he has since made more stable command rank as CO of Chi Squadron.

(Played by Will Keith)



Malaclypse the Seeker

OLD MAN OF THE JIHAD (VRDET, RET.)

ST 12 IQ 20 Move: 6

DX 14 HT 13

Damage: Thrust: 1d-1 Swing: 1d+2

Advantages:

Ally Group (The Jihad) [70]
Gadgeteer (Cinematic) [50]
Illuminated [60]
Impertubable [10]
Military Rank 7 (Director Emeritus, VRDET) [35]
Unaging [15]

Disadvantages:

Absent-Mindedness [-15]
Code of Honour [-10]
Curious (Extremely) [-10]
Duty (to the Illuminati) [-10]
Duty (to the Jihad) [-35]
Enemy (B'harne and Fiends) [-60]
Reclusive [-10]
Secret+4 (member of the Illuminati) [-30]
Sense of Duty+3 [-15]
Vow: Great (To build a finer world) [-15]
Weirdness Magnet [-15]

Skills

Area Knowledge(VRDET Blanca Mountain)-21; Artificial Intelligence/TL13-20; Armoury/TL8-20; Astronomy-18; Beam Weapons/TL9(Laser)-17; Beam Weapons/TL8(X-Rifle)-17; Computer Hacking/TL8-19; Computer Operation-20; Conspiracy Theory-20; Disarming-21; Driving(Automobile)-17; Driving(Motorcycle)-17; Driving(Tracked)-17; Electronics/TL13-20; Electronics Operation-19; Engineer/TL13-20; Fast-Talk-19; First Aid-20; Games(Poker)-19; Games(Illuminati: New World Order)-19; Games(Baseball)-19; Guns/TL7(Pistol)-17; Guns/TL7(Rifle)-17; History-17; History(Esoteric)-19; Hyperspace Physics/TL12-24; Intimidation-19; Judo-14; Language(English)-20; Language(Japanese)-19; Language(Navaho)-19; Leadership-18; Literature-17; Mathematics-20; Mechanic-20; Mind Block-18; NBC Warfare/TL7-19; Nuclear Physics-22; Occultism-20; Paleontology-18; Philosophy-18; Physics/TL16-24; Piloting (Propeller and Turboprop)-17; Piloting (Subsonic Jet)-17; Piloting (Supersonic Jet)-17; Piloting (Spacecraft)-17; Probability Physics/TL16-20; Politics-18; Research-24; Savoir-Faire-20; Savoir-Faire(Military)-19; Science!-16; Staff(Cosmic Rod)-16; Stealth-16; Survival(rural Colorado)-19; Survival(Urban)-19; Temporal Physics/TL16-21; Weird Science-24; Xenobiology(HellWyrm)-20; Xenobiology(Lyran)-19.

Quirks

Afficionado of classic Science Fiction (Clarke, Heinlein, etc.)

Collects unusual & anachronistic artifacts
Doesn't like to get attached
Leaves his pipe unlit
No patience with stupidity
Wears eyeglasses even though he doesn't need them
Won't talk about his past

Total Points: 589

Of all the Jihaddi with mysterious origins, none is more mysterious than Malaclypse the Seeker, founder of the Evil Geniuses and VRDET.

Mal was born under a different name somewhere in the western United States between fifty and seventy years ago (even this much he refuses to disclose), where he had a mostly-normal childhood. At some point in the late 1960's, Mal was pulled into the world of the Illuminati. Whether this was by accident or choice, nobody knows, and Mal isn't telling. Regardless, Mal became one of the premiere Fortean investigators of the time; while he never received any of the press attention other investigators (like Erich von Dankien) got, Mal's field research advanced the Illuminati cause by leaps and bounds. He was placed on the fast track for Secret Master status, and thus spent the years tracking down weird things and securing them for further study or sequestering in Warehouse 23.

In 1992, while on a routine phenomenon investigation, Mal stumbled upon a Jihad/Hellwyrn combat zone in the forests of Maine. Faced with the knowledge that a) some unknown enemy was apparently invading the Earth, and b) there was already a group combating that enemy, Mal called in his report and waited for further instructions.

Those instructions were: "Investigate, infiltrate and keep them out of serious trouble."

In 1995, Mal had acquired enough data on the Jihad that he felt safe to join. He used his personal resources to set up a base of operations, then contacted the Praetor at the time, asking for admittance as a formal research lab. Thus the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, Inc. were born. They mostly kept a low profile, inventing a few widgets while giving Mal a better platform from which to observe the inner working of the Jihad. His quiet demeanor and rational way of thinking made him something of a "mentor" figure to many lower-ranking Jihaddi. Deserved or not, Mal quickly became a leader of the group, all the while reporting on it to the Illuminati.

The X'hirq Invasion of 1996 effectively destroyed the Geniuses: The main operations center was obliterated, and most of the group was killed in action. Malaclypse himself survived mainly by a stroke of exceptional luck. When the Blood Jihad collapsed in 1997, Mal combined his resources with that burned-out org and created the Verthandic Rangers.

Mal headed up the Research division of the Rangers until his recent retirement. Since then, he has acted as a senior advisor to the Jihad leadership, as well as continuing his own research into paranormal phenomenon and the nature of reality. While not strictly a combat officer, Mal has no hesitation to fight if the goal of the Jihad (or his Illuminati patrons) is threatened.

Mal appears to be a stocky, shorter-than-average (5'9") man in his late 20s/early 30s, with grey eyes hidden behind John Lennon-style glasses (zero prescription lenses) and medium brown hair worn in a ponytail and a close-trimmed beard. He habitually wears blue jeans, Hawaiian shirts and a neon green labcoat when working in the labs. For combat operations, the labcoat is replaced by a black duster, shoulder holster and a large courier bag full of handy gadgets.

(Played by Sean Breen)

Minerva

VRDET Sysop & Ghost in the Machine

ST 9 IQ 23 Move 5

DX 11 HT 11

Damage: Thrust: 1d-2 Swing: 1d-1

Advantages:

Alcohol Tolerance [10]
Appearance - Beautiful [15]
Absolute Direction (uses GPS, -20%) [4]
Absolute Timing [5]
Cool [1]
Disease Resistant [5]
Eidetic Memory - Level 1 (No skill bonus{-70%}) [9]
Extra Life+1 (Digital backup{-50%}) [13]
Lightning Calculator [5]
Longevity [5]
Mathematical Ability [10]
Unaging [10]
Visualization [10]
Voice [10]

Disadvantages:

Absent-Mindedness [-15]
Curious [-5]
Honesty [-10]
Overconfidence [-10]
Proud [-1]
Reprogrammable Duty [-25]
Sense of Duty: Mal-3 [-5]
Shyness (mild) [-5]

Skills:

Accounting-25; Acting-21; Administration-23; Area Knowledge (Cyberspace)-23; Area Knowledge(Denver)-24; Artificial Intelligence/TL11-20; Aviation/TL8-21; Computer Hacking/TL7-23; Computer Hacking/TL8-22; Computer Operation/TL8-26; Computer Programming/TL8-25; Driving/TL7-16; Electronics/TL11-22; Engineer/TL11-22; Fast-Talk-21; First Aid-22; Guns/TL8-14; Language(Chinese)-23; Language(English)-23; Language(Japanese)-23; Language(Navajo)-22; Mathematics/TL16-23; Physics/TL12-21; Poetry-23; Research-23; Sleight of Hand-11; Singing-12; Survival (Urban)-22; Teaching-21; Temporal Physics/TL16-20; Video Production/TL8-23.

Quirks:

Easily distracted by new anime DVDs.
Wears eyeglasses even though she doesn't need them.
Cautious and deliberate.
Would like to have children someday.
Childlike and naive.
Very sentimental.

Total Points: 328

Minerva is one of several sentient computer systems currently allied to the Jihad. The brainchild of Professor Malaclypse, Min was originally a computerized helpmeet, and helped run the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, Inc. during Malaclypse's early years in the Jihad. When the original Evil



Geniuses complex was bombed out during the X'hrijq Invasion, Min rode with Malaclypse through the fight in a spare lapframe, up to their reckless and mostly-fatal engagement with the Lizard's invasion fleet. The original Minerva died in low orbit over California.

After the invasion, Malaclypse used backup copies of Minerva's personality-generating code and a few scattered memory backups to rebuild his friend. However, Minerva 2.0's personality was markedly different from her 1.0 persona. Instead of creating a fully adult personality, the generator created one more closely resembling a teenager. This "new" Minerva immediately formed a bond with Malaclypse, proclaiming him her father, and Mal responded in kind. The two remain close, and any injury or insult to either one often results in retribution from the other.

Minerva primarily resides in a Complexity 9 TL 13 megaframe in the basement of VRDET's Blanca Mountain complex, with the official duty as Chief Systems Control Officer.

Recently, Mal and Min have quietly undertaken a project to give Minerva a "proper" humanoid body. Min's new body - when completed - is a woman in her early 20s, around 5'10", with a fairly slender build that makes her look a little taller than she actually is, pale skin, light blue eyes and dark brown hair worn shoulder length. Her otaku tendencies have influenced the design of the bioshell's DNA to the point where the face has a strong resemblance to a character from Final Fantasy - not the heavily exaggerated features of a "traditional" anime character, but the smoother, more realistic renderings done in the later FF games.

So far, both Min and Mal have been keeping their "Project Galatea" under wraps for the time being, as they have some doubt as to how well the rest of VRDET, much less the entire Jihad, will react...

(Note: Minerva's stats are for her completed bioshell.)

(Played by Sean Breen)

PUPPETEER

The Trenchcoat-Wearing Super-Wizard

ST 13 IQ 17 Move 7

DX 14 HT 14

Damage: Thrust: 1d, Swing: 2d-1

Advantages:

Administrative Rank+5 (Arch-Chancellor of JPV) [25]
 Ally Group (The Jihad) [90]
 Ambidexterity [10]
 Charisma [5]
 Combat Reflexes [15]
 Magery+3 [35]
 Military Rank+4 (Lt. Commander, TRES) [20]
 Musical Ability (Saxophone) [1]
 Psionic Resistance [2]
 Strong Will [4]
 Unusual Background: Magic (Family) [10]

Disadvantages:

Absent-Mindedness [-15]
 Arachnophobia (Severe) [-10]
 Code of Honor [-5]
 Duty (the Jihad) [-15]
 Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80]
 Impulsiveness [-10]
 Obnoxious Drunk [-1]
 Secret (Member of the Jihad) [-20]
 Stubbornness [-5]

Quirks:

Is a bit of a dirty mind.
 Plays magician tricks (card tricks, etc.).
 Trademark (Coat of Many Pockets).
 Fan of vintage clothing, music, etc.

Skills:

Administration-15; Area Knowledge (JPV HQ)-20; Area Knowledge (Tri-State - PA, WV, OH)-17; Battlesuit-15; Beam Weapons (X-Rifle)-15; Breath Control-14; Broadsword-9; Carousing-14; Computer Operation-13; Crossbow-15; Driving (Automobile)-15; Driving (Motorcycle)-17; Driving (Tracked Vehicle)-13; Electronics Operation (Any)-12; Exoskeleton-14; First Aid-17; Fishing-13; Guns (Pistol)-17; Hiking-15; History-15; History (Magic)-18; Illusion Art-19; Leadership-15; Mechanic (Motorcycle)-19; Motorcycle-17; Musical Instrument-15; Occultism-20; Orienteering-15; Performance-15; Piloting (Mecha)-12; Research-19; Ritual Magic-13; Spell Throwing-19; Sports (Baseball)-12; Staff-17; Stealth-14; Survival (General)-15; Teaching-17; Writing-16.

Spells:

Alter Voice-18; Amulet-18; Analyze Magic-18; Apporation-18; Aura-18; Block-18; Blur-18; Bravery-18; Catch Missile-18; Catch Spell-17; Colors-18; Complex Illusion-20; Conceal Magic-18; Continual Light-18; Control Illusion-20; Cook-18; Copy-18; Cornucopia-18; Counterspell-18; Create Fire-18; Create Food-18; Create Object-18; Dark Vision-18; Darkness-18; Deflect Missile-18; Delay-18; Detect Magic-18; Dispel Illusion-20; Divert Teleport-17; Duplicate-17; Enchant-17; Enlarge Object-17; Extend Object-17; Extinguish Fire-18; Find Weakness-18; Fireball-18; Flash-18; Hideaway-18; Identify Spell-18; Ignite Fire-18; Illusion Dis-

guise-19; Illusion Shell-19; Imitate Voice-18; Infravision-18; Keen Eyes-18; Know Illusion-20; Know True Shape-18; Lend Health-19; Lend Strength-19; Light-19; Lighten-19; Link-18; Mage Light-18; Mage Sight-18; Magic Resistance-18; Maintain Spell-17; Minor Healing-18; Night Vision-18; Perfect Illusion-20; Power-18; Recover Strength-18; Remove Enchantment-18; Reshape-18; Restore-18; Return Missile-18; Scroll-18; Scryguard-18; See Invisible-18; Seek Food-18; Sense Emotion-18; Sense Foes-18; Sense Life-18; Shape Fire-18; Shield-18; Simple Illusion-21; Sound-18; Spell Shield-18; Staff-18; Suspend Enchantment-18; Talisman-18; Teleport-17; Test Food-18; Throw Spell-17; Trace Teleport-18; Transform Object-17; Voices-18; Weaken-18.

Total Points: 528.5

Pupp joined the Jihad initially by becoming a member of TRES Corps. He rapidly worked his way up the ranks, and is now a Lieutenant Commander in TRES Corps.

Recently, also, he created the Jihad Praxeum Veneficus. He is the Arch Chancellor of the JPV, and has a rank of 1st Parallelogram.

Pupp is a large man, appearing to be roughly in his early 20's. Built like an American Football linebacker, he looks like someone not worth messing with. However, he is usually smiling, or at least wearing a smirk, always radiating good cheer.

He prefers to, and usually does, wear vintage clothing. His ensemble of choice is: any one of his many bowling shirts, a pair of loose-fitting slacks, and his TRES-issue combat boots. He doesn't go anywhere without a black well-worn trenchcoat. The coat has been magically enhanced by Pupp to be able to store (and summon) most anything reasonably sized that he likes.

Always one to keep things light, even in a bad situation, Pupp is well-known as a smart-ass and general dirty-mind by most Jihaddi. It takes quite a deal to get him worked up, and even more to make him lose his temper. However, when forced to act, he tends to over-react or get himself up to his neck.

Pupp is always willing to help a friend, usually going out of his way to do so. Also, he will lean towards a devil-may-care attitude if someone he knows and likes is in trouble. It takes heavy convincing, and sometimes force to make him see reason.

On long campaigns, tense battles, or just any time to goof around, he carries around various magic tricks, cards, etc. to amuse whoever he's with. He'll pull them out randomly, or if he's bored, or if someone looks bored, etc.. He also plays with various small spells (cantrips) he always has ready just to amuse himself. (e.g. Hat out of rabbit, etc.)

Pupp's chief weapons are his magical abilities. He is primarily an illusionist, and as such, can generate convincing images, smells, and sounds of most anything he's ever been in contact with or has a concrete idea of. This is limited by range, his stamina, and the intelligence of the target. For example, he can easily convince a sponge that a horde of Bunnies[tm] is approaching, but would have a hard time convincing the Wyrms of the same.

His second primary magical weapon is the ability to conjure. He can produce small non-living objects of his desire easily, and large ones with great effort. The stipulation is that they are non-living, and have to be able to exist in this plane.

Pupp spends most of his time commuting between the JPV headquarters in Pennsylvania and TRES Corps main base in Colorado.

(Played by Joe Schnieder)

Arianna Mahtasha Nexus 3 Kline

VRDET BOSS-LADY IN CHARGE AND PART- TIME CAT.

ST 11 IQ 13 Move 7

DX 15 HT 13

Damage: Thrust: 1d-1 Swing: 1d+1

Advantages:

Absolute Timing [5]
Acute Hearing [2]
Acute Taste & Smell [2]
Acute Vision [2]
Administrative Rank+5 (Director of VRDET) [25]
Alertness [5]
Ally Group (The Jihad) (frequency: 15 or less (*3), size: large group (+30)) [90]
Charisma+2 [10]
Combat Reflexes [15]
Common Sense [10]
Hard to Kill [5]
High Pain Threshold [10]
Language Talent+3 [6]
Longevity [5]
Night Vision [10]
Perfect Balance [15]
Peripheral Vision [15]
Toughness [10]
Unfazeable [15]

Super Advantages:

Illusion [5]
Morph (Cat) (+9), can only change between human and cat forms (-40%) [38]
Telepathy (mild), costs Fatigue (-5%), reduced range (-10%) [4]
Teleportation (transdimensional) (+10), instantaneous (+20%), no signature (+20%), location memorization (+40%)

Disadvantages:

Claustrophobia [-15]
Compulsive Carousing [-5]
Curious [-5]
Cynophobia (Fear of dogs) [-5]
Enemy (Barney & Friends), frequency: 12 or less (x2), size: formidable group (-40) [-80]
Paranoia [-10]
Semi-Literacy (-2) [-5]
Sleepwalker (sleep levitation) [-5]
Spoiled [-5]
Stubbornness [-5]
Tourist (lacks common and essential cultural knowledge) [-5]
Uneducated [-5]

Quirks:

Broadminded.
Delusion: Thinks pickles are jellybeans.
Fond of cats.
Loves to listen to music.
Loves to travel.
Nosy.

Perpetual teenager.

Wants to learn to read.

Skills:

Acrobatics-17; Acting-17; Administration-13; Astronomy-12; Beam Weapons (X-Rifle)-16; Beverage-Making-13; Brawling-14; Camouflage-15; Carousing-17; Climbing-13; Cloak-13; Computer Hacking-11; Computer Operation-13; Cooking-13; Criminology-12; Cryptanalysis-11; Dancing-13; Demolition-15; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-11; Disguise-17; Driving (Any)-13; Escape-13; Explosive Ordinance Disposal-13; Fast-Draw (Pistol)-16; Fast-Talk-15; First Aid-14; Free Fall-13; Gesture-15; Gunner (Any)-15; Guns (Sniper Rifle)-17; Holdout-13; Illusion-12; Intelligence Analysis-11; Interrogation-15; Karate-13; Knife Throwing-14; Language (English)-15, Language (Native)-17; Leadership-13; Linguistics-13; Lip Reading-14; Lockpicking-14; Morph-20; Navigation-11; No-Landing Extraction-12; Parachronic Electronics-11; Parachronic Operation-13; Parachronic Physics-10; Parachuting-14; Philosophy-11; Photography-12; Physics-10; Pickpocket-14; Poisons-14; Politics-12; Psychology-15; Research-14; Savoir-Faire-9; Scrounging-14; Sex Appeal-13; Shadowing-15; Sign Language-13; Sleight of Hand-12; Stealth-15; Strategy-11; Streetwise-15; Survival (Any)-14; Swimming-14; Tactics-11; Telereceive-13; Telesend-13; Tracking-13; Traps-13.

Total Points: 598

Nexus was born at the dimensional coordinates of 00-00-07, to an Eternian (a race of cosmic immortals) mother and a Human father. Unlike in the Human world, where children have a nearly incalculable chance of inheriting this or that from one parent or descendant etc. Children who have one Eternian parent and an "other" parent have a 50/50 chance of being 100% "whatever" or 100% Eternian. Nex is 100% Eternian. She grew up a ward of the Empire of Chi-Lin and therefor served all her capable childhood and the first part of her adult life in service to their army. She remained voluntarily for a few years after reaching the age of independence. And wandered around for about a year before finding her way into the Jihad Universe.

Ari has had no formal education, and knows very little about earth and its customs, history, and cultures. Her knowledge of "normal" human society is limited to what she's picked up from Katze and those she's worked with since being here. Her speech patterns are unusual, at best, however she's come along quite a bit since her arrival. She is easily enough understood if you're paying attention, familiar with her and so long as she isn't excited. She's not the most mature person in the world, a bit finicky, prissy and spoiled at times, just like a cat. She also likes to go out at night and often won't bother to come home until dawn.

Ari is loyal and very protective of friends and possessions. She's also adventurous and a bit reckless. It isn't something she can help. She battles constantly between human and feline instinct. She has a tendency to get impatient and bulldoze her way through things, especially when it comes to minor details holding the show up. She might have little regard for her own safety but she would never intentionally risk another's safety.

(Played by Ari)

DEIDRE GREIST

...the SECOND GENERATION JIHADDI

ST 9 IQ 17 Move 5

DX 11 HT 10

Damage: Thrust: 1d-2 Swing: 1d-1

Advantages:

Ally Group (the Jihad)[70]
Appearance: Attractive [5]
Eidetic Memory (+2) [60]
Gadgeteer (Cinematic) [50]
Limb (Arm, DX 16, ST 14, Unnatural: Obvious) [6]
Manual Dexterity (+4, right arm only) [6]
Neuro-Interface Jack [10]
Weapon Mount [5]

Disadvantages:

Alcohol Intolerance [-1]
Compulsive Behavior (Speeding) [-5]
Curious [-10]
Easy to Read [-10]
Edgy [-5]
Enemy (Barney & Friends) [-60]
Impulsiveness [-10]
Light Sleeper [-5]
Ophiophobia (fear of reptiles) [-10]
Weak Will(-3) [-24]
Weirdness Magnet [-15]
Workaholic [-5]
Youth(-3) [-6]

Quirks:

Feels naked when unarmed.
Imaginative.
Overly excitable when it comes to new technology.
Relies too much on her artificial arm.

Skills:

Armoury(Battlesuits)-19; Armoury(Firearms)-23;
Armoury(Energy Weapons)-21; Battlesuit-20; Beam Weapons(X-Weapons)-13; Blacksmith-16; Chemistry-17; Computer Hacking/TL8-18; Computer Operation-19; Computer Programming-21; Cooking-18; Cryptanalysis/TL8-18; Cryptography/TL8-17; Cryptology/TL8-17; Demolition-25; Driving(cars & trucks)-13; Electronics-18; Electronics(Bionics)-17; Engineer(Electrical)-20; Engineer(Mechanical)-26; Explosive Ordinance Disposal/TL8-23; First Aid-19; Forgery-17; Games(First-person shooters)-19; Gunner-12; Guns(Light automatics)-15; Guns(Pistols)-15; Guns(Pistols, right arm only)-19; Guns(Rifles)-14; History-17; Intelligence Analysis-17; Karate-11; Language(English)-21; Language(German)-19; Language(Japanese)-17; Language(Spanish)-18; Lockpicking-22; Mathematics-21; Mechanic-24; Metallurgy-17; Motorcycle-14; Nuclear Physics-18; Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Warfare-17; Photography-17; Physics-21; Research-20; Science-19; SIGINT Collection/TL8-18; Speed Reading-18; Tactics-19; Traffic Analysis-16; Weird Science-19.

Total Points: 228

Dee is perhaps unique in the Jihad, being a second generation Jihaddi, albeit adopted. She was always incredibly bright and fascinated by technology, and she remembered, literally, everything. Through homeschooling her education was well up to college level in some more technical areas of study by the age of 10. Things changed though. Caught up in a small battle involving the newly formed Blood Jihad, Dee's parents and her right arm became collateral damage. She was picked up in a sweep for survivors.

Dee recovered from her coma remembering what had happened to her parents. The Blood Jihad watched over her as she recovered and she started tentatively forming bonds with a couple from the Skunk Works division. They genuinely wanted to help her, and they were able to talk shop, one of the things that she knew best. Eventually she asked if she could stay here, with them, and it was allowed. As she opened up more and more Dee started learning new, wonderful things about the Jihad technology. People who at first dismissed her as a kid started paying attention when she had intelligent things to say about their designs. As things got better, she became genuinely happy for the first time since the attack.

That, unfortunately, didn't last. The reality shifts of Operation WorldWalk had a lot of consequences, and one of those was Dee's adopted mother ceasing to exist during the tumult. Her adopted father closed himself off after that, and more and more Dee was being raised by the whole Skunk Works, still outwardly as cheerful as ever but hurting. Then the debacle of Operation Phoenix happened, through which Dee escaped only through luck; many of her friends in the Skunk Works didn't, which only added to her psychological injuries. The final straw came when her adopted father joined the Lone Warrior's ill-fated mission on the Andromeda. Dee's mind, already under a great deal of stress, broke.

When the Evil Geniuses and the Blood Jihad formed the Verthandic Rangers, Dee was a mess; barely feeding herself and under psychiatric supervision. With the help of some of her surviving friends, and a few new ones, she improved again. She'd later say that Minerva, the base AI, was one of her best friends... and that she'd developed a crush on Malcalypse. She slowly got back into things and attacked her work with an increasing level of devotion.

At the age of 15, Dee stopped growing and it was finally okayed to fit her with an artificial arm. Due to the extent of damage, it actually had to anchor into a variety of other bones but boasts very precise movement, better strength than her natural arm, and a powerful computer tied into her nervous system.

The black composite arm is Dee's most obvious feature. The 5'2 girl is slender, some would say scrawny, though her face would bring the word "cute" to mind. Her coppery brown hair is cut to a serviceable shoulder length, with her bangs occasionally drifting over her piercing green eyes. Her normal mode of attire is baggy camouflage cargo pants or jeans over black combat boots, and a black synthetic motorcycle jacket a size too big over a t-shirt a size too small. Red skull and crossbones dot her earlobes.

(Played by Dan DeRosia)

RENS HOUBEN & shadur τ'kharn

Rens

ST 11 IQ 13 Move 5

DX 13 HT 10

Damage: Thrust: 1d-1 Swing: 1d+1

Advantages: 3D Spatial Sense [10], Acceleration Tolerance [10], Acute Hearing [2], Acute Vision [2], Ally Group (The Jihad) [90], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Dark Vision [25], Improved G-Tolerance [5], Military Rank+3 (Captain, TRES) [15], Shadow Form [50], Sharpshooter (Pistol and Rifle) [45].

Disadvantages: Bad Temper [-10], Callous [-6], Code of Honor [-5], Duty (to the Schwarzwald) [-27], Enemy (Admiral Bond, TRES Intel) [-10], Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80], Frightens Animals [-5], Gluttony (eats like a dragon even in human form) [-5], Karmic Ties (Schwarzwald) [0], Odious Personal Habit (reptilian body language) [-5], Sense of Duty (the Jihad) [-5], Split Personality (Shadur) [-10], Trickster [-15], Weakness (high environmental temperature) [-15].

Quirks: Can't drive a car to save his life; Proud.

Skills:

Acting-13; Area Knowledge(Schwarzwald)-20; Aviation(TL7)-12; Aviation(TL8/9)-15; Chess-13; Combat Art (Dual Pistol)-14; Combat Art (X-Rifle)-13; Computer Hacking(TL7)-14; Computer Operation-15; Computer Programming(TL8)-14; Crypanalysis(TL8)-12; Cryptography(TL8)-11; Dancing-13; Disguise-12; Dual-Weapon Attack (Pistols)-4; Electronics(TL8)-13; Engineer(TL8)-13; Fast-Draw (Pistol)-14; First Aid-13; Intelligence Analysis-11; Interrogation-12; Language(Dutch)-13; Language(English)-15; Language(German)-12; Mathematics-11; Mechanic(TL8/9)-12; Motorcycle-13; Musical Instrument (Keyboard)-14; Musical Notation-13; No-Landing Extraction-13; Physics(TL8)-12; Pickpocket-11; Research-13; Sign Language (TRES Battle Sign Code)-12; Skating-11; Sleight of Hand-11; Stealth-14; Weird Science-12.

Total Points: 265.5

Shadur

ST 21 IQ 11 Move 6

DX 13 HT 14

Damage: Thrust: 2d Swing: 4d-1

Advantages: Alertness+4 [20], Ally Group (The Jihad) [90], Breathe Fire [20], Cast Iron Stomach [15], Claws [15], Combat Reflexes [15], Damage Resistance+4 [12], Damage Resistance (versus Fire/Heat) [2], Dark Vision [25], Discriminatory Smell [15], Enhanced Move (Running) [10], Extra Encumbrance [5], Extra Hit Points+6 [30], Extra Legs (Four total) [5], Extra Reach (Forelimbs) [20], Fearlessness+2 [4], Flexibility [15], Flight (Winged) [24], Full Coordination+2 [100], Hard to Kill+2 [10], High Pain Threshold [10], Immunity to Disease [10], Military Rank+3 (Captain, TRES) [15], Penetrating Call [5], Peripheral Vision [15], Scales (Heavy) [28], Striker: Tail [15], Teeth (Sharp) [5], Telescopic Vision+2 [12], Temperature Tolerance+5 (Cold only) [5], Unaging [15].

Disadvantages: Appearance: Monstrous [-25], Bloodlust [-10], Duty (to Schwarzwald) [-27], Dying Race (Last of kind) [-10], Enemy (Admiral Bond, TRES Intel) [-5], Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80], Frightens Animals [-10], Gluttony [-5], Greed [-15], Horizontal [-10], In-



convenient Size (Large) [-20], Intolerance [-10], Jealousy [-10], Odious Racial Habit (Eats Sentients) [-15], Poor Grip [-5], Pyromania [-5], Stubbornness [-5], Truthfulness [-5], Weakness (High environmental temperature), [-20].

Quirks: Doesn't trust humans; Likes reptile men.

Skills:

Area Knowledge (Schwarzwald)-20; Combat Art (Draconic Ground/Air)-14; Intimidation-16; Language (English)-11; Riding (Being Ridden)-13.

Total Points: 584

Rens and Shadur are separate entities, sharing the same body. This fact used to have a negative effect on Rens's study results, especially in classes that bored him. (It's hard to concentrate on a dull droning voice nattering on about something dumb, but it's even worse when someone else is explicitly stating his opinions on the teacher, the subject and several hundred other facts that Shadur considers more interesting). Because they constantly share each other's thoughts, memories and experiences, both of them are gradually changing, becoming more like the other, starting to literally think as one.

Shadur joined with Rens during the latter's 15th year, when he'd injured himself critically falling from a tree. They were still exploring the effects of the joining when, in the spring of 1996, a group of wrym-minions entered the Schwarzwald in order to build a clandestine TV station there to spread the Hellwrym's influence to Europe. In doing so, they trespassed on what Shadur claimed as his territory and pissed him off by attacking him when he asked them what the hell they were doing there. (Good advice: Never tick off a dragon in his own territory. They died quickly but messily.)

Shadur wanted to kill all of them outright, but Rens convinced him to leave one survivor to take a message back. The Hellwrym subsequently kidnapped Rens's parents and brother and sister, trying to blackmail him into allowing the TV station to be built and protecting it from the Jihad.

Realising that submitting would only cause this "Barney" to continue the blackmail as long as whatever it was had a use for him, Rens/Shadur flew across the Atlantic to locate this "Jihad" which this "Barney" seemed to worry about, to find out if they could help him.

After making contact, he learned just what kind of danger the Hellwrym presented to all sentient life and decided to join the Jihad. With the help of TRES Corps, he was able to rescue his parents and his brother and sister, as well as wiping the construction site in the Schwarzwald off the face of the Earth. Since then Shadur continues to work with TRES, currently as executive officer of Zeta Squad R&D.

Grand Admiral DarkSide

C-in-C, TRES Corps

ST 16 IQ 11 Move 7

DX 15 HT 15

Damage: Thrust: 2d-1 Swing: 3d+2

Advantages:

Acute Taste and Smell+5 [10]
 Acute Hearing+5 [10]
 Ally Group (The Jihad) [100]
 Claws (Talons) (Armor Piercing {50%}) [0]
 Combat Reflexes [15]
 Divine Favor (Feral Jackson (Infrequent, appears on a roll of 6 or less; -50%)) [13]
 Immunity to Disease [10]
 Military Rank+8 (Grand Admiral, C-in-C TRES Corps) [40]
 Night Vision [10]
 Psychokinesis+15 [75]
 Regeneration (Regular) [25]
 Shapeshifter (Maenad) (Double ST, DX+2, HT+2, PD 1, DR 2 [90], confers the Claws (Talons) advantage and the Stress Atavism disadvantage, both at no cost/gain.)
 Teleportation+6 [30]
 Unaging [15]

Disadvantages:

Bloodlust (Lyran) [-10]
 Duty (The Jihad) [-15]
 Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-90]
 Guilt Complex [-5]
 Magic Susceptibility+5 [-15]
 Nocturnal [-10]
 Pacifism: Cannot Harm Innocents [-10]
 Phobia: Enclosed spaces (mild) [-15]
 Post-Combat Shakes [-5]
 Sense of Duty (All humanity) [-15]
 Split personality (Nemesis) [-10]
 Stress Atavism / Severe/Uncommon [0]
 Susceptibility to Poison [-5]
 Unnatural Feature (Red, glowing eyes) [-5]
 Unstable Morphism (Warp mutation) [-15]

Skills:

Pyrokinesis-19; Telekinesis-11; Autoteleport-14;
 Exoteleport-12; Artist-16; Language: French-13; Language: German-12; Language: Lyran-9; Guns/TL7 (Rifle)-18; Guns/TL7 (Pistol)-17; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle)-17; Two-Handed Sword-19; Brawling-18; Fanning-16; Battlesuit/TL8-15; Electronics Operation/TL8-15; Armoury/TL7 (Rifles and Handguns)-16; Driving (Automobile)-17; Driving (Tracked Vehicles)-15; First Aid-15; Piloting (Propeller-Driven Fighter-17; Piloting (Jet Fighter-16; Blacksmith-14; Distilling-13; Cooperage-12; Masonry-14; Tactics-12; Strategy-12.

Quirks:

Scottish brogue comes and goes when agitated.
 Interacts with peers strictly according to protocol when formally "on-duty".
 Soul-bound to a sentient Lyran-made sword.
 Nemesis smokes; Felton doesn't.
 Empathically linked to his wife, Keili.

Total Points: 612

Grand Admiral Kirk Felton, Commander-in-Chief of TRES Corps has borne many names throughout his lifetime; Ralph Lamb, Victor Lyon, Greg Lucas, Gregor Bourdon, and many others. But he was born Gregor Lamont, in the year of our Lord 1632 on the Cowal peninsula of what is modern day Argyll in Scotland. For over three centuries he has walked the Earth, following a path laid before him, never certain where it will lead or when-- if at all-- it will end.

His powers first manifested themselves on the eve of his twenty-second year, coinciding with a number of strange dreams and the appearance of the black claymore he carries with him to this day. The sword is sentient, and has forged some sort of soul-bond with him; he suspects that it is this bond that is responsible for his longevity, and possibly even for causing his psychokinesis to manifest in the first place.

The next several decades found him wandering western Europe aimlessly, trying to fulfill a destiny that was only vaguely defined. Vampire covens tended to be a favorite target, and he grew a loathing for the various other creatures with whom he shared the night. In France, he found himself caught up in the Revolution, beginning his career as an eternal soldier. It was, after all, much easier to fade out of society as a nameless and faceless casualty of war, allowing him to move on to his next destination. And so the centuries passed. He was witness to Nelson's victory, and eventual death at Trafalgar, taken prisoner himself by the Royal Navy. He was cut down on Gallipoli, with countless other British soldiers. He flew sorties over the south Pacific, Korea and Vietnam, an ace twice over.

Vietnam ended his military career. He wandered the states, making himself a nuisance for whatever paranormal forces were themselves being a nuisance. And then the Hellwyrms arrived.

Gregor will be the first to admit that his initial reasons for joining the Jihad were less than benevolent; he was discovered by then-admiral J. Foxglov while tracking and carrying out a vendetta against a cell of wyrm minions responsible for an assault that left his closest friend in a coma and himself severely injured. A chance encounter with a handful of TRES Corps Alpha Squad operatives introduced him to the Admiral, who saw potential in a man with whom they shared a common enemy.

He was inducted into TRES Corps Zeta Squad and almost instantly made the rank of Lieutenant, and while he was perfectly happy in the R&D labs developing infantry weapons, he gained notoriety in the intelligence work he did on the side, often using his skill with a pencil to render early impressions of new agents of the Enemy based on first-hand accounts of operatives.

The real trial by fire for him came during the raid on the Pacifica POW camp, where he made Captain and, much to his surprise, found himself in the favor of the Holy Albino, where he was brought into the ranks of his Maenads, given the name of Nemesis by Windigo the Feral.

The fast track didn't stop there, however. Not long following Pacifica he was transferred to Theta Squadron, where he took up drill instructor duty, eventually being promoted to XO and Rear Admiral of the "newbie squad." Soon it was Admiral, and he was placed in command of TRES Corps Omega Squad.

In the wake of Grand Admiral Marburger's disappearance, he was appointed the seat of Second-in-Command by de facto Grand Admiral Melanie Davies. And when the position began to wear on her, the two officers met and agreed to change positions.

And so he sits in the Big Chair, double-diamonds clipped to his lapel. To those that don't know him, they might find him somewhat distant, curt to a point, and always formal. But to those of the "inner circle," he's warm, friendly, and a great bloke to share a stout with. And if you have a stout handy, you're already halfway there.

Interestingly enough, the emergence of the Nemesis entity has all but eliminated the appearance of the demon-beast. The gift of the Warp seems to have brought a welcome stability into Felton's being, provided that no Lyran happen across his path.

ARIS MERQUONI

Executive officer, VRDET Explorations Division

Feline humanoid form:

Common to all forms:

Attributes: IQ 12 DX 12 HT 14

Advantages: Ally Group(the Jihad) [70]; G-experience [10]; Magery+1 [15]; Military Rank+7 (Commander, VRDET) [35]; Multiple Forms+4(Natural dragon, winged dragon, small dragon, feline humanoid, human)[20]; Patron(Deity, never around when you need him) [10].

Disadvantages: Duty(to the Jihad, constant) [-15]; Enemy(Barney & Fiends) [-60]; Fanaticism(for the Jihad)[-15]; Hoarding [-10]; Oblivious [-3].

Skills: Language(English)-15; Language(Kzinti)-12; Language(Th-varian)-14; Free-Fall-14; Swim-12; Change Control-12; First Aid-14; Computer Operations-12; Administration-11; Leadership-12; Tactics-10.

Spells: Detect Magic-12; Fog-10; Ignite Fire-10; Lightning-12; Seek Earth(gems)-12; Teleport(ritual)-12.

Quirks: Disorganized; Talks to self; Mood swings.

Total: 233 points

Natural dragon form:

Attributes: ST: 25 [150]

Advantages: Claws, talons[40]; Penetrating call[5]; Scales(PD 1, DR 1)[28]; Tail [5]; Teeth [5].

Disadvantages: Appearance: Monstrous [-25]; Horizontal [-10]; Inconvenient size [-10]; Poor grip [-5].

Total: 183

Winged dragon form:

Attributes: ST: 20 [110]

Advantages: Claws(talons) [40]; Flight(winged) [30]; Penetrating Call [5]; Scales [28]; Tail [5]; Teeth [5].

Disadvantages: Appearance: Monstrous [-25]; Horizontal [-10]; Inconvenient size [-10]; Poor grip [-5].

Skills: Flight-13

Total: 175

Small dragon form:

Attributes: ST: 15 [60]

Advantages: Claws(+2 damage) [15]; Scales [28]; Tail [5]; Teeth [5].

Disadvantages: Appearance: Monstrous [-25]; Horizontal [-10]; Poor grip [-5].

Total: 73

Attributes: ST: 14 [45]

Advantages: Claws [-15]; Fur [4]; Teeth [5].

Disadvantages: Appearance: Monstrous [-25]

Skills: Beam Weapons(Plasma Rifle)-11; Brawling-14; Broadsword-11; Gunner(Kzinti starship cannon)-14.

Total: 57.5

Human form:

Attributes: ST: 12 [20]

Disadvantages: Easy To Read [-10]

Skills: Beam Weapons(Plasma Rifle)-12; Brawling-12; Broadsword-12; Driving-10; Typing-12.

Total: 15.5

Total Points (All Forms): 554

Aris joined the Jihad after doing something extremely stupid: attempting to take on a group of Lyran mages all by her lonesome. A member of a race known commonly as the 'Galactic Dragons', she has the ability to cross dimensional barriers. Unfortunately, when she came to this universe, her teleport was rudely interrupted by a Lyran channeling spell. Irked, and intent on taking revenge, Aris plowed straight into the mages' circle and got fried for her efforts.

Licking her wounds, Aris joined up with the Jihad in order to get a chance to fight back, and there learned about the Hellwyrms and other Jihad lore. After a brief stint in TRES Corps, she decided that the formal military structure wasn't for her and joined the newly formed Verthandic Rangers. Through diligence and application, or maybe just sheer stubbornness, she rose to the rank of XO of the Explorations division.

Less rash than her early days, and incredibly out of the loop of global politics, Aris is much happier in a straight fight than in a cloak-and-dagger situation, but understands the term 'overwhelming odds' much better than she used to.

Aris has a rather fuzzy history pre-Jihad; it is known that at one point she served as a Third-Gunner on a Kzin battleship, and that she was mentored by an anthropomorphic feline deity named Firefoot, but she doesn't have many non-Jihad ties and doesn't seem to mind.

Aris is not a professional shapeshifter. Changing into forms she hasn't practiced gives her muscle spasms and migraines. She rarely needs to.

(Played by and image by Aris Merquoni)



LORD RESHTUR MASTER OF SPONGIN

ST 9 IQ 13 Move 5

DX 11 HT 10

Damage: Thrust: 1d-2 Swing: 1d-1

Advantages:

Animal Empathy [5]
Appearance: Attractive [5]
Combat Reflexes [15]
Magery+3 [35]
Musical Ability+2 [2]
Unaging [15]

Disadvantages:

Code of Honor (serve the High Mage to the best of my abilities) [-10]
Intolerance (Humans) [-10]
Paranoia [-10]
Sense of Duty (to the Lyran race) [-15]
Vow (To destroy humanity) [-15]
Vulnerability (Owsenite-2, very rare+15) [-45]

Quirks:

Chauvinistic to a fault
Despises his charges
Proud
Trademark Lyran mask

Skills:

Alchemy-11; Body Sense-10; Flight-11; Illusion Art-12; Language(English)-12; Language(Lyran)-15; Occultism(Lyran)-13; Ritual Magic (Create/Change Servant)-11; Rune-Lore(Lyran)-11; Sacrifice-12; Spell Throwing-12; Symbol Drawing-12; Thaumatology-11; Theology-12.

Spells:

Analyze Magic-15; Animate Plant-15; Apporation-15; Beast Link-15; Beast Speech-15; Beast Summoning-15; Beast-Rouser-15; Beast-Soother-15; Berserker-15; Blink-15; Block-16; Boost Strength-15; Bravery-15; Charm-15; Choke-16; Clumsiness-15; Command-16; Complex Illusion-14; Concussion-16; Continual Light-14; Control Limb-15; Control Person-15; Counterspell-14; Create Air-14; Create Fire-14; Create Plant-15; Create Water-14; Darkness-14; Daze-15; Delay-14; Detect Magic-15; Emotion Control-16; Enslave-15; Enthrall-15; Fear-16; Fireball-16; Foolishness-15; Forest Warning-15; Forgetfulness-15; Frailty-15; Freeze-14; Hang Spell-13; Haste-15; Heal Plant-15; Hide Path-15; Hinder-15; Ice Dagger-16; Ice Sphere-16; Identify Plant-15; Identify Spell-15; Ignite Fire-14; Insect Control-16; Itch-15; Know Illusion-14; Lend Health-15; Lend Strength-15; Light-14; Lightning-16; Loyalty-15; Magic Resistance-14; Mammal Control-16; Master-16; Might-15; Mind-Reading-15; Mind-Sending-15; Minor Healing-15; Pain-16; Panic-15; Pentagram-14; Persuasion-15; Plant Control-15; Plant Growth-15; Plant Sense-15; Plant Speech-15; Purify Air-14; Purify Water-14; Recover Strength-15; Reflect-14; Reflex-14; Reptile Control-16; Rider-15; Rider Within-15; Scryguard-14; Seek Air-14; Seek Magic-14; Seek Plant-15; Seek Water-14; Sense Danger-16; Sense



Emotion-15; Sense Foes-15; Sense Life-15; Shape Air-14; Shape Fire-14; Shape Plant-15; Shape Water-14; Shield-16; Silence-14; Simple Illusion-14; Sleep-15; Slow-15; Sound-14; Spasm-15; Spell Shield-14; Spell Wall-14; Stun-16; Suggetsion-15; Suspend Spell-14; Telepathy-14; Teleport-14; Terror-16; Thunderclap-14; Touch-15; Truthsayer-15; Vexation-15; Vigor-15; Wall of Wind-16; Ward-14; Weaken Will-15.

Total Points: 273

“Lord” Reshtur is a 5th Circle Lyran, in charge of the small contingent of sponge-minions his master Terrik’wint keeps for canon fodder and experimental animals. He is obviously not a true lord — being only a 5th Circle, his rank in Lyran society is low to say the least. Still, his charges call him “m’lord,” and the ego-boost is just enough for him to encourage it.

Reshtur came to Earth across the Babylon Road shortly after the Pacifica debacle resulted in the banishment of Charn’El and unacceptable losses of experienced Lyran mages. He is not the most experienced mage available, but after Pacifica there is a lack of qualified scut laborers; the sinking of the island killed most of the wymmions trained by the Lyrans to do the dirtier work.

While obedient to his master, Reshtur truly hates being a glorified zookeeper. (As he sees himself. Indeed, the behavior of the spoungin isn’t that far off) While he’d like to do something other than keep the spoungin fed and reasonably clean, the only way out for Reshtur is continual study and promotion to the 6th Circle. If he makes it, then he’d get a better assignment. Or he could find a different master, but there are few lyrans who would willingly associate with a low-caste animal handler. Still, Reshtur maintains a narrow hope that soon the war will end and he can get back to some *useful* studies.

Where it all began....

"And just to think that it all began, on an uneventful morn..."

-Bob Dylan

From: Michael D. Breen (jppjoe@ix.netcom.com)
Subject: [REQUEST] Information from Jihad Writers
Newsgroups: alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die
Date: 1996/02/26

Hello sports fans! Professor Malaclypse here!

This is a polite request from all the people who participate in the various shared-world stories and Rping that the Jihad does. Over the years, we've created a lot of stuff that we've used in the shared-world.

Now, because I'm kinda bored and need something to keep myself occupied, and because newbies to the Jihad are probably very confused by some things that aren't in the main FAQ, I am going to try and create a Hitchhiker's Guide to the Jihad. Sort of an encyclopedia detailing all of our creations.

So, what do I want from you? Well, information about your additions to the Jihad Universe is what I'm looking for.

If you want to submit information, make sure to make it short, and include these things:

- a) The name of the object/place/character (naturally)
- b) Who created it (RL name is preferred, but I'll accept nicks if you don't want to give out your name.)
- c) When it was first used in the Jihad shared-world
- d) A brief explanation of the object/place/character

Submit it to me at jppjoe@ix.netcom.com with the Subject "Jihaddiverse Primer Submission." Feel free to send attached files in MS Word 2.0 or Microsoft Write formats.

-Prof. Malaclypse, EGfaBT

-

THIS IS A SUBVERSIVE ARTICLE! BURN YOUR NEWS SERVER AFTER READING!!!

nizloga * Apologia

"It's a weird feeling to sit in a Las Vegas hotel with a fantastic room service bill run up in 48 hours of total madness, knowing that just as soon as dawn comes, you're going to flee without paying a fucking penny."

—Hunter S. Thompson

Sweet monkey Jesus, it's been a long strange ride to this point.

It all started ten years ago, when as an mostly-innocent high school student I downloaded off of a local BBS a copy of "Barneystein 3D," a fairly silly-ass mod to the equally silly-ass FPS Wolfenstein 3D. Included with the image mod was a good big old stack of fiction from alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die, including what most people consider the first Real Classic of anti-Barney fiction, "Day of the Barney."

I read it, and I was hooked.

Around the same time, I found a dialup shell account out of the University of Denver. The account was free, so access was limited, but I could wander around the Web and gopher — remember? — using lynx. And lo and behold, I found Deadslug's Jihad website. Using lynx, I didn't know how hideous & garish the design was, but the available content was even more interesting than the other stuff.

When I managed to cajole my parents into getting a proper Internet service, my first destination was good old ab4d. Destiny had it in for me from the start, I guess.

My early career was... unimpressive. Like many a newbie before me, I started my own JAO: The Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow. Like many another newbie, I was laughed at by the older members until I had aged a little. I managed to show up in the middle of the great Serp Expulsion, so I don't doubt there was a fair amount of paranoia where I couldn't see. There would later be a great deal of paranoia where I *could* see, but that's another story altogether.

Anyway, life went on, Phoenix and Pacifica happened. Between the two projects, destiny decided to fuck with my life once again. On the spur of the moment, I decided to build a general guide to the Jihad's oft-confusing story/game world. The beginnings of the project were, to be frank, pretty weak. Not much more than a list and description of stuff found in the early stories. When DeadLock the Feral, the then up-and-coming de facto leader of the Jihad, took an interest in the project, it really began to get off the ground. Between the two of us, we decided that instead of a simple list of stuff, we should try and formulate a proper role-playing guide to the JU.

We had long voice & IRC conversations about how to shape the universe. Most of it, however, was eventually lost. Partly because I lost the notes over time, but mostly because a lot of DeadLock's suggestions were heavily influenced by White Wolf Game's World of Darkness series. At the time (this would be near the end of Pacifica, IIRC — call it late 1996), DeadLock and the Maenads of the Holy Albino were the de facto storytellers in the Jihad, and they had a very strong bias towards WoD. Well, DL did anyway, and he was the driving force behind most of the Maenad storylines.

I don't like WoD. Never have, never will. And ultimately, DeadLock's contributions to JU2 have been pulled out, as they're no longer relevant to the group.

Time passes. The Jihad changes oh so slowly. And still I kept at it. DeadLock left the Jihad, claiming boredom (and I don't doubt there was some truth to that) but also having made a number of enemies along the way. Including, as it turned out, me. I was named a Leader of the Jihad — I still don't really understand why — and I kept working on JU2.

Brother Fireball came on the team to replace DL, and together we pulled off a miracle: We made sense of the muddle of stories that made up the Jihad and created the Jihad Universe 2.0. We released it to the Jihad and, well, nobody who hadn't already seen it gave a damn.

I got pissed and threw a public rant/resignation. A month later I was back at it, building bigger and better structures for the JU to rest upon. Slowly but surely, the great Work began to take shape out of a mountain of insane rantings, and now the true form can be seen.

I have been consumed by this mad gibberish, swallowed like Jonah into the a world where danger hides behind a kidvid show, mad scientists lurk underneath mountains opening holes into other dimensions, Atlantis waits under the sea for the foolish to pry her secrets out, and anybody with the eyes to See and Understand can grab a Really Big Gun and help Save the World.

It's been ten years since I first read about this group, and much has changed. Almost all of the old guard from 1994 are gone. DeadLock's gone, JFox, Arsenal, J-Rock, Owsen, Windigo, Shardik... all names of former Great Leaders who've departed for warmer climates. The Jihad itself has dwindled from a cast of hundreds to a mere dozen active members. The message boards and web pages are all collecting dust.

But. Those dozen people left of the Jihad have a great deal of fire to them. They're continuing to add to the structure that I built, creating newer and greater monuments to one of the Internet's oldest running gags. As a GM, I couldn't be prouder of any of them.

It's to them, katster, Zibblsnrt, Aris_TGD, KillJoy, Fireball, Shadur, Tangaroa, Puppeteer, Nemesis and Jeff Hurley, that I dedicate this final-and-I-mean-it-dammit version of the Jihad Universe 2.0.

As for me, I'm outta here.

Ave Atque Vale.

"Σ-ΙαΜ"

Sean Malaclypse Breen
April 9, 2004

The Critics Rave!

...and rant, and rave, and generally make a lot of noise...

"My husband was stupid to bring this up. My daughter was scared when she saw this. You don't need to be saying such things when kids could accidentally see this."

--travelwithtami@hotmail.com

"However made this site is a fuckin idiot. That goes to show you how many morons there are out there."

--Anonymous

"I could not believe my eyes when I discovered this site. What a bunch of freaks you are. You obviously don;t have kids and don;t have Jesus in your life. I feel sorry for you. Barney sends a message of love for our fellow man, and all you are doing is showing hate and violence. I would be ashamed, and may God have mercy on your rotten souls"

--"Barney Lover"

"IF "JIHAD" AND BARNEY GO IN THE SAME SENTENCE, YOU ARE SORELY IN NEED OF A REALITY CHECK AS TO WHAT YOU THINK IS FUNNY. MY 10 YEAR OLD SON WENT HERE..... YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED. THE TWO HAVE NO CONNECTION TO EACH OTHER, AND YOU SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATE THE MEANING OF "IN GOOD TASTE"..... THIS, SURELY, IS NOT:"

--"Mine"

"I have never seen a group of people who so desperately need to "get a life" as you folks. Perhaps the recent events in the U.S. will give you an excuse to quit acting like such idiots. AB"

--"Abu Nidal"

"you should change your url. both in regard to the 9/11 attacks, and regardless of the attacks, your title is pathetic. it not only offends me, it probably is also offensive to members of the Islmaic faith."

--"CP"

"you must have so much time and money to do such sad thing so why not spend this time and money wisely, you people are aged from 18 and above and you are doing such sad thing so why not use this brain and talent in a wiser way eg make a useful website. you people are way down the evolutionary stable and are as thick as a stick."

"so well done for breaking the stupidity and sado record, congratulations you deserved it. so what are you sado's thinking of doing next, a terrorist attack on the teletubies hill!!!"

"oh yeah.....no offence"

"so please reply back on what you think!"

--"benadetto spera"

Keep the Funny Coming, Guys!

The Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur

<http://www.jihad.net/>

Message Board: <http://www.jihad.net/phpab4d/>