

*Adventure 11*  
*Murder on Arcturus Station*

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**TRAVELLER<sup>®</sup>**

*Science-Fiction Adventure  
in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop

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*Science-Fiction Adventure  
in the Far Future*

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Dedication: to Lord Peter Death Bredon Wimsey, the best of them all

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*Murder on Arcturus Station*

**TRAVELLER**, Adventure 11

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This booklet is an adventure for **Traveller**, GDW's science fiction  
role-playing game set in the far future.

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materials.

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# Introduction

*Murder on Arcturus Station* is a **Traveller** murder mystery, in which the adventurers seek to unravel clues to discover the murderer of a wealthy businessman.

It is assumed that this adventure will be administered by a referee who has read through this booklet and who is familiar both with it and the rules for **Traveller**. This situation calls for any **Traveller** rules set: **Basic Traveller** (Books 1, 2, and 3), **The Traveller Book**, or **Starter Traveller**, and no additional supplements, books, or other information. As usual, paper, pencils, six-sided dice, and square-grid graph paper will prove helpful during the course of the adventure.

## STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This adventure takes place in a fictional universe which has been extensively described in other **Traveller** products. However, all background information actually required to play the adventure is given in this booklet. Those interested in further details may consult Supplement 10, *The Solomani Rim*, Supplement 8, *Library Data (A-M)*, Supplement 11, *Library Data (N-Z)*, and other **Traveller** supplements, books, and adventures.

The Imperium (also known as the Third Imperium, as this state is the successor to two previous empires of similar nature and scope) is a gigantic, human-controlled interstellar government, encompassing hundreds of subsectors and thousands of worlds. Its control is loose, however; most worlds handle their own internal affairs.

The Solomani Rim is a sector of the Imperium — an administrative grouping of 16 subsectors. One of its worlds is Earth. The capital of the sector is at Dingir.

Arcturus, at which the adventure takes place, is an asteroid belt located less than forty light years from Earth. An unimportant system by most standards, the Arcturus Belt has attracted a number of mineral exploitation firms which have established large-scale mining operations among the asteroids; the bulk of the system's small population is made up of miners employed by these firms.

## CHARACTERS

This adventure is intended for use with any group of adventurers available; they may be any sort of individuals as long as they are looking for some type of paid employment. The text of the adventure can be altered to use nearly any type of adventuring group.

**Desirable Skills:** In this adventure, a wide variety of skills may come into play. Some skills of particular value would include medical, jack-of-all-trades, streetwise, administration, computer and the like. In the final analysis, however, the usefulness of any skill depends on how the players use their characters.

**Pregenerated Characters:** At the referee's option, the players may use the pregenerated characters supplied below. If there are fewer than eight adventurers in the party, the first listed characters should be selected first.

1. Ex-Navy Captain                      785AB9    Age 38    5 terms    Cr25,000  
Computer-3, Administration-2, Pilot-2, Rifle-2,                      Sword, Travellers'  
Vacc Suit-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-1

2. Ex-Marine Lieutenant	99A8A6	Age 30	3 terms	Cr12,000
Medical-3, Leader-1, Gambling-1, Cutlass-1, Revolver-1				
3. Ex-Other	695783	Age 38	5 Terms	Cr26,000
Streetwise-2, Forgery-2, Bribery-1, Revolver-1				Revolver
4. Ex-Merchant 2nd Officer	8A9864	Age 34	4 terms	Cr7,000
Bribery-2, Streetwise-2, Steward-1, Auto Pistol-1, Gambling-1, Gunnery-1				Auto Pistol
5. Ex-Army Lieutenant	A78586	Age 36	2 terms	Cr12,000
Computer-1, Administration-1, Leader-1, Forward Observer-1, Rifle-1, SMG-1				
6. Ex-Scout	58A755	Age 42	6 terms	Cr20,000
Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Electronics-2, Medical-2, Mechanical-1, Navigation-1, Rifle-1, Vacc Suit-1, Gunnery-1, Pilot-1 Auto Pistol-1				Rifle
7. Ex-Other	B68645	Age 30	3 terms	Cr6,000
Brawling-1, Bribery-1, Streetwise-1, Gambling-1				
8. Ex-Merchant	6889A3	Age 30	3 terms	Cr15,000
Streetwise-2, Computer-1, Revolver-1				Revolver

## EQUIPMENT

This is not, primarily, a gadget-oriented adventure. Some items, however, are described here. Two of these are given not because they are useful in an adventuring situation but to adhere to an important rule of SF mystery writing—never make an assumption based on some event or invention that the readers would have no preparation for. These items are part of the background of Arcturus Station, and will be known to the adventurers.

Remaining items are available to the party as tools in their search for the criminal, and may be used as such. Some notes on legal considerations are included for the information of all concerned.

**Thumbprint Lock:** A common security device found throughout the Imperium. The lock contains a plate on which the individual places his thumb; a light beam scans the pattern of ridges and matches it against the pattern (or several patterns—the lock may be keyed to more than one individual) stored in its memory. The lock on the murdered man's room is of this type, keyed to his prints only.

A thumbprint lock may also be used, if the characters can think of it, to analyze fingerprints. Any such lock may be modified, by electronics-2 or better, into a device capable of determining whether two fingerprints are identical, something the adventurers would not be able to do on their own.

**Disposal Chute:** Disposal chutes are a general method of waste disposal in Arcturus Station, and are found in most public corridors and in all sanitary closets in the facility. Trash fed into the disposal chute is stored temporarily until, at regularly scheduled intervals, all chutes empty into a large recycling room. Here, the garbage is sorted by automatic devices, reduced to its basic constituents, and placed back into the station's store of raw materials.

The intervals between emptying chutes are employed to clean the recycling room, and also allow individuals a chance to change their minds about disposing of some item. In this adventure, the party must think to search the disposal chute within 2D hours of the murder, or evidence may be lost.

**Flashtray:** The flashtray is a small, desk-top convenience used to incinerate small items, particularly cigarettes and the like. Any flammable item placed in the flashtray is reduced to a pile of ashes in a matter of seconds.

**Stress Detector:** The linear descendant of the polygraph, the stress detector uses readings of a suspect's physical responses, voice stress, and similar phenomena to establish the individual's degree of truthfulness under questioning. It is not, however, necessarily accurate in its readings, and the interpretation of readings is a complex matter.

In order to properly interpret a detector's readings, either a highly competent operator (none is present on the station) or a properly programmed computer model/2 or better (the station has one of these) must be consulted. If an operator or computer is available, the accuracy of a stress detector's readings is determined by the tech level of the machine. A throw less than or equal to the tech level of the device is required to get an accurate indication of the truthfulness of a given response. Various modifiers are applied to this basic throw.

For every fifteen minutes, up to a maximum of one hour, spent in preliminary "registration questions" (to set up the parameters of the subject's normal stress reading) allow a DM of -1. The computer skill of the operator can also be used as a negative DM.

On the other hand, stress detectors are not infallible. Clever subjects can wreak havoc with the results of a stress detector. A character who throws intelligence or less before undergoing a stress detector interrogation may add 1D to the roll made on each question. Streetwise skill is also used as a positive DM.

If Book 4, *Mercenary*, is in use, interrogation skill can be a negative DM for an operator, and a positive DM for a subject.

The referee should always keep the die roll results on interrogation rolls a secret. The questioner knows only what the machine tells concerning truth or falsehood. A subject is never sure when the questioners have been fooled, except by their attitudes. Note that inaccuracy can cause a truthful statement to be interpreted as a lie (the subject is nervous); also, a subject must specify the intent to confuse the machine in order to bring positive die modifiers into play.

The stress detector available at Arcturus Station is a Tech 14 model, weighing 6 kgs and costing Cr1500.

**Legal Note:** Banasdan law (under which the station operates) expressly prohibits the use of stress detectors without the full consent of the subject being examined. If the subject does not agree (and many of the suspects would not), use of the machine would be a violation of the suspect's civil rights. Evidence gathered in this fashion would be inadmissible (a mistrial would no doubt result in the case of the guilty party); the adventurers, as official investigators appointed by the highest government authority present (the station manager), would be fined (2D x Cr100 apiece); a suspect whose rights were so violated could sue the adventurers for amounts ranging into millions of credits for the violation. In short, the referee should make it clear that nothing will work out if the group flagrantly ignores the rights of those concerned—thus ensuring that brains, and not gadgetry, are used to solve the mystery. Although the adventurers will be granted access to the station computer, they certainly would not be allowed to use it in conjunction with illegal use of the stress detector.

**Truth Drug:** Truth drug is used to compel individuals to answer interrogation

truthfully. One dose is sufficient to assure truthful answers for approximately 2 minutes, after which the user experiences one hour of unconsciousness and 2D in wounds. It should be noted that the same regulations adhering to stress detector tests apply to truth drug as well, in regard to legal considerations. Cr5000 per dose.

## USING THIS BOOKLET

This adventure is unlike most other **Traveller** adventures in content and nature. The material contained in this booklet allows the referee to set up any of a variety of different specific situations. The fact of a man's murder is a constant; the referee, however, determines how the murder was committed, who did it, and what clues—helpful or misleading—are available for the players to use in the course of their attempts to solve the mystery.

Thus, instead of providing many specific events, encounters, or other plot elements, this adventure is largely devoted to the presentation of source material from which the referee must build the specific mystery to be presented. Familiarity with the process of creating the mystery is important, as is advance preparation. The reward for this extra effort is an unending variety of situations, in which the murderer can prove to be anyone—a business associate of the victim, a star-crossed lover, a personal enemy—even one of the adventurers themselves. And, in the best tradition of classic mysteries, the referee can incorporate a variety of other elements, as desired, so that multiple murders, cooperation between two or more killers, and other plot devices can be introduced (or not) entirely according to the referee's whim. This variety will keep *Murder on Arcturus Station* fresh and useful for session after session of **Traveller** play.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Before beginning the adventure, the referee has a great deal to do. He should first read through the entire adventure. Then he must determine the details of the crime, as explained in *Creating the Perfect Murder*.

Only after this is the referee ready to involve the players. He should first assign characters and inform the players of the basic background facts given in the *Standards and Assumptions* above.

Next, he should run the players through the events in the next chapter, *Death on Station Three*. Although it is possible merely to read the text to the players, a better way is to allow the players to interact with the characters encountered.

Once this first chapter has set forth the background to the mystery, the adventure begins as the characters set out to solve the murder mystery and bring the criminal to justice.

# Death on Station Three

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The job had been a hard one, but the adventurers had pulled it off. The missing ore carrier belonging to Lamarck Minerals, LIC, had been discovered deep in the Arcturus Belt, and a plot by disgruntled employees to steal the vessel and flee the subsector was uncovered and nipped in the bud. Now the group was back at Arc-turus Station Three to meet their employer, Ringiil Urshukaan, the president of Lamarck Minerals. Here they could collect their payment and await the arrival of the intrasystem liner that would ferry them to Wainwright Starport and a ship bound outsystem.

Perhaps they should have listened more closely to some of the stories the miners had told concerning Lamarck Minerals and Urshukaan's usual treatment of employees.

## ARCTURUS

The Arcturus Belt (Arcturus 0501 C000364-F) is a comparative backwater system of the Solomani Rim. The system is of little importance, with no better than Class C starport facilities and a small (about 8000) population. Most of these are miners employed by one of the mineral exploitation firms which operate in the belt.

Licenses to mine the belt are granted by representatives of the government of Banasdan, based in a government enclave at Wainwright Starport. For the most part, mining licenses are held by fairly large corporations; smaller companies and individuals have found it extremely expensive to participate in belt mining operations—a major point of contention which has received considerable attention in recent months.

Arcturus Belt has been roughly divided into four quadrants, each defined loosely by the location of an administrative station. There are three such stations, plus Wainwright Starport. Variations in orbital paths between these four bodies cause some shifting in the definition and nature of each quadrant, but the changes are so gradual as to be completely unimportant during the period of this adventure.

Each station is operated under the auspices of the Banasdan government. They serve as centers of supply, administration, and recreation open to miners from each of the companies working in the quadrant. Stations are run by a station manager and a small administrative staff (total station personnel, including staff, technicians, and support people, numbers about 75 in each station).

Miners being what they are, a certain degree of enforcement is necessary to see to it that "recreation" is kept reasonably well controlled. Because there are insufficient numbers of Banasdan representatives in the system, local enforcement is largely handled by squads of company police maintained by the various companies at each station. Companies are given jurisdiction over their own employees, with the understanding that this jurisdiction is not to be abused subject to revocation of the corporate mining license.

Four patrol cruisers and a detachment of Banasdan Port Authority Police are maintained at Wainwright Starport. Here they maintain general order, enforce customs and immigration restrictions, and act as a mobile backup in case a problem comes

up that can't be handled through normal channels. In the past century, such problems have only arisen three times—the Station Two Riots of 1061, the piratical activities of Jon Fastern in 1078, and the sabotage carried out by independent miners on corporate property belonging to Lamarck Minerals and Triple-G Resources, LIC, in 1098. In each case, the Wainwright Starport police detachment was more than adequate to handle the problems as they arose.

Arcturus Station Three is diagrammed on the next page.

## INTERVIEW

Ringiil Urshukaan and his entourage—plus several other passengers—arrive via the weekly intrasystem liner a few days after the adventurers completed their mission on Station Three. The liner leaves before the party can schedule a meeting with Urshukaan; they will now have to await the arrival of the next liner, a week from now.

Urshukaan does, at length, consent to see the party. While they are waiting for him, they hear a loud argument between Urshukaan and some other individual, during which threats against Urshukaan's life are uttered.

(Note: the referee must decide the identity of this individual, as well as the others who are later observed with Urshukaan, when he determines the other facts of the crime. Although the players are not aware of these persons' identities at this time, these facts may eventually become important.)

Urshukaan is in a foul mood after his bodyguards eject the quarrelsome person and conduct the adventurers into his temporary office. Hot-tempered and impatient, Urshukaan's red face and heavy breathing show how upset he was with the previous visitor. He proceeds to take out much of his anger on the adventurers.

The party is told in no uncertain terms that Urshukaan is dissatisfied with their performance on the job just completed. Though they recovered the ship, and gathered evidence against the plotting employees, they failed to capture the ringleader, and took too much time to carry out the task. Urshukaan has decided, therefore, that Lamarck Minerals will not honor the contract—in accordance with a non-performance clause which permits him to do this with perfect legality. The adventurers have been cut off completely from the Cr50,000 apiece promised at the beginning of the mission, and have nothing to show beyond a small advance against expenses now more than used up during the mission itself.

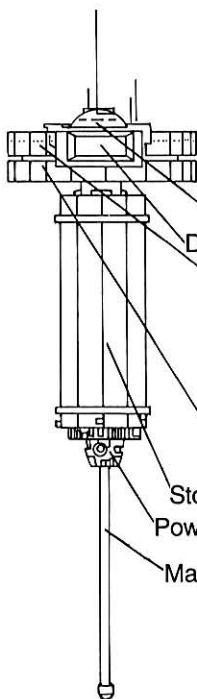
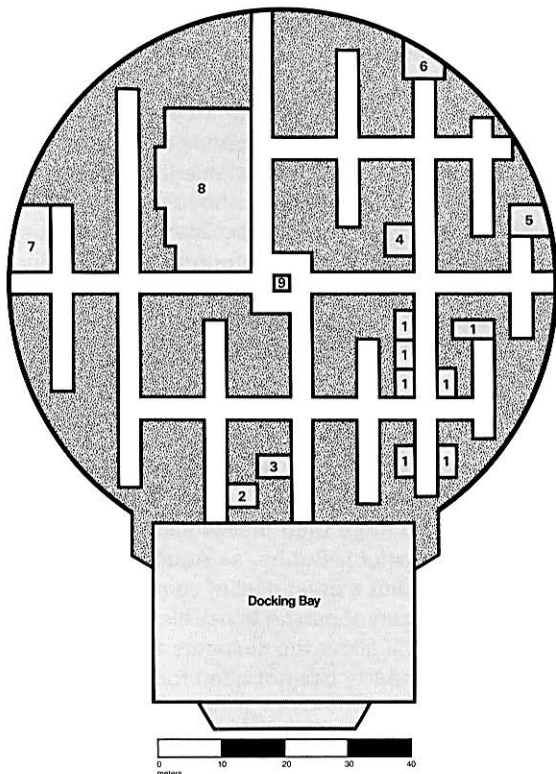
Urshukaan will be completely indifferent to threats of legal action. The clause is sufficiently vague, and his financial resources sufficiently greater than the adventurers', that he has no cause to worry. Should the adventurers become personally abusive or threatening, he will have his bodyguards eject them none too gently. His callous attitude may well provoke one of the adventurers to make threats, just as the last visitor did.

As they are on their way out, Urshukaan's assistant is seen talking to the president. They cannot hear what the assistant says, but they do hear Urshukaan's outburst in response. "God—another one who's out for my blood. All right, show the bloody fool in. We might as well get this over with now!" The adventurers may get a glimpse of one or more people in the waiting room, obviously waiting for a chance to see Urshukaan.

After the interview, the adventurers go on about their own business. In the evening, they witness a brief altercation between Urshukaan and yet another disgruntled

## A Module, Middle Deck (Guest Staterooms)

1. Adventurers' Room
2. Srinivasan's Room
3. Davis' Room
4. Narayanam's Room
5. M'Banke's Room
6. Sharik's Room
7. The Baronet's Suite
8. Urshukaan's Suite
9. Lift Shaft



## Arcturus Station Three

Bridge

Docking Bay

A Module (3 decks)

Top Deck: offices, work areas, employees' quarters

Middle Deck: guest staterooms

Lower Deck: lounge, restaurant, dispensary, casino,  
passenger loading

B Module: station facilities, cargo loading,  
shuttle servicing

Stores, fuel

Power plant

Maneuvering, attitude control

50 meters



individual; following this disturbance in the station lounge, Urshukaan withdraws to his cabin.

Some four hours later, Ringil Urshukaan is discovered dead in his room, and the evidence points to murder.

## DILEMMA

The discovery of Urshukaan's body causes a shock throughout Arcturus Station Three. The adventurers are awakened from a sound sleep and brought to see the station manager, Marja Aguilar, not long after the murder is found out.

Aguilar is faced with a dilemma. She does not have the resources at Station Three to investigate a murder. The corporate enforcement personnel at the station cannot be used—they are security police, and the chance of bias makes them doubly unusable for this investigation.

Aguilar has placed a call to Wainwright Starport, summoning a detachment of Port Authority police. But Wainwright Starport is on the far side of the system from Station Three; even at maximum acceleration, the patrol cruiser will not be able to arrive at the station in less than three days. When they do arrive, they will have only two days more before the intrasystem liner arrives at the station.

As station manager, Aguilar can hold traffic in and out of Station Three for up to a week. To do more than that would require a special order from the police inspector at Wainwright. But he, as Aguilar well knows, is an ambitious bureaucrat with few friends but a great deal of caution. Some of the suspects have influence, and he is not the sort of person to risk his career by detaining such individuals. Aguilar is sure that he will allow the suspects to leave once the liner is in—which means that, if the guilty party has not been found by that time, he or she will be gone for good.

Marja worked with the adventurers during their search for Urshukaan's ore carrier, and has become a good friend. They impressed her with their ability to track down leads and solve problems, and although they are among those being checked out (thanks to Urshukaan's treatment and their own angry responses), she is convinced that they could not be the killers. And she needs help. Her staff doesn't even know where to begin to start looking into this, and the delay in the arrival of the police will be a great waste of vital time. If the murderer is to be brought to justice (and Aguilar wants this, very badly, no matter how people may have felt about the dead man), the investigation has to start now. Aguilar wants the adventurers to help her do it.

She is asking as a friend, but she offers an appealing compensation as well. First, she can cover all costs for the party's stay on Station Three, plus passage via liner back to the starport and a government priority middle passage for each member of the group to Banasdan. But the main attraction of the offer is this: she knows the Vice President/Operations for Lamarck Minerals; he's an old friend who owes her a favor or two. She thinks she can get him to pay off the money Urshukaan withheld. But he's most likely to do so if Urshukaan's murderer can be caught. So, if the party will help her out of her current dilemma, Aguilar will do everything she can to arrange the payment. Since the corporate official involved is currently on Banasdan, the party (with a letter of introduction from Aguilar) will be able to collect once they reach that planet.

Aguilar cautions the party that Inspector Dragovitch, the police inspector en route,

will not be as likely to trust the adventurers. Whatever evidence they uncover must be solid enough to convince him. Otherwise he's likely to seize upon some suspect of little influence, build a circumstantial case, and leave it at that. Aguilar also reminds them that their own influence is scant; without some pretty convincing proof, they themselves could become the Inspector's scapegoats.

Aguilar places an office and a computer terminal at the group's disposal, as well as other station facilities (the dispensary and labs, for instance). She and her staff will give what help they can, normal duties permitting. Computer records can also be obtained from the starport within a few hours. The group is cautioned that the suspects are all to be treated with consideration for their rights, as is guaranteed by the Banasdan Civil Code.

With these warnings, the station manager leaves them to their task: to sift through a welter of clues and suspects to discover who murdered Ringiil Urshukaan and bring the murderer to justice.

# Creating the Perfect Murder

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*Murder on Arcturus Station* is unusual in that the course of the adventure is more thoroughly shaped by the referee than is usual in most published **Traveller** situations. This chapter discusses the procedures by which the referee creates the murder situation, a process that allows nearly endless variation, different degrees of complexity, and as much input as the referee desires to add to make the situation unique.

## PREPARATIONS

Before beginning the adventure, the referee should work out the nature of the mystery. Advance preparation is absolutely essential; referees are strongly advised not to attempt to improvise the situation on the spot!

The first consideration that should be made is that of complexity. Complexity is established by determining the number of suspects, the diversity of their motives, and the number of clues and red herrings to be used. Decisions made at this time will directly influence the level of uncertainty—and hence the excitement—of the adventure proper.

Descriptions are provided (beginning on page 30) of nine different suspects. These predetermined suspects break down roughly into three groups of three, with each group revolving around a different general motive for killing Urshukaan. Thus, one group is business oriented, a second centers around Urshukaan's background, while a third involves a romantic triangle.

A very simple murder mystery revolves around three suspects, all with a similar motive. This is straightforward and uncomplicated, involving little need to narrow down conflicting motives or multiple suspects and/or red herrings. Complexity can be added by mixing up motives—perhaps one suspect is drawn from each triad, rather than having all come from the same one. Greater complexity can be inserted by increasing the number of suspects as well.

A case of fair complexity would involve the presence of all nine given suspects. Not all of them would be suspects very long—evidence might almost immediately narrow the field considerably. But interaction with all the suspects would still be possible (and desirable), and it is this area which leads to the heightened complexity of the situation.

The truly ambitious referee can go a step or two further. First, additional suspects can be created by following the basic format of the given suspects. Secondly, special cases can be developed. Collusion between two or more suspects is a possibility (consider *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie as a source). Or a case which looks like a murder could, in fact, be suicide (see *Clouds of Witness* by D. L. Sayers). Such expansions on the basic situation are in the province of the referee, adapting and modifying the basic material presented here as desired.

Finally, the ultimate in complexity is achieved by having the murder committed by one of the player characters. This situation is covered in detail on page 19.

Once the murder and basic nature of the suspects has been determined, the referee proceeds to establish the facts of the murder itself. During this process, all the salient facts of the mystery are developed and set forth. The process follows a set, step-

by-step course.

First, the murderer is selected from the pool of suspects. The description of the suspect provides all information necessary to determine motive, means, alibi, and so forth. A number of clues are also summed up which will point at the particular suspect.

The second step is to select the other suspects. Once again, the wide variety of available suspects makes it possible to alter the balance of play considerably. If the suspects are each the sort of individuals who would carry through the murder in a similar fashion, the resulting case will be harder to solve than one in which the means is easily traced to a particular individual. For example, a stab in the back from a dagger, which is found in the room, takes on extra significance when it is realized that one suspect, the Aslan officer, is psychologically incapable of killing in that fashion, while a second, Urshukaan's hated opponent M'Banke, would never have been able to strike from behind with a dagger (Urshukaan was too cautious for that). The murderer might be quickly spotted by a process of elimination. Thus care must be exercised to keep the murder from being too obvious—either by choosing more than one suspect who might have committed the crime in that way, or by introducing other evidence that counteracts the basic simplicity of an uncomplicated situation like the example.

Once the suspects have been chosen, a murder timetable is created. Plot the movements and activities of each suspect prior to, during, and just after the murder. Facts are filled in from the suspects' descriptions, and are rounded out by the referee and embellished as desired.

With the timetable completed, additional clues are filled in. These clues are the red herrings that may point to suspects other than the murderer. They will obviously be based upon the movements of the suspect; thus a suspect who met Urshukaan before the murder might have left fingerprints on a glass in Urshukaan's room, but this clue would not be present if the suspect didn't go near Urshukaan's room at all.

The last step to consider is optional; it concerns the interaction between the NPCs. In this step the referee might decide that the murderer has deliberately chosen to incriminate another suspect (thus supplying further red herrings but, possibly, additional clues to the murderer's true identity at the same time). Or it may be established that one suspect has decided to cover up for another—possibly leading to suppression of knowledge or evidence, a false confession, etc. The extent of this final step should be regulated by the referee, based on the suspects involved and the degree of complexity desired. The last section of this chapter, beginning on page 17, gives some guidelines for the referee uncertain of how to set up this aspect of the mystery.

## SUSPECTS

Descriptions of suspects follow a very specific format, as is outlined below.

**Basic Information:** Name, stats, skills, etc.

**Involvement:** This section describes how the suspect is likely to come to the attention of the adventurers. The referee is free, however, to modify this information in the interests of tightening or altering the plot line of the mystery.

**Known Background:** In this part, generally known information about the suspect is presented. This includes all background which is "public knowledge", any data easily located in computer records, and anything the suspect will freely admit about

the past. A physical description may also be included in this section.

**Other Background:** All information which is not readily available to the adventurers is contained in this section. This includes material which can only be unearthed by a particularly diligent computer search, or information which is admitted to by the suspect only under pressure.

**Motive:** This is the suspect's motive for murder. Suspects who did not perform the murder will still have this motive—a deep, dark secret in their lives which gives them a good reason to be glad of Urshukaan's death, or which causes them to behave in a secretive fashion.

**Means:** This is a description giving at least two different ways the suspect might have committed the murder. These alternatives will vary somewhat from suspect to suspect (though there will be overlap). Following each of these means, the clues which might be left behind by the suspect are then provided. Some will tie in to the specific means, while others will be general clues that will point to the suspect even if he or she is not the murderer.

**Alibi:** This section relates the suspect's alibi, if any. It describes how the alibi is supported (by witnesses or other evidence); if the suspect was the murderer, this section will also show how the alibi was maintained even though the suspect killed Urshukaan.

**Reaction Data:** This is more fully explained in the section on NPC interaction on page 23. The reaction rules show ways in which the suspect will help or hinder the investigation.

**Notes:** This section gives additional information of help to the referee, if any.

## THE MURDER

The referee chooses from among the suspects to determine who has committed the murder. From the various choices given for that suspect under *Means*, the actual course of the crime is plotted, as well. *Means* not only gives information on how the murder itself took place; it also gives a short summary of what went on before and after the crime, and provides the body of clues which actually point to the murderer.

False leads are listed in a separate part of this section, which describes what went on if the suspect was not the murderer, and the misleading clues that might, as a result, have appeared.

## ALIBIS

Suspect descriptions include a section on alibis. These alibis give the story the suspect will tell concerning his or her whereabouts and movements at the time of the murder. Some alibis are "layered"—one story may be replaced by another if the suspect is trying to hide something.

The referee is responsible for determining which alibi a suspect will begin with, if such layering exists. There will be some suspects who have no alibis, and some who will stick to a single story, regardless.

Alibis may (or may not) be supported externally; the suspect description will indicate this. For example, a suspect may claim to have been in the station lounge until well after the murder, and might be able to produce several witnesses to this fact. Other alibis may be totally unsupported.

Suspects with strong alibis have been given a short description of how the alibi

is maintained if that suspect actually did commit the murder. In the course of investigating the case, the adventurers may be called upon to break a seemingly unbreakable alibi, in the best traditions of detective fiction.

## **NPC RELATIONSHIPS**

The various suspects may, through their relationships, provide alibis, evidence, and other important plot devices for the mystery. The relations between NPCs are largely determined by the referee, using the background information on the suspects in use in the current adventure. Some extrapolation and creativity may be required to supplement the basic information available.

The suspect relations table (below) gives the referee the opportunity to construct some elaborate relationships between suspects. Roll 2D for each suspect; on a 7+ the table is consulted; throw 2D again and record the corresponding result. (Of course, the referee is always free to choose a specific set of results rather than roll the dice.) The murderer uses a separate table which regulates that individual's attitudes and actions after the murder.

### **Suspect Relations Table**

#### *Die Result*

- 2 Suspect knows the identity of Urshukaan's killer, but is keeping silent for the moment. The suspect has confronted the murderer with this knowledge. The murderer's response can be determined by a reaction roll; a result of 6- means that the murderer will attempt to kill the suspect or implicate the suspect in the crime in order to keep him or her quiet; 9+ indicates an attempt by the murderer to placate the suspect through payment of blackmail, etc.
- 3 Suspect has correctly guessed the identity of the murderer, and is shielding that individual with false alibis, clues, or even a confession of guilt. The referee should develop a motivation for this and determine specific actions taken.
- 4-5 Suspect wrongly believes that another suspect killed Urshukaan, and will declare this belief to the adventurers. Supporting evidence on motives, hidden background information, etc. which would reasonably be available to the NPC can be brought forward. The referee must choose the suspect falsely accused, and may have to expand upon relationships to develop the overall motivations of the two suspects in question.
- 6-7 Suspect has no particular beliefs concerning the murder, but is very cooperative. Background information which might otherwise be kept hidden will be shared willingly.
- 8-9 Suspect is very uncooperative. Give all reaction throws a DM of +2.
- 10 Suspect wrongly believes that another suspect killed Urshukaan, and will attempt to protect that individual through false alibis, clues, etc. The referee should develop a motivation for this and determine specific actions taken.
- 11 Suspect has correctly guessed the identity of the murderer, but has no proof. As in 4-5, above, information will be shared freely with the adventurers.
- 12 Suspect is working in collusion with the murderer, and will fully support any alibi the murderer advances. Roll 2D; on 9+ the suspect will cooperate with actions taken by the murderer after the fact.

## Murderer Relations Table

### *Die Result*

- 2 Murderer will attempt to kill investigators who seem to be getting close. The referee must determine when and if this happens, and the results of such a move.
- 3 Murderer will kill any suspect who knows or guesses too much about the crime (a roll of 2, 3, 1, and possibly 12 on the previous table). Subsequent murders should be set up very much like the basic murder, with the referee determining clues, alibis, etc. as needed.
- 4-5 Murderer does nothing unless the investigation seems at the point of solving the mystery. As soon as the murderer is sure the crime has really been solved correctly, the killer hatches an escape plan to take hostages at the station and force the authorities to provide transportation out-system. The outcome then depends upon the interaction between the players and the referee.
- 6-8 Murderer claims innocence, and takes no action at all.
- 9-10 Murderer plants clues pointing towards one or more other suspects.
- 11 Murderer claims to have witnessed another suspect entering Urshukaan's room at the time of the crime.
- 12 Murderer will take another suspect into confidence and reveal guilt. The actions of the suspect in response should be determined by the referee, using the information for the suspect in question (if any). The murderer will regret this lapse (reroll on this table) on a roll of intelligence or less.

**Referee's Notes:** These tables deliberately leave many things up to the referee. In staging the mystery, it will ultimately be the inter-relationships between suspects which lends the greatest interest to the adventure. But to avoid overly mechanical solutions, we have felt it best to let the referee work out the details.

Referees are encouraged to introduce other options into the tables, as desired. In all cases, strive to fit the various results into a coherent whole, even if it requires the addition or alteration of background on specific suspects. For example, Urshukaan's estranged wife is the murderer. The victim's chief detractor in the local Independent Belters' Association, M'banke, is indicated as knowing about the crime, and helping to cover it up. It is up to the referee to fill in missing details—perhaps Urshukaan's wife stands to inherit sufficient stock to make or break M'banke's plans with the IBA. Perhaps the two have some personal or business relationship that explains this support. In each case, relationships should be set up carefully to make the interaction smooth, logical, and, above all, real.



# An Adventurer as Murderer

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One of the most challenging and potentially exciting adventure situations possible is a mystery in which the murderer is in fact one of the player characters. In this case, the players are not aware that one of their number is a criminal actively attempting to confuse the trail. Given a plethora of NPC suspects and a natural assumption of player innocence, the insertion of this active opponent into the game will make for an exciting and interesting mystery.

## PREPARATION

As with the standard adventure, this situation requires some advance preparation on the part of the referee. One of the players must be chosen to play the part of the murderer. It is suggested that this player and the referee get together prior to the game session to work out several points of importance to the adventure in advance.

The referee should explain the background to the player, and then work with this individual to develop the murder plan. This becomes, in effect, a one-on-one adventure, with the player determining the method of the murder, while the referee regulates events to provide hazards or opportunities for the player to deal with. The player should be encouraged to develop as elaborate a scheme as is desired to set up an alibi, throw suspicion on other suspects (including other players), and so forth. Careful track should be kept of events and times, so that the referee can set up suspect worksheets and regulate other events.

Other preparations go as usual. However, one special procedure must be followed to establish the number and type of clues that the player-murderer will leave in committing the crime. After all else is finished, the number of clues left is established by rolling  $2D + 3$ , and comparing the result to the player character's intelligence rating. If the number is greater than the character's intelligence, the difference between the two is the number of clues which should be planted. If the result of less than the character's intelligence, the difference between the two numbers is the number of false clues the player may leave, either accidentally or deliberately, pointing to other possible suspects. These false clues are in addition to general clues which other suspects may leave. If the player has announced a definite intention to incriminate someone else, then all the false clues should point to this suspect. If not, it is up to the referee to select clues from a variety of characters and apply them as desired.

The actual nature of clues left by a player-murderer can be derived in several ways. For the greatest fairness, the player and the referee should together compile a list of possible clues once the murder plan has been worked out. This is a process requiring logic, creativity, and a sense of what is possible in the real world. It will be necessary for both the player and the referee to approach the creation of these clues with a willingness to be reasonable. Since the number of clues will not be established until after the natures of the clues are determined, a large and diverse group should be created from which the specific clues can be drawn. The referee does this secretly, after the player's participation is complete. The player should



know neither the number nor the specific nature of the clues available, unless the character resorts to the classic “return to the scene of the crime”—a dangerous alternative.

**Referee’s Notes:** When establishing clues, keep the following facts in mind: first, clues should not be too blatant—unless the character is of very low intelligence. (The player would have to be dull-witted, as well, to allow really obvious clues to be put into the mix!) Secondly, clues should not conflict with the way the crime was committed. If the player indicates that the character wore gloves throughout, fingerprints are unlikely as clues. Finally, both the player and the referee should have a strong voice in determining the nature of the clues. This ensures fairness. In this game, the player-murderer and the referee must work together, but they cannot allow the situation to become completely unbalanced. Thus, the referee should be the one who strives to come up with clues that will serve to point to the murderer. The player may try to suppress these, arguing that the character would not have allowed such a thing to happen. In case of unresolvable differences of opinion, the referee of course has the final say on inclusion of any clue, although he should make every attempt to be fair.

## THE ADVENTURE

Once all is set up, play proceeds as usual. All the characters, including the murderer, should be led through the adventure from the beginning. It is up to the player-murderer to separate from the other members of the party during the times worked out for the murder. This can be done in any manner the player desires (even including the use of force against other players, if this is desired).

The group is approached as before and asked to find the criminal. As the bulk of the party works to discover the killer’s identity, the player-murderer may attempt to plant false evidence, suppress actual discoveries, or even eliminate other individuals—NPCs or players—in an attempt to confuse or complicate the search. The player determines all activities, without restraint, but has to live with the results of these actions.

**Referee’s Notes:** This adventure will require a great deal of communication between the player-murderer and the referee. To disguise the nature of this communication, the referee should encourage the group to split up and pursue separate lines of inquiry, and then impose the requirement that questions, answers, and actions must all be communicated by notes to the referee while the party is not together. The ostensible reason is to limit the data available to the party and leave open the possibility of important clues being overlooked by insufficiently attentive players. Actually, of course, the notes allow the player to inform the referee of special activities—planted evidence, an ambush, etc.—which cannot be safely discussed without creating suspicion.

The referee might want to use this system of notes and limited information in all games of *Murder on Arcturus Station*. Although it slows play slightly, and is only essential to the player-murderer situation, it is still a good idea—both for the reasons stated previously, and to keep players familiar with the precepts of the adventure from determining whether the murderer is a player or an NPC in any game. The slower time flow, too, can be turned to advantage; this is a thinking adventure, by and large, and time should be made available in which players can go over clues and come up with new lines of endeavor.

## CONCLUSIONS

The player-murderer is striving to escape justice. How this is done is entirely up to the player. It is possible the murderer will take other players into the plot in order to cover the trail more thoroughly. Other players may act as they see fit, if they learn of their companion's crime.

The group's goal is to try to discover the murderer. They may decide to falsely arrest some other suspect, or they may seek justice and turn their fellow traveller in. Each player should closely examine the character he or she controls, determine likely actions and reactions, and then act according to the dictates of the character's conscience.

If characters are caught with some proof of involvement, either before or after the fact, in this crime, the referee may wish to consult Adventure 8, *Prison Planet*, for a likely follow-up to this adventure.

# Investigating the Crime

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The adventuring group is required to collect information and clues, analyze data, and deduce the identity of Urshukaan's murderer. To do this, they may follow any of a number of possible procedures, in any combination desired. No one path is likely to produce all the information required; it will be important to balance alternatives against one another, applying character skills in several directions and combining the results gained from different endeavors to produce the answer needed.

## FORENSIC SCIENCE

The gathering and analysis of physical clues makes up the body of knowledge known as forensic science. This may include such items as fingerprints, the analysis of bloodstains or strands of hair, and other similar evidence of a solid, concrete nature.

In order to gather evidence of this kind, characters must indicate their intentions. A search must be directed at a particular area or item. The more confined the search is in scope, the more likely clues are to be uncovered.

Clues connected with the item or area being searched are discovered if the character makes a throw less than or equal to the average of the character's intelligence and education. There are several DMs which can be employed: +2 if the search is of a room, corridor, etc.; +1 if the search is of a body; -1 if the search is of an artifact; -1 if the searcher is looking for a specific type of clue (and such a clue is present); +2 if the search is interrupted; -1 for every 1/2 hour, after the first, spent in search.

The time to be spent on the search, given in 1/2 hours, should be announced by the player(s) before the success throw is made. The referee should throw 1D, secretly; if the number is less than or equal to the number of 1/2 hours announced, the search is interrupted. The nature of the interruption will depend upon the nature of the search and the desires of the referee. It may be a distracting call, or it could be the return of a suspect to a room the character is investigating. The consequences are in the hands of the referee.

Also included in the search modifiers are applicable skills. A character could apply medical expertise, for instance, to a search of a body. A character looking for signs of a piece of electrical apparatus deliberately rigged to impart a lethal shock could use electronics skill. And so forth.

Discovery of items such as fingerprints, hair, blood, etc. requires that these clues be matched up with information from suspects and analyzed by someone experienced in the proper field.

Thus, the discovery of a fingerprint on the murder weapon doesn't help until each suspect's fingerprints are taken and compared. Fingerprinting is not widely used as a method of identification; retinal scanning is much more accurate. Therefore the suspects are unlikely to have readily available fingerprint records. Characters will have to secure the prints, either through persuasion (see *NPC Interaction*) or by some less open approach. After prints are obtained, a means of making com-

parisons must be found. Adventurers are unlikely to be familiar enough with fingerprint analysis to do the job, but a means does exist: thumbprint locks are common on the station and contain circuitry designed for that purpose; see *Equipment*.

Bloodstains, hair, and other organic samples may be compared in a medical laboratory by anyone with medical-3 or better. Again, samples must somehow be obtained from suspects for comparison.

This will be true of other, similar clues, as well, and the possibilities of red herrings, false evidence, and so forth make it quite possible that these clues alone will not be sufficient to prove the murderer's identity.

## RESEARCH

Characters will not start off with any sort of detailed knowledge of any of the suspects, or of the possible connections between some of them and Urshukaan. Research will be of vital importance to any attempt to uncover such material.

To do research, characters must have access to a computer terminal. Computer skill is not necessary (anyone can enter the proper requests for data) unless a player-murderer wants his character to insert data into a file on one of the other suspects which will confuse the issue or focus suspicion on others. In this case, the throw needed for success is intelligence or less, with computer skill used as a negative modifier.

For ordinary research, players need only announce the specific topic they wish to examine. Topics available are all entries listed in *Library Data* (page 53), some of the generally available background material on the more prominent of the suspects, and any other items the referee may care to make available to the players to aid in the solution of the mystery.

Another source of information is computer records from the starport. For most of the suspects, this is purely routine information gathered upon arrival: name, world of birth, residence, business, length of stay, and so on. For two suspects, Sharik Urshukaan and Chaijin Davis, it reveals important facts.

It is important to remember that the players should be the ones to initiate all research. The referee should never volunteer information of this kind.

With a stymied or uncertain group, the referee may use a safety valve to allow their efforts to be channeled in a useful direction as needed. At the referee's discretion, areas of possible research can be suggested to any particular player who makes a roll less than or equal to his or her character's intelligence. Such suggestions should not always be valid directions and should be offered sparingly. They do, however, allow the game to proceed in times when the players find themselves unable to offer useful courses of action.

## QUESTIONING AND NPC INTERACTION

One of the most fruitful sources of information and background data is derived from questioning various suspects. Interrogation can bring out a variety of useful bits of information which can supplement the clues and research results gathered in other ways. Ultimately, it will be the characters' ability to deal with NPCs that will determine the success of their attempts to solve the murder.

Each non-player suspect has a unique group of reaction values, plus a set of reaction modifiers applicable to that character only. Each time the suspect is questioned, the reaction values are used to regulate the NPC's attitude and responses. This pro-

ceeds along relatively simple lines, as explained below.

The basic reaction value of the suspect is a given part of the suspect description. This represents the NPC's characteristic outlook and opinion of the adventurers' investigation of the murder.

During the questioning session, the player(s) formulates questions to be asked. A throw of 2D is compared to the reaction value. Generally, a result less than the value indicates that the character is cooperative, while a result greater than or equal to the number is uncooperative. Reaction modifiers are applied to represent specific questioning conditions or techniques, character quirks, and the use of certain skills in the interrogation.

A cooperative character will tell the truth, in so far as he or she knows it, in response to the question asked. A suspect who is uncooperative may simply refuse to talk, may lie, or may threaten or attack the questioners—a specific decision best determined by the referee with a view towards the suspect's nature and the exact situation.

The basic reaction value is used for routine questions. When questioning turns to specific areas that the suspect may not wish to discuss freely, other reaction values are substituted instead. For example, when questions turn to a discussion of the suspect's background, the background reaction value given is used instead of the basic value. Each of the reaction values is explained later in this section.

Die modifiers are applied to the throws made during questioning. These are summed up along with each character's reaction information, and may differ from character to character. The referee should decide when specific modifiers should be introduced, based on the players' actions and on the overall situation.

In addition to responding to specific questions, suspects may volunteer information, either accidentally or deliberately. Once during each interview with a suspect, the referee should make a special roll against the average of the suspect's intelligence and basic reaction. A successful result requires the referee to introduce some new fact into the overall situation. The nature of this revelation—be it personal background, background on some other individual, the confession of some lie previously told, or whatever—is up to the referee.

The other four reaction values are explained below.

**Background:** This value comes into play when questions begin probing into the character's hidden background or motives. A suspect may willingly admit dislike for Urshukaan, but will not go into specifics unless this reaction value goes into play.

**Knowledge:** This value is used when questions concerning other suspects are brought forward. For example, when Lukargik is questioned concerning Xuan's history, the knowledge value is brought into play. Some characters will have modifiers applied for their willingness to discuss specific individuals (e.g. Xuan and Srinivasan). If a suspect is indicated as covering for or being in collusion with another, an automatic DM of +5 is applied when questions about that suspect come up.

**Confession:** This value is used any time the suspect is directly confronted with evidence and/or an accusation. This may not only be connected with the crime itself; confronting an innocent suspect with the truth of some hidden motive may produce a confession of the details of that motive, but a continued claim of innocence. If the suspect is indeed the murderer, there is a DM of +3 applied to confession rolls. If the unmodified roll would cause a confession, but the modification would prevent it, the murderer will confess to the motive but not to the crime.

A confession can only be demanded twice. Once those two attempts are made, the suspect is going to stick solidly to the story already being told. The referee should not impose this restriction in absolute terms on the player ("No, you cannot ask that again—you've used up all your rolls"). Rather, it is up to the referee to secretly regulate this aspect of their interaction with the NPCs. If they suddenly can produce startling physical evidence or a flawless chain of reasoning pointing to the individual who committed the crime, make the confession roll. But if they are merely bluffing, rolls should be made in other areas (background, etc.), and they will get nowhere.

**Alibi:** Another value is used when a suspect is being questioned regarding an alibi, if the alibi being used is incomplete or false. Successful rolls against the suspect's reactions using this value will reveal gaps or inconsistencies that could damage the alibi.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

When using the NPC interaction material to set up the crime, additional, special cases may come up. Characters covering for other suspects may, for instance, falsely confess to the crime or introduce false evidence. This should be handled using the normal confession process, but with modifiers introduced at the discretion of the referee to assist in the implementation of these false confessions.

**Unexpected Solutions:** The referee must always remain alert for the player or group who approaches the problem in an unexpected or original fashion. Creative ideas—if they are practical—should be rewarded with success. There are many possible ideas that could be introduced, but not enough space to cover them all in one booklet. In the end, it's the referee who must deal with such matters. Don't make it too easy to solve the problem. If the players come up with a "foolproof" but rather simplistic solution to the crime, complicate things before they have a chance to follow through. Reward creative thought, but don't give everything away without making the group work for the solution.

**Evidence:** Strictly speaking, it's not enough for the players to determine the murderer's identity, or even a complete account of how the crime was accomplished. They must procure enough evidence (legally obtained) to convince the police and a judge that a conviction is likely. This is a more difficult matter, and is often taken care of in mystery novels by having the killer confess when confronted with detailed knowledge of his acts. If the referee wishes to reward a successful solution of the case, he may use this way out. Another time-honored method is for the detective to use his knowledge of the crime to set a trap in which the killer is forced to incriminate himself, which can make for an exciting denouement. However the referee chooses to do it (and much depends on what the players think of on their own), the question of sufficient evidence must be addressed.

# The Victim

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Ringiil Urshukaan was a man with many enemies. A number of people on Arc-turus Station Three wanted him dead, for a variety of reasons.

The material presented below is a compendium of what is known about Urshukaan, either as general knowledge, or through research into computer files on him which can be conducted by the adventurers as they begin to investigate his death. A few specific points require deeper probing to unearth, and are listed separately.

## THE DEAD MAN

Ex-Army General	758AA9	Age 54	7 terms	Cr300,000
Computer-4, Admin-4, Leader-2,	Gambling-1			Body Pistol
Revolver-1, Tactics-1, Rifle-1, SMG-1				

An army officer of some local fame, Urshukaan rose to command Imperial forces engaged against Solomani rebels during the Unity Uprisings on Scaramouche in the Harlequin subsector of the Solomani Rim. Although his forces suffered several reverses in the early stages of the campaign, the general eventually subdued the worst outbreaks of armed resistance. On the assassination of the Imperial Governor of the planet, Urshukaan was named Acting Governor, a post he continued to hold for four years. Under his authority, harsh measures enacted against the rebels brought an end to the threat of renewed rebellion, though at dreadful cost in lives and Imperial good will.

Charges were brought against Urshukaan after his post was taken over by an Imperial appointee. These accusations of excessive force, violation of various sophont rights codes, and embezzlement of tax revenues were dismissed, but Urshukaan resigned in protest over the government's treatment of him. Still regarded in many areas as a hero for his firm stance on Scaramouche, Urshukaan was offered the presidency of Lamarck Minerals, LIC. Under his direction, the company stabilized a declining profit picture and became a significant factor in the resource exploitation field in the Arcturus, Banasdan, and Sol subsectors.

Urshukaan has earned a reputation over the years since his retirement from the military for sharp dealing. He is widely regarded for his skill in business practices, but also is considered to be a freewheeling, unprincipled, unscrupulous man who will use any means, fair or foul, to win his way. This particular aspect of his character has earned him many enemies.

Urshukaan is survived by his wife, Sharik; he had no children. The couple has been on bad terms for the past two years, and have lived apart through most of that period.

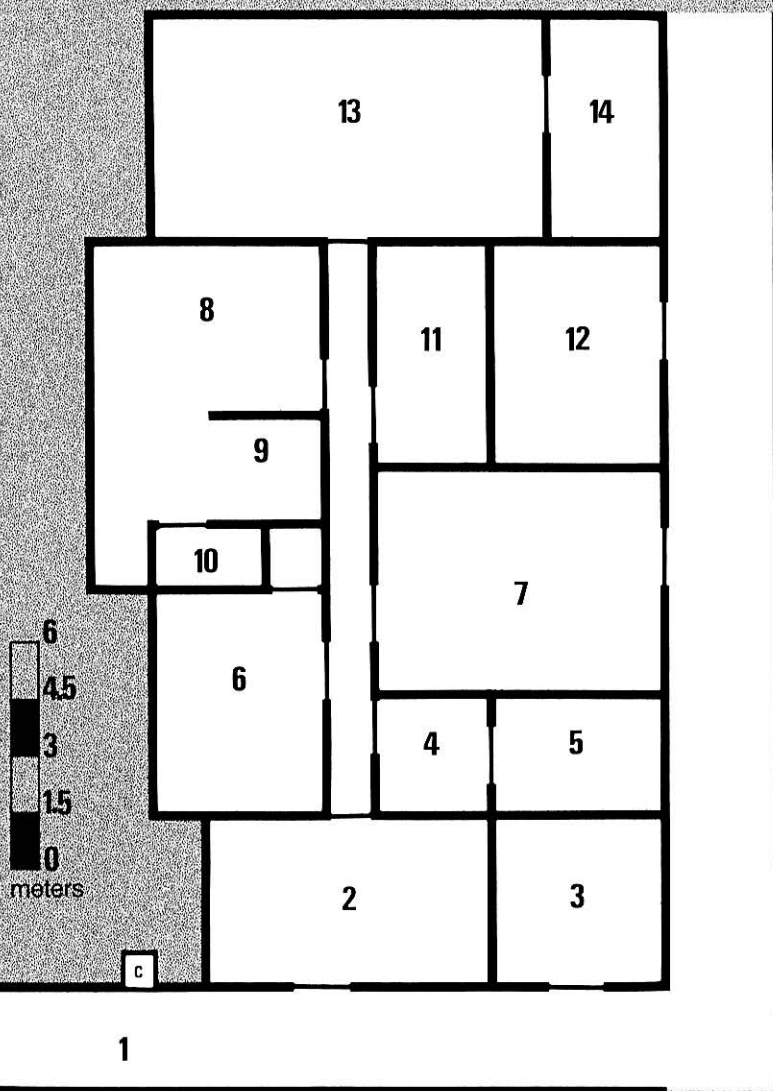
## THE ROOM

Urshukaan's suite is diagrammed on the opposite page.

It is up to the referee to describe the condition of the suite, based on the method in which the crime was committed. Furniture may or may not be disturbed. Certain factors will remain constant.



## Urshukaan's Suite



- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Corridor (public)        | 9. Bedroom - Urshukaan                                 |
| 2. Reception Room           | 10. Bathroom - Urshukaan                               |
| 3. Stateroom - vacant       | 11. Stateroom - Enli (not occupied on night of murder) |
| 4. Small Office             | 12. Stateroom - Eayukheal                              |
| 5. Large Office             | 13. Conference Room                                    |
| 6. Stateroom - Lukargik     | 14. Computer Room                                      |
| 7. Stateroom - Katarin Xuan | C - Disposal Chute (public)                            |
| 8. Sitting Room - Urshukaan |  |



A computer terminal is in the room. In a drawer under the terminal, Urshukaan keeps a body pistol. This pistol will be discovered unless the referee designates that it was taken elsewhere.

A bedstand will hold Katarin Xuan's dagger in any instance where the dagger has been left in the room but was not the murder weapon. (A murderer might also put it back here, but this is less likely.) A small clock of old-fashioned appearance is also located here; it is this clock which may be reset to disguise the time of the murder.

A notebook (see later in this chapter) will be present somewhere in the room.

Other clues are up to the referee to locate, using the suspect descriptions and embellishing as desired. Fingerprints and other such obvious clues need not be of any great concern, since even a criminal as slow as Srinivasan would know enough to wear gloves if he were planning a murder. Most prints will be those of perfectly innocent suspects who visited the room with good reason (and need not have been left the night of the crime).

## **THE PRIVATE FILES**

Urshukaan's private computer files may be used by the referee to provide the adventurers with additional information which they would find difficult to obtain in any other way. Such information may either help to determine the true murderer or to expose secret information about another suspect in order to complicate the mystery.

But first, the adventurers must solve another mystery. The Lamarck file system uses a series of access codes which limit the ability of employees to reach files regarded as restricted. One batch of files were Urshukaan's private ones, and he was the only person who could access them.

Files are organized into security classifications; to access a file within a certain classification, the computer must be supplied with the correct code word for that classification. Each classification uses a different code word. Urshukaan's files were classified "Highest Restriction", and only he knew the code word.

Most company files use a set, relatively unchanging code; key words are changed only occasionally. Urshukaan, however, changed his private files a great deal, according to Lukargik. He reset the code word every time he took up residence in a new office, and on a regular basis when at the same office for more than a few weeks.

To crack the files, the adventurers will need to discover the key word Urshukaan was using. A character with computer skill might attempt to crack the code in some other fashion, but doing so takes luck (roll intelligence or less) and time (one roll allowed every  $2D + 6$  hours of time spent,  $DM - \text{computer skill}$ ). The character can be doing nothing else throughout this time.

Lukargik can supply some information: the code word must be between 7 and 10 characters long, must contain only letters (no punctuation marks, spaces, etc.), and must not contain repeated letters. This leaves only slightly more than  $2 \times 10^{13}$  possibilities, many more than can be tried in the time remaining.

## **THE NOTEBOOK**

In any search of the victim's cabin, a notebook will be discovered in a secure place, probably not far from the computer terminal. The book contains various ran-

dom memoranda; dates, cryptic memos and reminders, notes on monetary amounts, etc. It makes dull reading, and apparently contains nothing of value.

A character reading the book will pick up a key clue only by rolling intelligence or less (one roll allowed each time the book is read through). If the roll is made, one page is noticed, containing these entries.

Lamarck—Suleiman	Heraklion—Noricum
Anenerkuk—Gashurzid	Arcturus—Harlequin
Nyarlathotep—Hieronymus	Tunguska—Ishmael
Aqilat—Muangwi	Anenerkuk—Heraklion
Banasdan—Sathys	Lamarck—Melchior

If submitted to rigorous analysis, the following facts are revealed:

1. The left-hand list is Urshukaan's itinerary on his current inspection tour of Lamarck's holdings in the region.
2. The right-hand list is a list of planet and/or subsector names from throughout the Solomani Rim region, in no particular order.
3. Each of these names contains at least seven but no more than ten letters, and none contain duplicated letters.

The list of names, of course, shows Urshukaan's schedule of key words for the security files. By using the word listed next to "Arcturus", the adventurers can tap into any of the private files.

## CONTENTS OF THE FILES

The following are suggestions for possible contents of Urshukaan's secret files. Not all of these should be used, and the referee may wish to insert other pieces of information, depending on what he wishes the players to learn. Paragraph headings are suggested file names, of which the computer will supply a list when the code word is entered. For atmosphere, other, irrelevant files may also be included (those having to do with Lamarck business, for example).

**Eayukheal:** Details on all of the Aslan's past history (as given in the suspect description).

**Ind Belt:** The data given in M'Banke's suspect description which Urshukaan was using to blackmail him.

**Narayanam:** Information on the whereabouts, habits, and movements of Bortai's family on Heraklion.

**Sharik:** Material being collected as a defense against her lawsuit.

**Demetriou:** A complete record of Urshukaan's successful campaign to remove her from office. Dossiers on her and her staff (including one on Akbar giving all the information shown in his description).

**Ling-Standard:** A record of correspondence between Urshukaan and the megacorporation, including the job offer and veiled hints of rewards for worthwhile information.

# The Suspects

See *Creating the Perfect Crime* and *Investigating the Crime* for information on how the material given here is used.

## KATARIN XUAN

Other

695586

Age 26 2 terms

Cr500

Dagger-1, Gambling-1

**Involvement:** Katarin is identified in station records as part of Urshukaan's party; she is likely to come to their attention through this. She can also be one of the suspects seen threatening or arguing with Urshukaan before the murder, if desired.

**Known Background:** Xuan is widely known to be Urshukaan's latest mistress. She is the daughter of an impoverished Lamarck miner from Heraklion who caught Urshukaan's eye during his last inspection tour there. A greedy, rather brainless little gold-digger, Xuan saw Urshukaan as her ticket out of poverty, and has used him as a means to indulging her passion for luxuries and money. When first encountered, she sports a black eye and other bruises, and makes no secret of the fact that Urshukaan has been mistreating her.

**Other Background:** There are some things Katarin does not freely admit, but which may be discovered.

1. Urshukaan had recently decided to drop Xuan, and was threatening to leave her, penniless, at Arcturus when the entourage moved on.

2. Katarin's former fiancé, an honest but very poor miner named Srinivasan, is on the station and has seen Katarin several times. Katarin is hoping that he will help her leave Arcturus and return home.

3. Urshukaan has been beating Katarin and otherwise abusing her, particularly when her demands for attention or money got too strident.

**Motive:** See *Other Background* above. Xuan has seen an opportunity to get free of Urshukaan, and knows that the devoted Srinivasan will help her out of trouble.

**Means:** The following are the major possibilities covering Katarin Xuan's actions.

A. On the night of the murder, Katarin was summoned by Urshukaan to his quarters. She may have been seen by casual passers-by en route there, but, since she was invited by Urshukaan, she came to the private entrance to his suite, rather than through the reception area of the suite. Thus Lukargik did not see her.

Once in the room, Katarin awaited an opportunity to stab Urshukaan in the back with a dagger she always carried. This dagger is of a type commonly worn by women on Heraklion, a low-law-level world with a rough reputation. As a part of her upbringing, the wearing of this dagger is as much a part of Katarin's personality as veils to a woman of Arab background on early 20th century Earth.

After killing Urshukaan, Katarin cleaned the knife on Urshukaan's clothing, leaving a stain, and took it with her. Analysis of the blade will reveal traces of Urshukaan's blood. Katarin will naturally be unwilling to surrender the weapon, but would be reluctant to do so, even if innocent. Anyone who knows anything about the culture of Heraklion (roll education or less, or consult a computer) will know that a woman of that culture never willingly surrenders the weapon to anyone.

B. Katarin arrives in the room as above. However, she kills Urshukaan by slipping poison into the victim's brandy.

Katarin obtained the poison at the station dispensary earlier the same day. She visited the dispensary complaining of insomnia, and looking to purchase a sleeping medication. During her visit, the pharmacist was called away by a viewphone call, giving Katarin the opportunity to steal a 30ml vial of poisonous chemicals used to deodorize starship air recirculation systems. The chemicals were discovered to be missing sometime after her visit.

If another character is in collusion with her, the viewphone call was made by that character, and the pharmacist will recognize the individual again. (Thus a link discovered between Katarin and another suspect will suggest that the murder was premeditated.) Katarin might, however, have taken the vial on the spur of the moment, taking advantage of her good fortune.

Katarin knew Urshukaan's habits well (as does Lukargik, who can supply information as necessary). Every night, before retiring, Urshukaan always drank a single glass of lunaire, a rare and delicate brandy vacuum-distilled on Earth's moon and appreciated by all connoisseurs of fine spirits. Xuan would not have found it difficult to slip the poison into this carafe, knowing he would drink it at some point.

When Katarin opened the vial, bits of a package seal fell on the floor, to be found by a diligent search of the room. Close examination could verify that the packaging was the same as that used on intact vials from the dispensary. If final proof is needed, the empty vial can be discovered in Katarin's room or in her possession, or found in a disposal chute with her fingerprints on it. Most of the clues, however, point to her more because of her familiarity with the victim than anything else.

C. If Katarin was not the murderer, certain clues may still point her way.

First, she can be placed in Urshukaan's room by persons having seen her go there, and by traces she left during her visit. (For instance, Lukargik might notice that some of Katarin's favorite wine had been decanted after his last visit to the room. A wine glass with her fingerprints on it might also be found.) Clues of this sort are sufficient to place her at the murder scene at some point during the evening.

If the murder was committed with a knife, some false leads may arise. First, her reluctance to surrender her knife will be damaging. It is, however, possible that Katarin no longer has her knife. If, for instance, she made an unsuccessful attempt to attack Urshukaan, he might have taken it away from her. A later visitor to Urshukaan's room might then have used it, either as the first available weapon to come to hand, or in a deliberate attempt to implicate Xuan. In the latter case, it would certainly be left in the room to be found. And Xuan would be slow to admit that she allowed the weapon to be taken from her, as this is a very serious offense against custom on Heraklion.

If Urshukaan died by poison, Xuan might be implicated again. She might have visited the dispensary to get her medication, and been recognized; some other individual could have stolen the chemicals (or they might come from another source entirely).

**Alibi:** Katarin will have no solid alibi when first questioned. She will claim to have been in her room all night, alone. If Katarin did commit the crime, this unprovable alibi is all she can offer (unless another suspect provides one for her).

A. It is true. In this case, Katarin was never in the room that night, and only planted evidence would point to her as the killer.

B. Katarin spent part of the evening with Moshe Srinivasan, and does not want to involve him. (For one thing, his presence gives her a much better motive to kill Urshukaan.)

C. Katarin is so upset by the loss of her knife (see previous material) that she is denying having been with Urshukaan at all.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 6. Background: 2. Knowledge: 8. Alibi: - 2. Confession: - 4.

**DMs:** + 6 if questioning involves loss of dagger; - 2 if interrogators are friendly; + 1 if interrogators are hostile; - 3 if Katarin perceives a threat to Srinivasan (at ref's option); - 2 if confronted with truth; - 2 if surprised (roll Katarin's intelligence or higher to determine if surprise planned by adventurers works); - 1 per 1000 credits offered (only for knowledge roll).

- streetwise or bribery skill of interviewer (whichever is higher).

**Notes:** Katarin is best used in combination with Moshe Srinivasan.

## MOSHE SRINIVASAN

Belter BCA464 Age 30 3 terms Cr1000

Vacc Suit-2, Brawling-2, Ship's Boat-1 2 Middle Passages

**Involvement:** Srinivasan is identified as a suspect because of a scene he created at the station before the murder took place. He attempted to force his way into Urshukaan's office, shouting threats and imprecations, and claiming that he would "kill that cold-blooded krinthoc" (Urshukaan) if he touched her again. This may be one of the scenes witnessed by the adventurers.

**Known Background:** Moshe Srinivasan is a miner from Heraklion employed by one of Lamarck Minerals' subsidiaries. Poor, but without any particularly bad record, Srinivasan resigned from Lamarck shortly after Urshukaan's recent inspection tour at Heraklion. Little else is known concerning the miner, who is large, aggressive, and not very bright.

**Other Background:** Moshe Srinivasan was, in fact, Katarin Xuan's fiancé before she met and went off with Urshukaan. The miner vowed revenge, and decided to bring Katarin back. He sold everything he owned for passage to Arcturus (where Katarin told him she was going), plus two tickets for use on the return trip.

Srinivasan has seen Katarin since his arrival at the Station, and she has been manipulating him for her own ends, hoping to escape from Urshukaan's influence.

**Motive:** See *Other Background* above.

**Means:** Moshe Srinivasan is not a particularly devious personality, and the basic account of his actions remains a constant. The specific results of these actions, however, can vary considerably.

A. Srinivasan managed to force his way into Urshukaan's suite, in order to demand that Urshukaan let Katarin return to Heraklion with him. It is possible that Katarin urged him to do this, and likely that Srinivasan gained access to the suite through Katarin's room, which has a separate entrance to the rest of the station that would get Srinivasan in without meeting Lukargik or being subject to possible monitoring by Urshukaan himself.

Once inside, Srinivasan lost his head. He worked himself into a rage and attacked Urshukaan. The ensuing struggle would pretty well wreck the room. In the end, Urshukaan is killed. The exact cause of death can be almost anything physical—a blow with a blunt instrument (such as Srinivasan's prospector's hammer), a slash from a dagger (Katarin's if Urshukaan took it from her), a gunshot (from Urshukaan's

pistol), strangulation, or a broken neck. Any of these would account for the death.

Srinivasan is really not bright enough to do much to cover up the crime. When he realized what he had done, he would probably flee. Most of the potential confusion in this situation comes from possible conflicting evidence—misleading clues pointing to M'Banke or Eayukheal, for example.

B. Srinivasan is far more useful as a red herring—so obvious that he serves as the perfect shield for the real murderer. In this case, the fight goes as above, but Urshukaan eventually gets his hands on his pistol and ejects Srinivasan summarily (probably too contemptuous of this bumpkin to even inform corporate security). The room is broken up, however; the real murderer, later, will be able to use the confusing evidence of the fight (and possibly some brief tidying up by Urshukaan) to confuse the traces of the real murder.

**Alibi:** During the fight with Urshukaan, the victim slashed Srinivasan's arm with a knife (Katarin's, if available). The resulting gash required medical attention, and Srinivasan went to the dispensary to get it.

If an air-tight alibi is required, one which eliminated Srinivasan from the running entirely, someone will have seen Urshukaan on the viewphone after Srinivasan's attack (possibly requesting a cleaning crew to straighten up the room first thing in the morning). The time of this call will be after Srinivasan was logged into the dispensary; the body could then be discovered before Srinivasan left.

If Srinivasan is to be left as a suspect, no call from Urshukaan goes in. Later evidence (from other suspects, perhaps) could eventually put the time of the death later than Srinivasan's check-in at the dispensary, but the question could remain open for quite some time.

Of course, if Srinivasan is wounded in this fashion, traces of blood on the knife will point to him. Again, there is so much evidence of his guilt that Srinivasan is better used as an innocent suspect, but an occasional referee might want to make him the killer just to throw off a group of players who feel they need to look at a complicated approach to everything.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 5. Background: 1. Knowledge: 3. Alibi – 1. Confession – 3.

DMs: – 5 or + 5 if he perceives either revealing or concealing something as being in Katarin's interests (referee's option); – 5 if confronted by truth; + 2 for every half-hour of questioning (cumulative, per session); – 3 if surprised (roll his intelligence or higher for planned surprise to work); – leader skill of interviewer.

**Notes:** Moshe needs Katarin around to make a good suspect. It is also wise to include either Sharik or Oojan, each of whom may commit the murder in a way not unlike Srinivasan's. As noted, Srinivasan is a better suspect than he is a murderer.

## SHARIK URSHUKAAN

Ex-Merchant First Officer                      475A98    Age 50 6 terms Cr750,000  
Pilot-3, Body Pistol-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Medical-1, Electronics-2,  
Computer-1, Admin-1

**Involvement:** Sharik's presence at Arcturus Station is not immediately known; she is travelling under an assumed name to avoid harassment from her husband's employees and agents. She is discovered only if her presence is revealed by another suspect who might reasonably know her, especially Lukargik, Eayukheal, or Baronet Rosa Demetriou, or by research into biographical files on Urshukaan—any character who rolls against intelligence successfully will recognize Sharik from photographs

in the file.

**Known Background:** Sharik is travelling under the name Kashin Thanh. As Thanh, she has no ostensible connection with the crime, and indeed, no record in the Wainright starport computers. (She entered the system under her real name. Thus, if she comes under suspicion as Thanh, the lack of starport records will generate further suspicion.) She has, however, been seen near Urshukaan's suite once or twice (including once on the night of the murder), and some station employees will volunteer the information that she was asking questions about Urshukaan's quarters, his movements in the station, and his planned itinerary.

**Other Background:** Sharik came to Arcturus Station to obtain evidence for a lawsuit against Urshukaan. When she married him, he had just taken up the post of commander of Imperial forces on Scaramouche; she gave up her own career as a merchant officer with Six-Star Services, a local tramp line, to become his wife. About three years ago, they quarreled, and Sharik left her husband. He retaliated by denying her access to money or credit. She is now suing him to recover her half of the property.

**Motive:** Urshukaan never prepared a will, and his marriage to Sharik was never dissolved. She stands to inherit most of his holdings as a result.

**Means:** The following options describe the major possible actions undertaken by Sharik.

A. With no thought except murder on her mind, Sharik made a surreptitious visit to Urshukaan's suite very late at night. She almost certainly made sure that Lukargik was not present first, by making a viewphone call to his room. This would ascertain that he was not present if he were already out; if he answered, Sharik would lure him out of the suite with a report of some difficulty in the office complex.

Once the assistant was out of the way, Sharik went to Urshukaan's front door, buzzed for admittance, and fired several rounds from a silenced body pistol into the victim as he answered the door. The body would have to be pulled back from the door, to allow it to close. Then Sharik departed immediately, disposing of the gun in a convenient disposal chute along the way.

Clues to this crime would be few, but, when found, could establish the facts fairly easily. If a search reveals the location of the gun, it will be fairly obvious that this is the murder weapon. Any character with gun combat-2 or more will be able to tell that it was recently fired (even if the magazine with several spent rounds is not recovered). More detailed ballistics tests would be required to prove conclusively that this is indeed the murder weapon (requiring facilities not available on the station, but which are included aboard the Banasdan patrol cruiser en route), but firearms are not discharged on the station very frequently, and the match (barring plot complications) would be fairly sure.

The weapon can be traced to Sharik if one of the adventurers thinks to examine the merchant's coveralls that someone saw her wearing the evening of the murder. Spots of oil in one of the garment's pockets will match the oil used in the workings of the pistol itself.

If the players are slow on the uptake, the coveralls might also have spots of the victim's blood (left when the body was moved)—but this is such an obvious clue that it probably shouldn't be used. Another possibility is for the coveralls to turn up, discarded, and with both oil and blood stains present, in another disposal chute. In this case, a six-pointed area that is not as faded as the rest of the coveralls pro-



vides a clue; this shoulder patch was that of Six-Star Services, Sharik's former employer. The patch was removed to disguise the outfit, but the discoloration still gives it away.

B. Sharik, using her assumed name, approached Urshukaan openly, visiting the suite and asking Lukargik for a few minutes with him. Lukargik escorted her in; Urshukaan, wrapped up in a computer report, ordered the assistant to bring a file from the office complex. Only after the assistant left did Urshukaan examine his visitor and recognize her. Lukargik might, in this case, have faintly heard him exclaim, "You! What brings you back to haunt me after all this time?"

Sharik had visited with the honest hope of working out her differences with her husband, but he greeted her with abuse and threats. In the course of the interview, he totally lost control, shouting at her at the top of his lungs, and, eventually, physically attacking her. The attack could be with bare hands, with a convenient knife (Katarin's, if available), or with Urshukaan's own pistol.

Seeking to defend herself, Sharik fought back. In the course of the fight, an accident occurred. The gun went off, the knife found its mark, or Urshukaan slipped and fractured his skull against a piece of furniture. In any event, he was dead.

Sharik, realizing that she could be accused of the crime (and doubting that a jury would believe her story, given her motive and the history of her stormy relationship with Urshukaan), made hasty efforts to erase all traces of her presence. Fingerprints could be wiped clean. But little could be done to disguise the fact of the murder, or Lukargik's knowledge that Urshukaan had a visitor fitting her description. She might, however, make it look as if some other party committed the crime. Signs of a struggle could be faked, giving the appearance that the assailant was more physically imposing than she. Sharik might decide to implicate someone else—possibly Xuan—by planting the murder weapon in the other suspect's room. In this case, traces of the weapon's passage (blood from a knife, grease from a gun) would again appear in the pocket of her coveralls. The weapon might then be missed by Lukargik, who could comment on its absence.

This scenario is best used by the referee who wants to cast suspicion plausibly on one of the others, particularly Xuan or Lukargik. In order for times to work out, Lukargik should be delayed in his errand (by anything from a crowded lift to a burglar in the office complex).

C. Sharik could, of course, be innocent. If so, a variant on option B should be used. Sharik did visit Urshukaan, but, instead of a fight, the shouting match resulted in Sharik's rapid ejection from the suite. The real murderer struck after this, but Lukargik's testimony about her arrival could keep suspicion focused on Sharik.

In any of the three situations, a distinctive perfume worn by Sharik could be noticed lingering in the room. Players might recognize it when they meet her another time (roll intelligence or less to do so).

**Alibi:** Like Katarin, Sharik does not have much of an alibi. As discussed above, she may pin her hopes, as the murderer, on implicating someone else.

Sharik will not admit to visiting Urshukaan's room, as she is afraid of being tied to the crime (even if she didn't do it, she'll realize that her motive is one of the best around). Once Lukargik confirms that she was indeed there, she will fall back on a stubborn denial that she killed her husband.

**Reaction Data:** Basic:8. Background:2. Knowledge:9. Alibi: 0. Confession: -6. DMs: +6 as long as her identity remains unknown; -3 if confronted with the



truth; - 3 if surprised (Roll her intelligence or higher to achieve surprise); + 2 if interrogators are hostile; - streetwise skill of interviewer.

**Notes:** Sharik is a good, all-purpose suspect. Note that she is capable of opening Urshukaan's electronic doors; information given on this subject for the Baronet can be used to provide an alternate approach to the murder, if desired. If this is done, however, enough clues to sort out one electronics expert from all the others should be present.

As Urshukaan's heir, Sharik is one of the powerful people who should not be offended. Mistreatment or violation of rights will cause Sharik Urshukaan to become a powerful enemy in the region (unless she's put behind bars).

## MARTIN LUKARGIK

Bureaucrat 886987 Age 38 5 terms Cr6,000  
Computer-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Admin-1, Body Pistol-1

**Involvement:** As Urshukaan's Administrative Assistant, Lukargik is both a prime source of information on the dead man's movements and potential enemies, and a good suspect himself. He is certainly the suspect with the greatest access to Urshukaan, and must therefore be considered.

**Known Background:** Lukargik has been employed by Lamarck for the past 10 years; the last five years have seen him as Urshukaan's number one assistant. His record has been exemplary. Notes in his personnel file show him to be ambitious, hard-working, and dedicated to the company, and he has been recommended several times for a managerial post.

**Other Background:** By digging deeper into corporate records, it will be discovered that Urshukaan has been responsible for holding back Lukargik's advancement, for purposes unknown. Lukargik has always suspected that Urshukaan wanted to keep him under close observation; as Urshukaan's chief assistant, Lukargik knows more than anyone else about the unscrupulous and often illegal business tactics his employer has used.

**Motive:** Lukargik is dedicated to Lamarck Minerals; everything he has ever done has been for the good of the company. He has recently discovered that Urshukaan has been skimming off corporate funds for private purposes, and has been entertaining offers of taking a new post with the megacorporation Ling-Standard Products, and, in the process, selling privileged information that would ruin Lamarck. As a result, Lukargik has been torn between protecting company interests and risking the possibility that Urshukaan would ruin his assistant's career before word of the president's plan could get out to the stockholders and other concerned parties.

**Means:** One of the following should be used to describe Lukargik's actions of the evening.

The specific method of killing Urshukaan can be quite varied—the prime candidates being poison, a gunshot wound, or a dagger wound. In any of these cases, see the information given for other suspects for specific potential clues.

With Lukargik as the murderer, the variety comes not so much from the method of the murder, but from the ways the assistant will attempt to disguise it. A clever man, Lukargik will do his best to divert suspicion from himself.

A. Lukargik has free access to his employer, and is trusted; thus there is little difficulty in murdering Urshukaan by any of the means mentioned above. Lukargik then arranges the scene of the murder to make it look as if Urshukaan was killed

by some unknown assailant.

In this case, Lukargik will plant a large number of clues to mislead the investigation. The exact nature of the clues will depend upon the method Lukargik used. A shooting, for instance, would probably be made to look like a break-in and burglary. The room has been ransacked, and valuables will have been taken from the room and from the victim's body. The victim will have been shot with his own gun, taken from a desk drawer. The weapon will have been dropped in the room, and a rubber glove will be found just outside the private entrance to the room. This door will have been forced open. The missing valuables may eventually turn up planted in one of the other suspect's rooms, perhaps even in one of the player characters' rooms.

B. If poison was used, the method will be much like that described for Xuan. Signs in the room will point to a visitor having seen Urshukaan: for instance, a cigarette found half-smoked lying next to the flashtray as if it didn't quite fall in when tossed there. Station computer records would show that a pack was ordered that morning through one of the public ordering tubes; it is not a brand used by any of the suspects. Two half-filled glasses are found in the room, one of them suspiciously free of fingerprints. Urshukaan's brandy snifter is also found, in the victim's hand; poison was introduced into the brandy carafe (as with Xuan). Finally, the computer room service log shows a request for service logged with Urshukaan's personal code number for a specific time in the evening, apparently proving that he was alive and entertaining company at that time.

In fact, the request was made by Lukargik, the only person who would know the code (Xuan might suggest this fact, if questioned). An inconsistency will turn up when it is discovered that someone—Xuan, a player-character, or one of the other suspects—passing near the victim's room heard a groan and a heavy thump about a half hour before the computer call was made. Further inquiry will place Lukargik at the dispensary during the day, before the poison turned up missing—the pharmacist remembers that he asked several times for various kinds of anti-nausea medication that were not on the shelves, forcing the pharmacist to check in the back room. (A contradiction: Xuan or Urshukaan's bodyguard might innocently drop a reference to "Old Ironguts"; Lukargik never seemed to suffer from eating spicy foods, motion sickness, or any other stomach ailment.)

C. If Urshukaan was killed with a knife, Lukargik would probably try to implicate Xuan. The victim took her knife away from her earlier in the evening (see the description of Xuan). Later, Lukargik used the knife on Urshukaan, stabbing him in the back. Knowing Xuan's background, he wiped the knife clean and sent it, via delivery tube, back to her room. She would assume that Urshukaan had relented and returned it, and would never mention that it was out of her hands. Then, during the inquiry, Lukargik would make sure that he was helpful in the investigation, making sure the adventurers knew Xuan had been in the room, and drawing attention to the knife.

The one way to disprove this set-up would be for Xuan to advance a solid alibi (perhaps she was with Srinivasan) which, coupled with the discovery of her cultural background, might lead to a suspicion of Lukargik. The fact that he had access to Urshukaan, was one of the only people who could strike from behind, and lied about the time Xuan was present in the room, could well be enough to give the adventurers the leverage to force a confession.

D. If Lukargik is innocent, suspicion might still fall on him in several ways. First,

the fact that he is the victim's closest associate makes him a likely suspect. In the case of a gunshot wound, nothing specific would point to him; if Urshukaan was poisoned, however, he might well have visited the dispensary (the medicine he wanted was for Urshukaan, not himself). He and Xuan are roughly equal as suspects for a knifing.

Most of the evidence relating to Lukargik, however, comes from motive and background, and from material found in the victim's private computer files.

**Alibi:** Lukargik's alibi centers around his work. Through the early part of the evening, he was in the suite, receiving visitors and running occasional errands for Urshukaan (thus he is sometimes gone during noisy confrontations). At 2140 hours, however, he claims that Urshukaan dismissed him for the evening. He then went to the office complex to finish up on some work that needed to be done before the next morning. The computers show that he logged in at 2144 and remained there until 2305, well after the murder was committed.

If Lukargik did not commit the murder, it occurred during this time frame. If he did, there are two alternate explanations.

A. The murder was committed earlier. In this case, Lukargik filed a room service call using Urshukaan's private code to make it appear that he was alive after Lukargik left the suite.

B. Lukargik falsified the computer records (a computer-2 skill allows this) to show him logged in at a time when he was, in fact, elsewhere—committing the crime.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 10. Background: 3. Knowledge: 10. Alibi: -2. Confession: -6.

DMs: -3 if approached "for the good of the company"; -2 if confronted with the truth; -4 if surprised (roll his intelligence or higher to achieve surprise); +2 if held back from duties; +2 if accused of involvement in murder (as opposed to being asked for help); +4 if help would reveal company secrets; - admin skill of interviewer.

**Notes:** Lukargik should always appear, as a source of information if not a suspect. His presence is vitally important.

As a murderer, he tends towards self-righteousness, and is probably one of those fools who would as soon boast about his deed as conceal it. He will at least act inexplicably glad to see his boss dead, one way or another.

## OOJAN M'BANKE

Ex-Belter

BAA787 Age 38 5 terms Cr30,000

Brawling-2, Vacc Suit-2, Electronics-2, Pilot-1

**Involvement:** M'Banke has been voicing loud threats against Urshukaan for several days, in connection with the failure of M'Banke's attempts to win concessions for the IBA (see below). The adventurers could well have witnessed such an outburst. He has a long history of dislike for Urshukaan, and over the last day or two has been seen behaving in an uncharacteristic manner—furtive and obviously ill-at-ease.

**Known Background:** A massive but usually gentle ex-asteroid miner, M'Banke is now head of the Independent Belters Association, which is lobbying for changes in Banasdan's treatment of small, independent mining concerns in the Arcturus Belt. A handful of larger corporations, focused around Lamarck Minerals, have been able to consistently block the IBA's attempts to persuade the government to lower licensing fees and otherwise ease the factors which make it nearly impossible for the independents to compete with corporate concerns.

Recently, M'Banke won the ear of an influential government official, and it seems almost certain that Banasdan policy in this area will be reversed. M'Banke was celebrating his triumph at Wainwright Station when he received an important personal message asking him to come to Station Three; he was heard to complain of this mysterious message to several people when he arrived, having no idea of why he was invited or who asked him to come.

**Other Background:** M'Banke soon learned the answers to his question. The message was from Urshukaan. They have met several times since M'Banke arrived, without witnesses; since these meetings began, M'Banke has begun behaving in a secretive fashion. Lukargik knows of the meetings, but does not know what was discussed.

**Motive:** Urshukaan is blackmailing M'Banke. Several years ago, while M'Banke was still an independent, he became involved in an actionist movement which was responsible for widespread sabotage in the belt. M'Banke, during one particular operation, accidentally killed three people—one of them the brother of Banasdan's Minister of State—when a bomb he'd planted went off early, during an unscheduled inspection tour.

M'Banke escaped detection, buried his past, and moved up in IBA political circles to his current position. But Urshukaan's security people have ferreted out this secret; revelation could cause a resounding backlash which could destroy not only M'Banke's career, but everything he's worked for as well.

Urshukaan demanded that M'Banke sabotage the new IBA agreement in return for the evidence accumulated against him, plus some incentive—an offer to set up an alternative licensing system which would get the independents a better set of license requirements and fees, but through Lamarck Minerals, to the company's profit.

M'Banke must give in to the blackmail, see his work completely destroyed, or see Urshukaan removed.

**Means:** Like Srinivasan, M'Banke has only one basic story to govern his movements on the night of the murder, but many possible outcomes can derive from this one line of action.

A. On the night of the murder, M'Banke had an appointment to see Urshukaan, during which he was able to give his final answer regarding Urshukaan's demands. A note, either on paper or on a computer, could be found either in Urshukaan's room or M'Banke's as desired, if a strong clue is needed.

M'Banke proceeded to Urshukaan's room rather late, arriving at a time when Lukargik was out, either on an errand or working elsewhere in the station. Urshukaan admitted M'Banke personally. Inside, the belter expressed his reluctance to betray his cause by sabotaging the new agreement. Urshukaan responded by calling up the file on M'Banke and the IBA on his computer terminal and preparing to transmit the information to several other places, including the local Traveller News Service booth and Marja Aguilar's office terminal. Threatened with this immediate prospect of public exposure, M'Banke grabbed Urshukaan and smashed the terminal, and a fight erupted.

As with Srinivasan, M'Banke could have killed Urshukaan by several methods (almost any direct physical attack—gun, knife, strangulation, etc.). Signs of a fight are everywhere evident in the room.

M'Banke is not as coldly calculating as Sharik, but neither is he as stupid as

Srinivasan. He knows he must establish an alibi, and disguise the fact of his guilt. To do this, he resorts to a fairly simple bit of misdirection, readjusting the time shown by a clock broken in the fight. Wiping clean any fingerprints he may have left, M'Banke then leaves the suite and goes somewhere public, where he is certain to be seen at the time shown on the clock.

This scheme could misfire, either by an early discovery of the tampering (someone finds the body and the clock before the time shown on the face), or by a discrepancy between the clock M'Banke changed and another timepiece he was not aware of elsewhere in the room.

M'Banke's escape from justice depends upon the time factor. He will be very specific about times when being interrogated, and will do everything possible to distract the adventurers from the period when the murder was actually committed. Because there were no other witnesses to this meeting, the proof of the act will come in the form of eliminating other suspects, exploiting discrepancies in M'Banke's story, and acting on M'Banke's background and the few clues they can find to piece together a story.

B. If M'Banke did not commit the crime, he may still have visited the suite. In this case, he probably gave in to the blackmail, then left to drink somewhere. His visit to Urshukaan's room might be discovered, as above, by the finding of a memorandum; a passerby might also have seen him going to or coming from his meeting.

If, after he left, there was another visitor who killed Urshukaan and broke up the room (Srinivasan, Sharik, Lukargik), M'Banke would continue as a prime suspect. Proving that he didn't kill Urshukaan would require the discovery of more specific evidence pointing to one of these others (perfume and other traces of Sharik's passing; Srinivasan's use of force on the door; etc.).

**Alibi:** As discussed previously, M'Banke's alibi depends upon being seen away from the scene of the crime, in public, at the time of the death. The manner in which this works out if he actually committed the murder is explained above.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 6. Background: -2. Knowledge: 4. Alibi: -6. Confession: -8.

DMs: -6 if confronted by the truth; -3 if surprised (roll his intelligence or higher for planned surprise to work); -2 if adventurers promise not to reveal truth to the public; +4 if interrogators are hostile; -streetwise skill of interviewer.

**Notes:** M'Banke is another powerful figure, with local influence over independent miners and well-placed friends in the Banasdan government. He is a suspect whose displeasure is to be avoided, according to the station manager.

Oojan has the electronics skill to break into Urshukaan's room; he has the resources and knowledge to use a miner's thermal bomb. Either of these two approaches (see notes for the Baronet and for Bortai Narayanam) could be used as alternative murder methods if desired.

## **BORTAI NARAYANAM**

Ex-Belter

8B7984 Age 34 4 terms Cr20,000

Vacc Suit-2, Computer-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-3

**Involvement:** Narayanam has been attempting to meet with Urshukaan for several months. When she finally did so, the day before the murder, she emerged from the meeting nearly incoherent. The only thing she was clearly heard to say was "I'll kill him. If he harms them, I'll kill him." She may be one of the suspects seen by

the adventurers prior to the murder, publicly threatening Urshukaan.

**Known Background:** Bortai Narayanam, formerly a miner, has become the spokesman and chief organizer of a labor movement which is seeking to unionize Lamarck's employees and promote better working conditions. She and her union have been a thorn in Urshukaan's side for months now. Urshukaan has reputedly tried everything to break up the union movement, including threats against Narayanam herself, so far to no avail.

**Other Background:** Delving deep into Narayanam's background, it will be discovered that she has two sisters and a brother living on Heraklion, where she was raised. Two of these three work for Lamarck Minerals. Bortai is devoted to them all.

**Motive:** Urshukaan recently decided to put an end to the problem Narayanam posed once and for all. He has informed her that continued union activities among his employees will be met by quick action directed against Bortai's siblings. They will be hurt or killed by some of Urshukaan's hired thugs if the entire union organization does not quickly disband. He has demanded that Bortai turn over a list of the chief union supporters in the Belt, as well.

**Means:** The following summaries delineate the major options for Narayanam's actions.

A. Convinced that the only way to protect her family without betraying her cause is to remove Urshukaan, Bortai decides to kill him. From mining supplies in her ship, she devises an effective murder weapon: a thermal bomb with a simple timer mechanism.

This bomb is a device which generates great amounts of heat; used on occasion for military applications, such bombs are far more frequently employed by civil engineering or mining personnel engaged in asteroid construction work. The intense heat is used to slag down areas of an asteroid's surface, so that braces, pylons, and other structural elements can be set into molten rock which, when it cools, then provides an extremely secure foundation for the structure in question. The timer employed is also part of the standard package; it allows a charge to be set with up to a one-hour delay.

On the night of the murder, Bortai prepared the package, setting the timer for the full hour's delay. She then had a station messenger deliver it to Urshukaan's suite.

A few minutes before the scheduled detonation time, Bortai placed a call to Urshukaan. She told him the information he had asked for was in the package, and, feigning agitation and concern, begged him to check through it and make sure everything he needed was there. This put Urshukaan into proximity with the bomb at the time of detonation.

When the bomb went off, it generated a great deal of heat, but a minimum of shrapnel or blast effects. Investigators will note severe charring effects; the body and room will be badly burned, and most physical evidence will be obliterated. Bits and pieces of the bomb may be recovered, enough for the party to establish that it was, indeed, a thermal device.

Suspicion will naturally focus on miners; Moshe, M'Banke, and Bortai could all have access to the material needed. (Indeed, the referee should consider this an alternate means for the first two, though it is rather out of character for Srinivasan.) The fact that a package was sent to Urshukaan by Narayanam will be a matter of record, as is the viewphone call. People who dealt with Narayanam might have no-



ticed that she was very much concerned with time. Most of these clues are more conjectural than solid, but could give players a starting point in attempting to break Narayanam's alibi.

B. Alternatively, Narayanam may have gone to Urshukaan's suite that evening to deliver the list he demanded. In this case, after she turned over the list, she was appalled when Urshukaan accepted it and then issued fresh demands, again threatening her family.

Like all Heraklionian women, Bortai carries a dagger (hidden in the top of her left boot). Overcome by rage, Bortai pulled this dagger and leaped to the attack, stabbing Urshukaan repeatedly. Only after he was dead did she realize what had happened.

Narayanam proceeded to carefully disguise all trace of her presence. Any tell-tale glasses or other signs of a second person in the room would be removed. Fingerprints would be wiped. Narayanam wants the crime to be completely mysterious: an unknown assailant, rather than someone easily connected with the victim in an obvious way.

The most difficult problem is the murder weapon. Although more cosmopolitan in her outlook than Katarin, Bortai is unlikely to readily abandon the weapon, although she probably realizes that it could incriminate her if examined. If Katarin Xuan's dagger is already in the room, however, an obvious course of action presents itself. The dagger is similar (though not identical) in pattern; since Bortai knows nothing about Katarin, she would assume that the dagger belongs to the dead man, and could be switched without anyone realizing it.

Therefore, Bortai would leave her own dagger in the room, and take Katarin's with her. Later, when examinations were taking place, Narayanam would willingly turn the dagger over for examination, and it would appear that she was perfectly innocent.

If Urshukaan and Srinivasan fought that night, however, it might be hard for Narayanam to explain how Srinivasan's blood came to stain the knife. This might arouse suspicions. If Katarin ever recognized her own blade, this would prove several things—though Katarin's reticent attitude concerning the knife would cause great complications.

C. If Narayanam is innocent, she might still make an excellent suspect as a result of false leads. For example, if Urshukaan was killed by a bomb, Narayanam might still have sent a package (the actual list Urshukaan demanded) and/or made a viewphone call to him. In a stabbing death, she might have visited him, leaving traces of her passage, and could even have drawn the knife on him and had it taken away, just as was described for Katarin Xuan.

**Alibi:** If a solid, unbreakable alibi is desired, Bortai could have attended a union meeting throughout the evening, and been in plain sight the entire time.

In a bombing death, of course, Bortai need never have gone near Urshukaan's suite. However, her movements would require a visit to the station's delivery service within an hour before the bomb exploded, and access to a viewphone just before it went off. The union meeting could still be used, provided she delivered the bomb before her arrival, and slipped off to place the call from a public viewphone during the meeting itself. This might be uncovered.

In the stabbing death scenario, her movements that evening would be confused, with no clear-cut alibi available.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 9. Background: 3. Knowledge: 7. Alibi: – 1. Confession: – 3.





Since he joined Lamarck Minerals, Urshukaan has employed Eayukheal to carry out dirty jobs, those involving force and blackmail against rivals, still under threat of revealing the Aslan's secret. Urshukaan even vowed to release the secret if Eayukheal killed himself. Recently, however, Urshukaan asked more than Eayukheal can deliver—he demanded that the Aslan take steps to discredit a rival minerals firm—a firm in which the Aslan's sister is an important executive. Carrying out the orders means the ruin of his sister, and even greater dishonor.

**Motive:** See the background above. Eayukheal has tried, without success, to get free of Urshukaan. The man's death is the only way out. But Eayukheal cannot allow the truth of the crime to come out (or his family will suffer the disgrace); nor can he take his own life, even though his tormenter is dead, until he discovers whether or not Urshukaan has left some record of the secret behind.

**Means:** If Eayukheal is involved in the crime, one of the following explanations of events is used.

A. The Aslan visited Urshukaan on the night of the murder to plead again to be released from the victim's latest set of orders. When Urshukaan refused, the Aslan slashed him across the throat with his dewclaw, killing him.

B. As above, except that Eayukheal seized him and broke his neck. In this case, an investigator with medical skill would discover some unusual signs on the victim's body.

1. The neck is not just broken, it is dislocated by being pushed up and back with great force.

2. The victim's jaw has been similarly dislocated.

3. There is a scratch—possibly fairly deep—running vertically between the victim's temple and right eye.

These signs were left by the attack, which involved the Aslan's placing his hand under the victim's chin and pushing back and up with great force. It is a blow which takes great physical strength and leverage, and would be unlikely for most human characters. The scratch comes from the dewclaw, which rested across the victim's face when the shove was delivered.

In either of these two forms of attack, there are few other clues to be found. Above all other things, it is the behavior of the Aslan which is the strongest clue and the Aslan reputation which provides the strongest counterbalance against any presumption of guilt.

After the murder, the Aslan will attempt to gain access to Urshukaan's computer files. He is most likely prevented from this at the time of the murder by the return of Lukargik to the reception area from some errand. Eayukheal would slip out of the private entrance.

The Aslan will continue to seek out those files. Clues that turn up later might include an attempted break-in in the office complex, demands or threats against Lukargik for access to the files, etc. If Eayukheal gets access to the files, he will destroy them, and then settle into a final period of meditation leading up to a ritual suicide. As long as the files may still be uncovered, he will postpone the suicide in the hopes of recovering them and thus sparing his family the shame of his past.

C. If Eayukheal is innocent of the crime, there will be no physical evidence implicating him. His behavior, however, will be suspicious—in fact, many of the same actions connected with the search for Urshukaan's computer records will take place one way or the other. The Aslan does not want those facts to come out. He will

do everything he can to recover the files before killing himself.

It may be that he will succeed in his purpose, thus apparently proving himself the killer. Other evidence might turn up to conflict with this, however. The discovery of what really motivated Eayukheal could very usefully help the players to fix the blame on another party and clear up these discrepancies.

Players will be disinclined to suspect the Aslan, thinking that it is out of character for him to kill, and then not admit it. In Eayukheal's case, however, the need to suppress the truth of his own dishonor outweighs this aspect, and makes it very likely that his behavior will come as a surprise—albeit a reasonable one—to the investigating players.

**Alibi:** When questioned, Eayukheal is sullen and uncooperative. Whether he is guilty or innocent, his answer is "I did not kill him. I will say no more." Since most people who know anything about the Aslan will assume him incapable of lying, this is sufficient to convince many of his innocence. If he is guilty, the lie is sparked by his need to spare his family from dishonor. Further questioning will yield nothing.

A possible alibi the referee may wish to allow would place Eayukheal in the Lamarck Minerals computer room at the time of the murder, attempting to tap into the private files and erase the information there. He might be seen by someone else (a security guard, or Lukargik), and thus given a solid alibi, even though he refuses to discuss matters himself. As he would not want Urshukaan to know he was there, the Aslan would have been quite secretive in this visit, and might even have attacked someone discovered in the room from behind in order to make the break-in. All of this could generally be used to increase the uncertainty and mystery of a situation in which Eayukheal was not the killer.

**Reaction Data:** Eayukheal does not use reaction rolls. See information above (and below) for his behavior.

**Notes:** To use Eayukheal, both referee and players should be familiar with the character of the Aslan, as presented in *Library Data (A-M)* and other GDW material. If this information is not available, do not use Eayukheal. If he is used, be sure that it is clear that he is an Aslan, following Aslan precepts of honor and ethics.

One point which should be common knowledge is that an Aslan would not use a knife as a weapon, although the dewclaw might leave a wound difficult to distinguish from a knife wound. Players overly concerned with determining a murder weapon may seize upon the notion that a dagger will leave traces of metal in the wound, while an Aslan claw will not. This narrows the field of suspicion a tad early in the adventure. To counteract it, suggest that many forms of daggers (including those used in this adventure) are not metal at all, but rather molded from a superhard plastic.

## BARONET ROSA DEMETRIOU

Noble	5A6BAC	Age 42	6 terms	Cr350,000
Admin-3,	Computer-2,	Body Pistol-2,	Leader-1	Body Pistol
Ship's Boat-1				Yacht

**Involvement:** The Baronet, a noble who has been stranded at Arcturus Station Three for several weeks by the breakdown of her yacht's navigational computer systems, met Urshukaan accidentally in a public promenade of the station. In response to some unctuous greeting by Urshukaan, she was heard to say, "Of all the dirty Stinkscrabblers I might have met, of course it had to be you. Why don't

you crawl in some hole, before one of your victims has sense enough to pay you back—in full!” This encounter could be one of those witnessed by the adventurers.

**Known Background:** Baronet Rosa Demetriou, youngest daughter of the eighteenth Baron Demetriou of Champa, rose to a prominent level of the sector administrative hierarchy before her career ended in a cloud some eight years ago. Her last official post was as Governor of Scaramouche, which she took over from Acting Governor General Urshukaan. It was on her recommendation that Urshukaan was charged with using unnecessary force and exceeding his authority in his treatment of the rebels on the planet; most of Demetriou’s administration was spent in attempts to rebuild shattered relations and restore Imperial good will. These efforts were not wholly successful, and were cut short when discrepancies in the treasury were traced to the Baronet. Charges of malfeasance were brought against her. She resigned under a cloud, and, though pardoned by a high official in the sector government, never again held any post connected with the government.

**Other Background:** It was Urshukaan, acting through agents, who was responsible for the charges brought against the Baronet (which were supported by elaborately faked evidence). This was done by way of revenge for her part in his own fall from grace. One of Urshukaan’s private files describes this elaborate plot.

**Motive:** The Baronet always knew, but could never prove, that Urshukaan was behind her downfall. An intensely ambitious woman with a burning desire to serve the Imperium, Demetriou found herself an outcast and has grown increasingly bitter as the years have passed. It wouldn’t take much for her to act out her deepest desire of bestowing on Urshukaan the final punishment for his past misdeeds.

**Means:** The Baronet’s actions follow one of the courses outlined below.

A. Having conceived the notion of killing Urshukaan, the Baronet turned to one of her entourage for assistance. This was Akbar (described later in this section), a former Scaramouche rebel who was pardoned by Demetriou and became her devoted servant. Akbar, a man of many talents, was able to assist her in formulating a plan of action.

Akbar was able to steal certain explosives from the station warehouses (see the description of Chaijin Davis) and use them to assemble a small bomb. At some time prior to Urshukaan’s arrival in his room, Akbar gained entrance to the suite, planted the bomb under the victim’s bed, and left again. The timer for this bomb, like that described for Davis, could be set up for up to 12 hours’ delay.

Akbar, unlike Davis, would not have adopted a repairman’s disguise. Instead, his knowledge of electronics makes it possible for him to tamper with electronic locks to gain access where needed. (Characters with electronics skill will know that electronics-2 or jack-of-all-trades-3 would be needed to do this.) Signs of the tampering will be plain to anyone with electronics skill who examines the door mechanisms. The burglary of the warehouse would be carried out in the same way.

Connecting Akbar to the crime will not be easy. If, however, the choice can be narrowed to, say, Akbar and Davis (by alibis, or by other means), the discovery of a dossier on Akbar in Urshukaan’s private files will prove that he has the knowledge to get past the electronic locks, while Davis does not. This file will also show that he was suspected of complicity in the assassination of Urshukaan’s predecessor as governor—an assassination performed using a bomb very similar in fashion to this one.

The Baronet is, of course, shielded by Akbar, and he could indeed be used as

a suspect separate and apart from her. If her complicity is desired, and some stronger connection warranted, it is suggested that Demetriou actively provides an alibi for Akbar. Since she is thus protecting him, her involvement in the crime is fairly obvious.

B. Again, Akbar and Demetriou work together, but in this version, the Baronet takes a more active role in the murder.

In this version, Akbar uses his skill with locks to get both of them into the suite on the night of the murder. Once inside, one of two methods—a body pistol or a dagger—could be used to do the deed. The Baronet is more likely to use the pistol, as she is an excellent shot; Akbar is most likely to cut the victim's throat.

This version of the murder makes use of all standard clues—the murder weapon is dropped in a disposal chute, as well as any bloodstained clothes. Grease markings on the Baronet's clothing would match with her pistol. Akbar's dagger is of a type made only on Scaramouche, and used as an unofficial symbol of the Solomani rebels. (This clue could point to Davis or Akbar as rebels, or to Demetriou or Urshukaan himself if it were a prize of some kind.)

For traditionalists, a pearl or other small personal item could be lost by the Baronet during her visit, and found through a thorough investigation of the suite. This missing item could later be connected to her, but this is a fairly blatant clue.

C. It is more likely that, if the Baronet did not commit the crime, she was nowhere near the room. Thus circumstantial evidence probably won't point to her or to Akbar. If she committed the crime, the referee should obscure the trail with other suspects; if she did not, most suspicion should attach to her because of her motive, and because of her highly uncooperative attitude. Furious at even being suspected, the innocent Baronet will have many of the earmarks of a guilty party.

Finally, someone might very profitably plant clues pointing to her in an effort to provide false leads. A stolen piece of her jewelry could be deliberately planted in the suite, or the murder weapon hidden in her room. Thus, if the Baronet didn't do it, she can best be made a valid suspect by some conscious plot on the part of the murderer.

The most likely candidates for this action are Lukargik and Davis.

**Alibi:** Demetriou's alibi is provided by members of her own staff. Several will claim to have been with her, or to have spoken by viewphone, at various times, giving her a nearly continuous alibi for the entire evening.

If the Baronet committed the crime, one or more of these servants are not telling the truth. Close questioning and cross-examination will reveal inconsistencies in the stories told on a roll of 8+ (DM + interrogator's streetwise or leader skill). Inconsistencies do not necessarily mean that the alibi is not true (and can turn up even if the Baronet is innocent), but certainly will encourage further investigation.

If Akbar's bomb was used, no alibi will cover the entire 12-hour period prior to the death. Collaboration between Akbar and Demetriou may be pointed up by Akbar's alibi for some specific time—say the period of the warehouse break-in—being given by the Baronet alone.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 5. Background: 0. Knowledge: 2. Alibi: -6. Confession: -8.

DMs: -6 if confronted with the truth; -5 if surprised (roll her intelligence or higher to achieve surprise); -3 if deference is shown to her rank; +1 per half hour of questioning or detention (cumulative, per session); + her social level minus that of the interviewer; - admin or steward skill of the interviewer, whichever is greater.

**Notes:** The use of the Baronet also requires the introduction of her servant, Akbar.

Akbar 994972 Age 46 7 terms Cr10,000  
Brawling-3, Blade Combat-3, Mechanical-2, Electronic-2, Dagger  
Jack-of-All-Trades-1, Auto Pistol-1

Bearing a distinctive scar across his throat, Akbar is unable to speak—the result of a wound suffered when a laser burn ruined his larynx. Akbar was a rebel on Scaramouche prior to his capture; the Baronet pardoned him in exchange for his help in rooting out a stubborn nest of rebel resistance. Her kindness (she provided medical aid at her own expense) led him to become her devoted servant. He acts as a combined factotum and highly talented bodyguard. Use Demetriou's reaction rules.

The Baronet obviously has much power and influence, and should be treated with great care and caution.

## CHAIJIN DAVIS

Rogue 885A93 Age 30 3 terms Cr20,000  
Streetwise-2, Jack-of-All-Trades-2, Forgery-1

**Involvement:** Davis would not, normally, be suspected at all, except for a single incident. In a bar the night before the murder, Davis got very drunk, and was heard to utter loud but rather incoherent threats against Urshukaan, promising vengeance for "our comrades slaughtered by the Impie pig." Several station administrative personnel heard him, and brought him to Aguilar's attention after Urshukaan was found dead.

**Known Background:** A native of Scaramouche, Chaijin Davis has an obscure background. A check of his entry records at the starport will reveal an attached note from Imperial authorities: Davis is a known Solomani agitator and should be watched; he was arrested two years ago on Hathor for political agitation and inciting a riot (charges dropped); three years ago on Murphy on suspicion of involvement in a plot to hijack a starship (not proven); six years ago on Umber for rioting and destruction of public property, and nine years ago on Cambyses as the main organizer of a series of college political protests (sentence suspended). Little more is available on him.

**Other Background:** A detailed survey of the rebellion on Scaramouche notes that party resistance was considerably hampered following the arrest of Moradeyo D. Atiyah, one of the rallying points of the movement, during Acting-Governor Urshukaan's first proclamation of martial law.

**Motive:** Chaijin Davis is Moradeyo Atiyah's son, travelling under her maiden name to avoid being connected to the heroine of the Scaramouche uprisings. He hates the Imperium, being a staunch member of an extremist Solomani group which advocates the use of terrorist tactics to win back Solomani freedom. Most especially, Chaijin wants to kill the man responsible for crushing the rebellion on Scaramouche and killing both his parents (his mother died in prison, and his father was killed in the fighting).

**Means:** The actions of Chaijin Davis at the time of the murder can be drawn from one of the options presented below.

A. When Davis became aware of the fact that Urshukaan was on the station, he set out to build himself a small bomb. Using some contacts, he ascertained the fact that various companies store explosives at the station for use by miners. A forged maintenance worker's pass and some stolen coveralls allowed him to steal



some of this explosive, enough to build a small (1 kilo) bomb. A great deal of shrapnel—nails, razor blades, etc.—was built into the bomb as well, making it an excellent terrorist's anti-personnel bomb. The detonator would be a simple electrical device with a timer; Davis has had plenty of exposure to this sort of weapon, and can assemble it easily.

Using the same maintenance worker's pass and coveralls, Davis then brought the device, concealed in a tool kit, to the victim's quarters. While pretending to check up on a problem with the viewphone system, Davis set the bomb in Urshukaan's quarters, in such a way as to do the maximum possible damage. This might have been done at almost any time up to 12 hours before the explosion; it will be very difficult to chart the suspect's movements over the whole time. Nonetheless, passersby may have noticed a repairman entering the suite at some point (and station records do not show any personnel assigned to work in the suite that day); his presence might be more forcibly brought home by Lukargik's mentioning that some tools discovered in the room belonged to the repairman sent to check the viewphone that afternoon.

In building a case against Davis, most of the clues will come from tracing the missing explosives to him. Routine legwork can establish a description of the repairman that will rule out several other suspects; when this tallies with the description of the maintenance worker who was in the storage areas before the explosives turned up missing, and Davis's history as an amateur terrorist is uncovered, a good working base of evidence (albeit circumstantial) will be available. And, as the reaction information shows, Davis is boastful and vain enough to be tricked into a confession with a little effort.

B. Another method of murder is somewhat more direct. Davis, again disguised as a repairman, gained access to the suite on the night of the murder. He came to Urshukaan's door, buzzed for admittance, and shot the victim once in the stomach when the door opened. Dragging the wounded man away from the door, Davis then spent several minutes reminding Urshukaan of his background, of his dead parents, and of the inevitability of Solomani triumph over Impie slime and weakling Vilani degenerates. His tirade over, he placed the gun against the victim's head and executed him.

This killing creates a lot of blood, and there are ample chances for bloodstains to turn up on the killer's shoes, clothes, etc. Most of these items would probably go into a disposal chute, but there might be an overlooked item or two that could be discovered by a careful search. (One possibility would be two photographs, of Davis's parents, which Davis had out as part of his show-and-tell session before the execution.)

The style of the killing is most in keeping with the political/terrorist approach. Most of the other suspects are unlikely to have acted in so cold-blooded a fashion. By and large, the shooting cases revolve either around an accident, or an act of passion. This one might stand out for that reason.

It is also possible that the victim himself could provide some clue to his killer's identity, in the best tradition of detective fiction. A symbol drawn in blood on the floor as he listened to Davis rave could have no special significance, unless research into the background of Scaramouche and the rebellion revealed it to be the symbol of the Scaramouche rebels.

C. If Davis is not the killer, circumstantial evidence will still point his way. He



is the sort of obvious killer (much like Srinivasan) who makes a superb red herring.

**Alibi:** Davis is unlikely to have an effective alibi. If the need arises for one, he can have been seen in a public place (a bar for instance) at the time of the killing (if the murder was a shooting). If a bomb was used, as discussed previously, it is virtually impossible for him to have a full alibi for the entire period.

**Reaction Data:** Basic: 3. Background: -2. Knowledge: -2. Alibi: -6. Confession: -8.

DMs: -6 if confronted with truth; -4 if surprised (roll his intelligence or greater to succeed); -2 if questioner is racially Solomani; -2 if questioner seems sympathetic to Solomani cause; +3 if questioner is Vilani or non-human; +2 if questioner is hostile; -streetwise or leader skill of interviewer, whichever is greater.

**Notes:** For details on Solomani political theory and the Solomani Movement, see Supplement 10, *The Solomani Rim*, Supplement 11, *Library Data (N-Z)*, or Double Adventure 3, *The Argon Gambit*. This information is not strictly necessary to the adventure, but can be useful as background. If players are not familiar with the Solomani, the various references should be treated as mentions of a political movement, in many cases radically opposed to the Imperial government, which has some terrorist elements. The Scaramouche rebellion and Chaijin Davis, are connected to this extremist faction.

## GENERAL NOTES

Naturally, a great deal of latitude has been left in the suspect descriptions; there are many areas still to be filled in. This is up to the referee, based on the exact scenario being cooked up to test player skill.

When setting up the mystery, consider how the murder is to have taken place, and determine additional clues of possible use from this. For instance, the arrangement of the victim's body can be a powerful indicator. If killed by Demetriou after a surreptitious entrance to the suite, the body is more likely to be found in a position indicating relaxation or repose. This is highly unlikely if Moshe Srinivasan killed him, since Moshe is not the sort who could easily sneak up on his victim.

The referee should feel free to go beyond these descriptions. Several characters have the electronics skill needed for a break-in. Thus Akbar isn't the only one who could unlock doors and make a stealthy approach. Davis might just as well use a knife, or possibly a pistol and knife in combination (belly shot to immobilize, slit throat to kill). Sharik might have slipped in long before the time of death and poisoned the brandy, knowing her husband's partiality to it.

When coming up with some original approach, make sure the mystery is consistent with the character. (How would Katarin use a bomb? How could Demetriou know enough to poison the right bottle?) Then make sure enough clues are provided to allow the mystery to be solved. Enough confusion should be available to keep the players uncertain for a time, but there must be a single solution that satisfactorily explains all the clues—one which sufficient detective work will uncover. Some of these may rely on confessions or other interrogative actions, but no murder should be completely insoluble.

# Non-Player Characters

The characters described in this section are not suspects (unless the referee wishes to construct a description, patterned on those already presented, which will make them suspects). Each has an iron-clad alibi and absolutely no involvement in the crime. They may, however, be encountered in the course of the investigation.

## MARJA AGUILAR

Station Manager	6878A8	Age 38	5 terms	Cr8000
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Admin-4, Computer-3, Leader-1, Jack-of-All-Trades-1, Auto Pistol-1

Aguilar, as station manager, is a relatively influential friend. She is also, however, a representative of the Banasdan government first and foremost. Aguilar is extremely unlikely to countenance anything illegal or unethical in the group's investigation. If they attempt to ignore her wishes in this area (and she will become aware of such things as unauthorized use of truth drug or stress detection gear), she will almost certainly report it to Inspector Dragovitch on his arrival. Friend though she may be, she has responsibilities and a job of her own to think about.

INSPECTOR TATSUO DRAGOVITCH

Ex-Army Captain	AB9566	Age 34	4 terms	Cr5000
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Brawling-2, SMG-2, Tactics-2, Rifle-1, Electronics-1, Gambling-1

Dragovitch is the police investigator assigned to the case. On his arrival, he proves to be everything Aguilar said he would be (see *Death on Station Three*). He dislikes bands of adventurers on principle, and will be only too happy to detain them if he feels they have exceeded their authority, or if someone with influence (Aguilar, M'Banke, Narayanam, Sharik Urshukaan, or Baronet Rosa Demetriou) accuses them of any sort of impropriety.

**ENLI ALNASR**

Ex-Marine                                      B6C353      Age 34   4 terms                      Cr3000

Brawling-3, Cutlass-1, SMG-1, Gambling-1

Enli is Urshukaan's bodyguard. He was unfortunately not present to guard his master on the night of the murder, having injured himself in a fall down a flight of stairs just a few hours before. Enli spent the evening in the dispensary. With Urshukaan dead, he will obey Lukargik; he is also secretly infatuated with Katarin, and may attempt to help her if he suspects she is in danger.

# Library Data

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The following library data entries are available in response to the correct keywords on any public terminal at Station Three.

**Heraklion:** Planet in the Arcturus Subsector of the Solomani Rim (0801-D343312-E). A poor, non-industrial planet, the world is given over to resource exploitation. Heraklion is currently owned and operated by Lamarck Minerals, LIC.

The planet is largely unremarkable, though the culture which has developed is of some interest to sociologists. A rough, poorly policed society, the planet has fostered the development of a strong streak of self-reliance. Most of the inhabitants are accustomed to bearing arms from an early age; this is less noticeable in the men (who instead tend to be trained in various types of unsophisticated hand-to-hand combat) than in the women. Most women on Heraklion carry daggers of a distinctive and highly useful design. A woman of Heraklion caught without her dagger in public (or deprived of it against her will) is subjected to considerable shame and humiliation.

**Ling-Standard Products:** Originally a mining firm (and still very active in that field), LSP currently is engaged in a wide spectrum of activities including the manufacture of electronic equipment of all sorts, ground and air vehicles, starships and starship armaments, drive systems, power systems, computers and software, small arms, and a variety of consumer goods. Concerned to a small degree with banking, insurance, and stockbrokerage, LSP maintains mining and manufacturing facilities throughout the Imperium.

**Scaramouche:** Planet in the Harlequin subsector of the Solomani Rim (0109-A7C6503-9). One of the few worlds in the Solomani Rim where local longing for the "good old days" of Solomani rule remains strong enough to give rise to active unrest, Scaramouche is a comparatively backwater world of little importance.

The planet's harsh atmospheric conditions and relative lack of value contributed significantly to the continuation of Solomani sympathies. Resistance to the presence of an Imperial governor and a brigade of marines at the starport/capital led, in 1098, to the outbreak of the so-called Unity Uprisings against the government. The uprising was largely suppressed by Acting Governor General Ringiil Urshukaan, though his methods were harsh and later repudiated by higher authority (despite Urshukaan's popularity on nearby worlds, which perceived his actions as decisive in preventing a recurrence of unrest in that portion of the sector).

The organization of the rebellion effectively collapsed after Urshukaan's capture of its major leader, Moradeyo Davis Atiyah.

After the short administration of Governor Baronet Rosa Demetriou, in which attempts at reconciliation were begun, it was decided that the Imperial presence on Scaramouche would be greatly reduced. Government was formally turned over to the citizens of the planet seven years ago (1102), and the post of Governor dis-

solved. The majority of the garrison was withdrawn at that time.

Since the Imperial withdrawal, government on Scaramouche has varied from unstable to nonexistent. Numerous splinter groups of the local Solomani party have caused the movement to collapse from internal bickering, while no other political force has emerged. Violence is common, and the world has been posted an amber zone by the Travellers' Aid Society.

# Referee's Notes

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*Murder on Arcturus Station* is quite unlike any other adventure ever undertaken. The situation is provided with a great deal of flexibility. Of course, this is won only at the cost of something else—in this case, the referee is burdened by a great deal of work not usually necessary in preparing to run a published **Traveller** adventure.

Nonetheless, the rewards should be obvious. As referee, you control many things that prepared adventures don't usually let you control—the complexity, the solution, even the exact nature of character interaction. This adventure won't appeal to everyone, but we think it will appeal to a great many people who have the creativity to develop an adventure, but not the time to fit all the details together.

The adventure is not meant to be taken as gospel. We often stress the fact that referees should tinker with their material as they wish. This time, we insist. A great many things have been done to allow multiple playings and variable situations; but there are still many elements left which, once revealed, spoil the "surprise" aspect of the mystery. Tamper with these: add new suspects; set up a brand new murder; draw from classic literary and movie sources for more complicated plots and more intricate solutions.

One other possibility which there was no time to explore in detail here is to dispense with the standard player characters and use the suspects as player characters. Give players the information on Katarin Xuan, Eayukheal, and the others, and have them play those roles; of course, one of them will be the murderer, and the chapter *An Adventurer as Murder* should be consulted here. In this case, Aguilar and Dragovitch (also player characters) should have the main responsibility for solving the crime, but other characters may help as they see fit. This option calls for role playing in the most complete sense of the term.

We've only skimmed the surface of the possibilities open to you here. It's up to you to explore them further.

The game's afoot!

*When a corporate executive is murdered on Station Three of Arcturus Belt, the adventures must solve the crime.*

*It's up to the referee to decide which of the 9 suspects is guilty. Was it the executive's estranged wife? His mistress? The Solomani rebel? The Aslan noble? This adventure explains how to construct each of the possible crimes, complete with motives, clues, alibis, and even misleading clues pointing to the wrong suspect.*