

THE FIRE OPAL OF SET

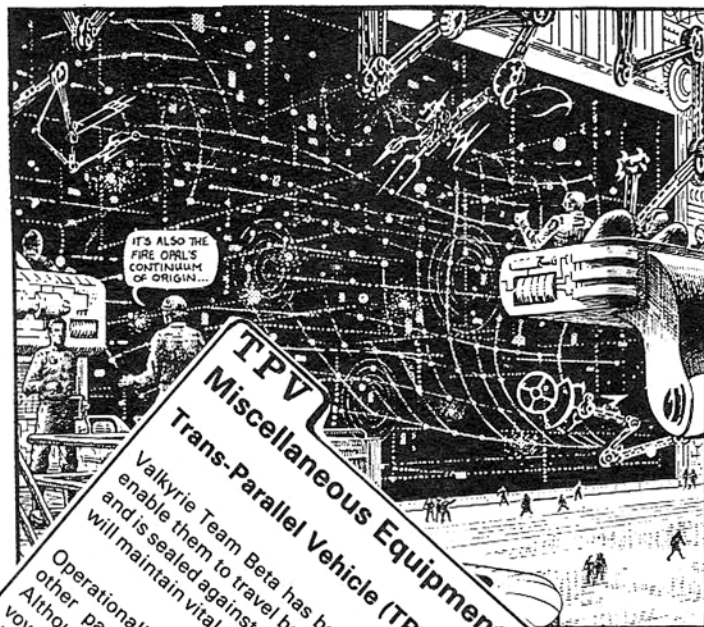
by Bryan Talbot & James Brunton
development by IMAGINE™ magazine

Notes for the Games Master

In running this adventure the Games Master (GM) will need Traveller Books 1-3 (or their equivalent), Book 4 **Mercenary** and Supplement 4 **Citizens of the Imperium**. Supplement 1 **1001 Characters** will be a useful but not essential aid. You should also read Bryan Talbot's article on p16 of this magazine, and the briefing for players on p18. Notes for players more familiar with the STAR FRONTIERS® system are on p28.

The adventure is concerned with the search by a team of characters — **Valkyrie Team Beta** — to discover the whereabouts of the Fire Opal of Set/FireFrost. This information is currently held by a Disruptor Knight named Monkton, so the team are expected to find him by visiting his agents (called 'Pawns') on five different parallels. However, after the third encounter the team should have the information to proceed to a confrontation with Monkton himself.

Read the whole of the module before play starts to get the overall feel. The adventure is unconventional — several linked *Amber Zone* encounters — and some general information is provided in boxed sections. Specific information is given in the adventure key. Players should be given the Players's Data on all five parallels that they are intended to visit when they ask for it (even though the team will not get to two of them). The Player's Data for *The Maze* section should be given to them only when the team is re-routed.



TPV Miscellaneous Equipment Trans-Parallel Vehicle (TPV)

Valkyrie Team Beta has been given an experimental prototype TPV to enable them to travel between parallels. The machine has eight seats, and is sealed against the external environment. The life-support system will maintain vital services for the occupants for no more than 48 hours.

Operationally, the TPV's computer (a Model 1) is preprogrammed to visit other parallels in a set sequence after departure from ZeroZero. Although a character with *Computer-2 Skill*, and a psionic with *Clairvoyance* (hooked into the computer) are required to guide the machine through its 'hops' between parallels, they have no influence over the pre-programmed destination. Each hop takes 30 minutes to complete, and a character with *Medical-1 Skill* must monitor the Clairvoyant. The TPV must recharge its capacitors from its own internal power source for 24 hours before it can make another hop. The TPV has no capability to move itself physically on a parallel, although it is equipped with small wheels and can be pushed across level, reasonably smooth surfaces by characters with a combined strength of 35 or more.

Built into the TPV is an automedic — a simple minded medical robot that can carry out basic medical procedures with a skill level of 0. The TPV carries the following equipment: 10 filter masks, 2 artificial gills, 8 short range communicators, 4 inertial locators, 2 hand computers (which may be linked to the vehicle computer), 4 pairs of binoculars, 10 electric torches, 2 mechanical tool sets, 2 medical kits, 2 electronic tool kits, 10 daggers and 8 vibro beamers.

The TPV can recharge the vibro-beamers in the standard time. Also carried are Vladek's lock-picking equipment, 18 grenades for Mycroft's Mini-RAM Grenade Launcher (six of each type), a Hokusai painting to act as bait for Ono no Komachi (Monkton's agent on the third parallel that the team will visit), and a suit of cloth armour for each member of the team — to be worn as the circumstances dictate.

TPC Miscellaneous Equipment Trans-Parallel Communicator (TPC)

This is a fixed installation which allows contact between parallels in the manner of a videophone. An operator can program the TPC to contact any other TPC on any other parallel (throw 4+ to succeed, no DIMs), providing the 'address' of the receiving machine is known. A TPC cannot communicate with a TPC on the same parallel.

The device can also be used as a 'psionic white-noise generator' broadcasting a blanket of psychic waves that will reduce the psionic strength of any character within 100m by 3. The psionic character who is affected will be aware of such a reduction, its cause, and its source.

Disruptors

Disruptor Knight: **Monkton**

UPP **BCDCCX**

Unarmed Combat-2, Admin-1, Computer-2, Electronics-1, Medical-1, Shotgun-2, Dagger-1, Telepathy-9, Psionic Strength 9

Monkton has a TPC (see the **Equipment Section**) implanted in his skull, to automatically notify his masters of his death. A squad of Disruptor rooks will then be sent to destroy his base on Parallel 00-73-87.

Monkton's TPV

In many ways functionally identical to the Valkyrie Team Beta vehicle, Monkton's TPV is a much more sophisticated model. It still requires a clairvoyant to guide it, but does not require medical attention or a computer specialist. The destination can be programmed by the pilot (throw 7+ to avoid an error, resulting in arrival on a random parallel — DMs +1 for every level of *Computer Skill*, +2 if Education is 9+). There is a drawback — the TPV can only carry two people with hand luggage.

Monkton's shotgun shells

Monkton has coated the pellets of his shotgun shells with a powerful nerve poison. Anyone wounded by one of these shells may (throw 7+ to avoid, DMs +1 for every point of Endurance 9+) die in one combat round; otherwise the character will suffer violent seizures and die within three combat rounds unless given medical attention (throw 10+ to avoid death, DMs +1 if Endurance 10+, +1 per level of skill over *Medical-2*).

Disruptor Rooks: **Leaders**

Normal Rooks

UPP **F8FXXX**

UPP **F6FXXX**

Laser Pistol-1.

Disruptor Rooks are of two varieties — leaders and normal Rooks, usually organised into teams of four normal Rooks under the guidance of a leader. Leaders can freely transfer between teams, but normal Rooks cannot be re-assigned (eg two teams of two normal Rooks cannot be consolidated into one team of four).

Both types of Rooks are armoured (the equivalent of combat armour) and, although they have a Strength of 15 for purposes of determining combat DMs, it is treated as 10 for the purposes of taking wounds.

Rooks are armed with laser pistols. These are treated as laser carbines in respect of the defender's armour and dexterity DMs, and as automatic pistols when considering range. They inflict 3D wounds on a successful hit and have a magazine capacity of 20 shots. Normal Rooks suffer a DM of -2 when firing at a new target — even if they have fired at the target before, and then engaged another target. Subsequent shots do not suffer this penalty.

Leader Rooks may 'register' a target for themselves and the normal Rooks under their guidance. A successful throw to hit is required (no damage is done). Thereafter, the leader and his team may fire at the registered target with a DM of +2, provided that the leader hits each combat round. Once the leader misses, the registration process must be carried out again to obtain the positive DM.

1. The Photographer Royal

Players' Data

Parallel 00-56-19 British Empire Variation.

Never having lost her American colonies, Great Britain has always been in a strong position on this parallel. World War I — the Great War — was a Disruptor engineered plot. Victorious due to Disruptor aid, a strong Britain thereafter dominated the Continent and strengthened its colonial hold upon the world at large. This is a parallel on which ZeroZero has little influence, and Disruptor control is strong.

On this parallel, Monkton's Disruptor Pawn is James Fox-Talbot, the Photographer Royal. His address is 3 Britannia House, Covent Garden.

Games Master's Information

The GM may find access to a copy of a London A-Z or similar will be helpful in running this section of the adventure.

The TPV will arrive in an empty warehouse off Nine Elms Lane. Secured two days previously by ZeroZero agents native to this parallel, it contains a fully fueled car (a common 4 seat hatchback model which will not attract attention). On the back seat of the car are three suitcases containing a complete 'native' outfit for each member of the team. In the glove compartment of the car are the warehouse keys, a map of London with Britannia House and the warehouse marked on it, and money sufficient to the team's needs (the equivalent of Cr.1000).

The flavour of this London is distinctly Victorian, but with a level of technology (TL) equal to that of the 1970s (TL7). The police are comparable with the Metropolitan Police of the real world. Social standing is still accorded importance — the clothes provided for the team are those of the wealthy upper class, save for Bernadette, Boston and Vladek, where Imperial prejudice and arrogance will cause them to be treated as lower middle class. Most officials tend to deal with foreigners shortly and sharply.

Orlando will, on a throw of 7+, be able to provide specific information on this parallel — traffic laws, customs, social organisation (ie the GM will supply the player with such information).

The simplest course of action is for the team to drive across London to Fox-Talbot's residence. Throw 7+ to avoid an encounter with the police, failure indicating that some infraction of social standards has occurred — drawing unwelcome attention to the team. Every two hours while driving throw 6+ (9+ on the first such roll, due to unfamiliarity with the parallel's traffic regulations) to avoid some type of mishap, DM +1 per level of the driver's *Wheeled Vehicle Skill*. If this fails, the results are:

1: Car wrecked — all occupants take 3D damage. A passerby will call the police to the scene.

2: Car damaged — the car is mobile, but no longer legally roadworthy. The occupants take 2D damage due to the accident, and the police will again be called.

3-5: A minor brush with another car, damaging a bumper or wing. The other driver(s) involved will call the police unless bribed (throw 8+ to succeed, DM +2 per level of *Bribery Skill*) or intimidated (throw 7+ to succeed, DMs +1 if Strength 8+, +3 if Strength 12+).

6: A near miss with another car. The police will be called on a roll of 6+ by the other driver(s) unless dealt with as above.

Fox-Talbot is dead, executed by his Disruptor masters. His body was found hanging under Lambeth Bridge in the early hours of yesterday morning and the news fills the headlines, even on television and radio news programmes.

News stands are covered in bill-boards announcing the 'Murder of the Photographer Royal'. However, such stands are not part of ZeroZero society, so unless the team specify that they are looking for one (they will pass several on their journey) they will not notice the news.

Anyone buying a newspaper — perhaps to see if Fox-Talbot is mentioned in the Court Circular — will certainly learn of his death. The press, while full of the story, contains little hard information — found by Constable Trench at 6.30am.... identified by Pauline, his sister.... two men dressed in black wanted for questioning. The equipment in the TPV may be used to receive radio and TV transmissions, but no fresh information will be gained.

As the car is not large enough for the whole team, they may decide to hire a taxi-cab (this London has no Underground system). The cabbie will inform his passengers (on a throw of 10+) of Fox-Talbot's death in the course of his gossip. The GM should actually act out the chatter — adding additional conversation, about horse racing, television programmes and the like. If an inattentive group misses it they will waste a great deal of time on this parallel.

At Britannia House the team will find uniformed policemen at the front and back doors. Across the street a gaggle of pressmen, cameras much in evidence, are waiting for the police detectives (an inspector and five constables) to emerge with Fox-Talbot's private papers. The team will be refused entry — and if they ask to see Fox-Talbot they will be told of his death. The press will be only too willing to talk — in graphic and mostly erroneous detail — about the man and his demise.

The team should be encouraged to realize that there is nothing to be achieved by remaining on the parallel longer than is necessary to recharge the TPV's capacitors.

Character Roster

This section contains the details of all the major characters who are not tied to a particular location in the adventure. These characters fall into two groups — the player characters of **Valkyrie Team Beta**, and the Disruptor Knight and Rooks.

Valkyrie Team Beta — The Characters

Team Leader: **Orlando Bridgeman**

UPP **CAB99X**

Wheeled Vehicle-1, Survival-1, Admin-1, Vibro-beamer†-1, Dagger-1, Brawling-1.
Languages Spoken:
English, German, Spanish.

Bridgeman has an extensive knowledge (ie the GM should supply the player with details) of British Empire Variations on differing parallels.



Medic: **Persephone McPherson**

UPP **687CBX**

Medical-3, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Bribery-1.
Languages Spoken:
English.

Any psi-drugs administered by Persephone may (on a throw of 8+) not cause any disadvantageous reaction at the end of their period of effect — such as an overdose or a loss of Psionic strength.



Weapons Specialist: **Bernadette Dylan**

UPP **9CC77X**

Wheeled Vehicle-1, Fixed Wing Aircraft-1, Mechanical-1, Sword-1, Bow Combat††-2, Dagger-1, Bayonet-1, Unarmed Combat†-1, Vibro-beamer†-1, Gun Combat††-1.
Languages Spoken:
English, French.

Bernadette is a trained weapon specialist, and as such receives positive DMs for her skill when using any weapon that falls within one of the generic categories marked ††. The GM may decide if she receives any DM accruing due to advantageous Dexterity or Strength.



Native Liaison: **Vladek Kasyatkin**

UPP **9EB87X**

Wheeled Vehicle-1, Streetwise-2, Brawling-2, Vibro-beamer†-1.
Languages Spoken:
English, Russian.

Vladek is a specialist in locks and computer security systems. When Vladek attempts a task relating to such items he is considered to possess *Computer-2, Mechanical-2 and Electronics-2 Skills*.



Weapons Specialist/Native Liaison: **Izumo Kusabgi** UPP **9EB77X**

Wheeled Vehicle-1, Sword-3, Vibro-beamer†-2, Unarmed Combat†-2.
Languages Spoken:
English, Japanese.

Izumo is a specialist on Japanese art on different parallels.



Native Liaison: **Boston Singh**

UPP **F8F66X**

Wheeled Vehicle-1, Streetwise-1, Shotgun-2, Brawling-3, Revolver-1.
Languages Spoken:
English, Urdu, Punjabi.

Boston has a steel skull cap beneath his turban that is treated as a 'horns' attack in combat — with the full DM benefit of Boston's brawling skill.



Computers/Electronics: **Mycroft von Neuman**

UPP **7A8DDX**

Demolitions-2, Computer-2, Electronics-2, Mechanical-1, RAM Grenade Launcher-1.
Languages Spoken:
English, German.

Mycroft's grenade launcher is a special model, and he is not skilled in the use of standard grenade launchers. See the **Equipment Section** for full details.



Psionic: **Alice Whittle**

UPP **6B7DBX**

Telepathy-10, Telekinesis-10, Clairvoyance-9.
Psionic Strength 10
Languages Spoken:
English, Gaelic.

Alice carries her psi-drug supply with her at all times — initially 24 doses of Booster, 18 doses of Double and 4 doses of Special.



† **New Skills:** Added to the other types of Gun Combat skills that are allowed, Vibro-beamer is the ability to use that weapon. Full details of the Vibro-beamer are given in the **Weapons Section**.

Unarmed Combat is the equivalent of **Brawling-n+2**, where n is the level of **Unarmed Combat Skill**. A character with **Unarmed Combat-2** or better may make 2 attacks per round without positive DMs due to skill.

2. The Penicillin Man

Players' Data

00-66-74 Post Urban Collapse

After a drawn out Second World War, lack of co-operation between the victorious Allies, and the apathy of the vanquished, brought about a slow climb from economic ruin. America gained control of the Middle Eastern oil producing countries — and was on the road to recovery — when the Russian Revolutionary State declared war to 'liberate' the oil nations. Drawn into the Oil War which lasted until 1959, Europe expected aid and an oil share from America when the oil states were divide between the two main aggressors, but received neither. Rioting, anarchy and the collapse of centralized government followed.

Europe has been a wasteland for the last ten years. The remaining population returned to a primitive feudal system, content to serve the Petrol Barons in return for protection from roving bandit gangs. The extent of Disruptor influence on this parallel is unclear.

Monkton's Pawn on this parallel is 'Snorty' Hargreaves, a dealer in drugs and medical supplies. Last reported location: the ruins of London.

Games Master's Information

Again, access to a copy of a London A-Z or similar is useful in running this section of the adventure, although the GM should remember that most of the city is in ruins. The cover picture (of the ruins of Tower Bridge) on this issue of IMAGINE magazine gives an impression of this London — and should be viewed as an aid in visualizing the scene.

The TPV will arrive with a jolt in the dry bed of the River Thames.

During the Oil War, Europe was devastated by chemical weapons. South east England was affected and London lies on the fringe of this area. It is now sparsely inhabited by the survivors of the war — and scavengers who have come down from the North.

The chemical agents — strains of tabon, sarin, soman, arsine and VX — linger on. Throw 8+ each hour (DM +1 per level of *Medical Skill*) to realize that filter masks should be worn and that the atmosphere should be tested. If characters leave the TPV without taking precautions, throw 10+ per hour or fall ill (DM +1 if Endurance 11+). The first symptoms (shortness of breath, trembling — subtract 1D from Strength and Dexterity) will appear after 3 hours plus 15 minutes per point of Endurance. Death will then occur 1D hours later unless a throw of 8+ is made (DM +2 per level of *Medical Skill*). After immediate care the affected character must return to the TPV for continuous care and monitoring by the Auto-Medic. Throw 13+ every two hours to recover (DM +1 cumulative after each four hours of care).

Testing the atmosphere and preparing prophylactic shots — for use in conjunction with filter masks — will take a character with *Medical Skill* four hours. Throw 4+ for each team member for these shots to be effective.

Encounter 1: After climbing out of the dry river bed — regardless of which bank — the team will be attacked by a pack of 30 rabid dogs. The dogs will appear from a ruined building some 250m away, and reach the team in waves of 8, 6, 9 and finally 7 dogs.

30 dogs (chaser/carnivores): Weight 30kg; Hits 9/8; Armour None; Weapons Teeth; Reactions A2 F9 S3. Rabies will be contracted from any wound. Throw 6+ to avoid death (DM +2 per level of *Medical Skill*).

Encounter 2: The noise of the team fighting the dogs will attract a group of militia from one of London's three Petrol Baron stockades. This group of 10 men (average UPP **894854**, *Shotgun-1*, *Blade-1*) is armed with shotguns (each has 1D+7 cartridges) and blades. They will assume that the team are mercenaries, and try to hire them for protection duties at their settlement — Tomstown — located in the ruins of the Kennington Oval. Even if the team refuse the contract, they will be invited back to the village for trade and drink. The scavengers mean no harm, their offer is an honest one — hopefully the team will have some new stories to tell, medical supplies or mechanical or electrical knowledge to trade.

Should the team refuse the offer to go to Tomstown they may wander London at will. Those encountered will be lone scavengers who will avoid contact with the team — and who know nothing anyway. Eventually the team will encounter either another group of 'militia' who will make a similar offer to the first, or arrive at one of the stockades.

Tomstown is the largest of the pallsided villages/stockades. The others — Fort Windy and Shalve's Palace — are located in St John's Wood and

Fulham. All three are dirty collections of lean-to hovels and rebuilt ruins surrounded by high barricades. Two or three hundred people dwell in each — and half this population requires some form of medical aid. Petrol generators provide a meagre power supply. At each village a militia of 40-60 men, armed with shotguns, rifles and revolvers (all short of ammunition) provide protection and scavenging teams.

The inhabitants of each village have heard of Hargreaves, and several hours of questioning will eventually (throw 9+ each hour, DM +1 per level of *Streetwise* or *Bribery Skill*) find someone who knows his present whereabouts — Casablanca in North Africa — and the fact that he is not expected to return for a year.

The hopelessness of trying to follow him in the time available should be obvious to the team, and again they should be encouraged to leave this parallel as soon as the TPV is ready.

3. Cha-no-yu on a Dark Afternoon

Players' Data

03-02-47 Japanese Empire Variation

Contact and trade with the Portuguese had a remarkable effect on Japan on this parallel. The potential of firearms and Western nautical skills was swiftly learned by the Shogunate. China was invaded and subdued after a century of intermittent, bloody conflict. In the West, the Catholic Church was strong, its influence retarding scientific advancement. Japan had accepted Catholicism, though in 1879 — under Disruptor influence — it returned to its old faith by Imperial decree. The inevitable war between the Japanese and Catholic Empires ended in 1902, and the Japanese Emperor took the title Lord of All the World. The war had seen fantastic advances in Japanese science and industry, again thought to be Disruptor influenced. These advances have continued through to the 1980s.

Industry is now centred in Europe, Russia and America. Although surrounded by Imperial troops, Japan and China have become two vast gardens, where the Japanese — First Class Citizens all — enjoy the fruits of their conquests. Europeans have been designated Third Class Citizens — an improvement on their former status as slaves — since the Humane Reforms of 1943. Indians and Africans, together with some Arabs, are Second Class Citizenry.

In this Japanese World, Monkton's pawn is Ono no Komachi, the Emperor's Geisha. Ono lives in regal luxury in a private house set on an island in the ornamental lake of Nhamaskha Palace, the Imperial residence.

Games Master's Information

The TPV will arrive in the cellar in London held by a small group of ZeroZero agents, led by Amanda Lewis, a railway labourer. The team will be provided with identification — as Izumo Kusabgi, dealer in Fine Art, and his personal retinue. Bernadette and Boston will be classified as secretaries; other members of the team as servants and bodyguards. An aircraft (which will be waiting at London Airport), and associated documentation, will be provided for the 14-hour flight to Japan, along with sufficient money to maintain Izumo's facade — the equivalent of Cr. 10,000. A facsimile of the Hokusai painting is aboard the plane.

Any Imperial Police involvement with a Third Class Citizen unaccompanied by his superiors will result in automatic detention, unless proof of legal purpose and identity can be produced. In Japan itself, no Third Class Citizen may appear unaccompanied in a public place, no matter what the reason.

The team should be told all of the above, and that the Emperor is not in residence at the Nhamaskha Palace, so it is open for guided tours. Ono no Komachi is in residence.

38 miles from Yokohama City, the Palace is set on an artificial hill next to the Imperial Communications Centre (ICC) — the only normal public access route to the Palace. The flawless gardens are open to the public, and visitors are unescorted, but cameras and patrols make it certain that anyone leaving the marked paths will be swiftly apprehended. The Palace buildings (except the Geisha's house) are also open to visitors — except Third Class Citizens — in escorted groups who are issued ID badges at the ICC Reception Centre.

The lake is purely ornamental, filled by a pumping station beneath the ICC, and quite deep enough for the skiffs which are on it. The bridges are made of wood, supported by stone piers, and the one to the Geisha's island has an electrified gate. It is watched by cameras set at both ends.

A computer-controlled subway runs from the ICC sub-cellar station to the palace buildings — with a branch line to the Geisha's island. The main line back to Yokohama has a service road running beside it. Carriages are routed to the Geisha's island by select officials and her personal retinue — or by computer command. This command can come from any ICC terminal (throw 9+ to defeat the computer's security systems, DM +1 per level of *Computer Skill*). Access to ICC terminals is normally denied to non-Japanese.

Descending from the hilltop, an access road is provided for wheeled vehicles. A gatehouse with a permanent detachment of 15 police officers prevents unauthorised entry. Anyone arriving at the gate without adequate identification and purpose will be detained.

Security is very intense. About 300 police (armed with a variety of swords, automatic pistols, rifles and SMGs) are responsible for patrolling the palace grounds, its buildings and the ICC. Camera surveillance of all main corridors, each subway station and all public areas is maintained.

Surrounded by a wall surmounted by electrified wire, Ono no Komachi's island is not ICC's responsibility. Security is handled by the Geisha's six personal guards. Security cameras watch the gardens, the lake, the bridge, the subway station lift and stairs. One guard will be in the Security Room at all times — except during the interview detailed below. This guard will also have access to the arms locker in which there are four additional sub-machine guns, two revolvers, ammunition for all the firearms in the house, and three swords. The other guards will be spread throughout the house, as will a variety of other staff (maids, cooks and a helicopter pilot), or in the garden.

The small central lagoon has a low jetty with a pair of four-man skiffs tied to it. The helicopter on the landing pad is capable of carrying eight, including the pilot. Bernadette may attempt to fly it (throw 5+ to avoid an accident, with a DM of -3).

Gunfire on the island will not attract attention — the guards often have target practice — but explosions (from Mycroft's launcher) will. The helicopter does not require any clearance to take off, and anyone using the skiffs will not be challenged if they land near a marked path.

Despite the security around her, Ono no Komachi's weakness as a collector of rare Japanese art will provide the team with access to her. Her private collection is reckoned to be second only to that of the Emperor. To exploit this weakness, the team has a Hokusai painting that was never painted on this parallel. If the team opt for this method of contact, the facsimile and a letter of introduction can be handed to ICC officials or be posted to her. ICC will bring it to Ono's attention that day, and an interview will be arranged for the following afternoon. If posted it will take an extra day before an interview is arranged.

Ono — thanks to her Disruptor contacts — will recognize the painting as extra-parallel in origin. She will immediately contact Monkton using the TPC in her house, and he will order her to capture at least two of the team, and eliminate the rest.

On the afternoon of the interview, all her staff, except the guards, will be sent to the main Palace. The guards will be stationed in rooms around the main lounge, where Ono will meet Izumo in his persona as an art dealer. Izumo and his accompanying retinue will be escorted to the house by a regular ICC official and two policemen from the ICC building. As specified in the **Equipment Section**, the TPC will be set to generate psychic 'white noise'.

Ono will be disguised as her own maid (any character specifically examining her must throw 8+ to see through this disguise, DM +1 if Education 10+, or +2 if Izumo). After the ICC personnel have departed, she will ask the team to wait for 'her mistress' and offer tea to all the members of the team — at this point astute players may realize that something is wrong given the nature of this Japanese society.

The tea is drugged (throw 9+ or fall unconscious in two combat rounds -30 seconds — plus five seconds per point of Endurance, DM +1 if Endurance 10+). When the first victim passes out, Ono will draw an automatic pistol from her clothing and call for the guards. She will then order the team to surrender — an order they do not have to obey. Anyone drugged will be kept sedated until Monkton returns to this parallel if the Geisha and her guards win. The rest will be killed. The team will have failed.

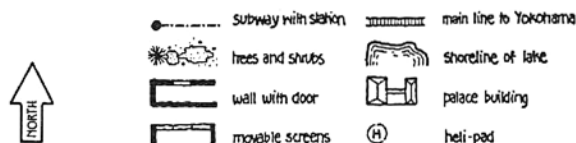
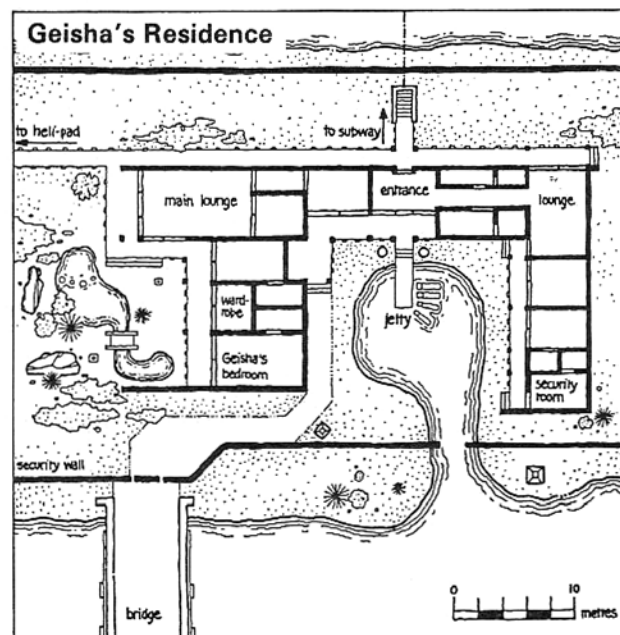
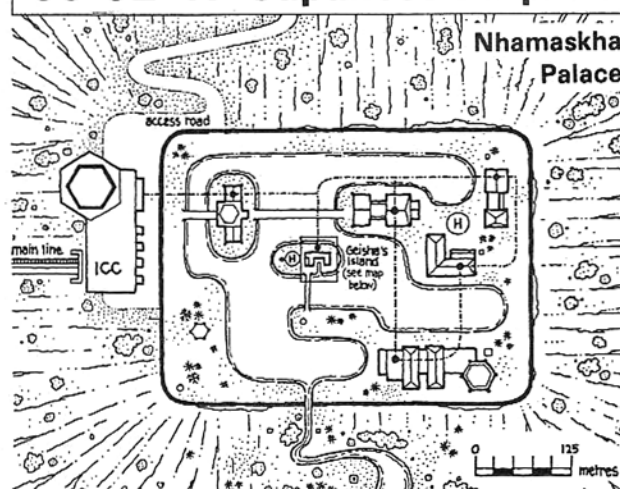
Ono no Komachi

UPP 7C6BAB

Admin-1, Bribery-1, Computer-2, Medical-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Unarmed Combat-1, Sword-1, Automatic Pistol-2.
Languages spoken: Japanese

IMAGINE magazine, May 1984

03-02-47 Japanese Empire



Six Guards

Average UPP 7A8768

Revolver-1, SMG-1, Unarmed Combat-2.

All are armed with a submachine gun and a revolver.

Ono's TPC is hidden in her wardrobe area and booby trapped (throw 9+ to notice this, DM +1 per level of *Computer* or *Electronics Skill* and 10+ to disarm the booby trap, DMs +1 per level of *Computer Skill*, +1 if Dexterity 8+, +3 if Vladek is attempting to do so). If the TPC is used without the trap being detected and disarmed, a small atomic device located under the house will be detonated by radio signal, killing everyone within a one mile radius.

The TPC is set to communicate with Parallel 00-73-87: London. This, and any data about Monkton the team can extract from Ono are the only clues they should normally be given about the Disruptor Knight's whereabouts. If the players are really stuck at this point, the GM can allow a character to find a religious broadsheet from St Paul's Cathedral on 00-73-87. If this hint fails the GM should tell the team that Monkton's name is pencilled on it.

The team will be able to use this TPC to contact ZeroZero. From here, or a London terminal that the ZeroZero agents operate, the team will receive the reprogramming needed to take their TPV to 00-73-87, a picture of Harry Fairfax (a ZeroZero agent), and how to find him at the Hilton Tavern in 'the Maze'.

The Other Parallels

And had the Valkyrie Team Beta mission gone as intended...

The fourth and fifth parallels pre-programmed into the TPV should not be visited by the team at all. However, the following information is available to the players and should be given to them in a similar fashion to the Players' Data on the first three parallels.

01-23-48 EEC/British Empire Variation

Germany, her recovery and re-unification aided after the Second World War by the Disruptors, is the dominant power within the European Economic Community. Still the major world colonial power, Great Britain is being undermined by Germany through massive support in terms of cash aid to Republican elements within Ireland — all carefully channelled through North American Irish organisations.

ZeroZero has a large influence on this parallel, and WOTAN agents can expect little aid.

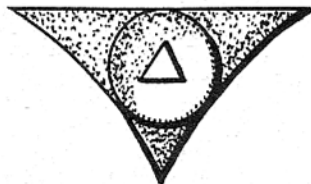
Monkton's Pawn on 01-23-48 is, as might be expected, heavily involved in the Irish situation. 'Captain' Thomas J Fitzpatrick is an armaments procurer and, although his last address is known to be defunct, he is still believed to be in Ulster.

00-73-11 Catholic Empire Variation

Rising to true European dominance in the late 16th century, Rome under the New Caesars achieved an artistic and military renaissance. By the end of the 17th Century this had changed to a tyranny that the Holy Roman Church deposed in 1822.

The Catholic Church proved, however, to be a sterner master than any of the New Caesars. Its first acts weakened and — finally — removed the nobility. This policy of 'all men equal under God' was supported by the peasantry — and some of the nobility who readily surrendered their lands in exchange for Church positions. 160 years of world theocracy have been the result, with science reserved by and for the Church — few of the benefits ever reach the common people.

Monkton's Pawn is Father Keith Fleming, the parish priest at St Mary's Church, Preston in Brittania (Northern England).



The Entropy Effect

The physical and psychic manifestations of the FireFrost Activation will become more and more noticeable as time passes in the adventure. As specified in the Briefing, the team must find the location of FireFrost and return with the information before the Entropy Effect reaches an unacceptable — and irreversible — level.

In game terms the Entropy Effect will reach this point after 13 days. Up to that point there is a finite chance that some effect of FireFrost will manifest itself on the same parallel as the Valkyrie Team Beta.

There are three types of manifestation which will affect the team: TPV malfunction, strange 'happenings' and psychic disturbances. The GM should roll once per day for each type of effect on the following table to see whether that effect occurs, and then see the appropriate notes for the nature of the Entropy Effect.

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Throw	12+	11+	10+	9+	9+	8+	8+	7+	7+	6+	6+	5+

If an effect is indicated the GM should decide at what time of the day it occurs.

TPV malfunction: A malfunction in one of the TPV's systems will occur. A DM of -5 is applied to the initial throw. A roll of 9+ must be made to repair the throw in 8 hours, DMs +1 per level of *Electronics* and *Computer Skill* applied, -1 if a second Entropy Effect roll indicates another effect.

Psychic Disturbances: Any non-Disruptor psionically talented character will lose 1D-3 psionic strength points.

4. The Maze

Players' Data

00-73-87 Puritan Protectorate Variation

The Protectorate of the Cromwells — controlled by the Disruptors — is now facing action by Royalist forces, backed in turn by ZeroZero. Strict curfews and executions of suspected Royalist terrorists are only two of the policies of General Standish and the Supreme Puritan Guard.

These policies are not — indeed could not be — imposed on the area within the London Wall known as 'the Maze'. It is a vast no-go area where all the misfits and undesirables in the Protectorate — mainly the London mob of cut-throats, beggars, wastrels, rakes, pimps, prostitutes and artists — and the Royalist rebels live. The Maze is the only place where taverns, theatres, brothels — and Roman Catholic churches — can be found.

Games Master's Information

The TPV will arrive (amid a thunderclap) eight kilometres west of London, some fifty metres north of the Thames — and six metres above ground level. The explosive arrival and resulting fall will render characters unconscious unless a throw of Endurance or less on 2D is made. On landing, a huge rock pierces the hull and embeds itself in the central generator.

The computer will indicate that the TPV will implode within 5-8 minutes — it will actually happen in 6 minutes (24 combat rounds) and anyone or anything in the TPV will be destroyed. It takes 6 combat rounds for two people to carry an unconscious character clear (18 combat rounds for one person). Removing weaponry and other equipment takes 1 combat round for small items (ie items which can be roughly defined as a 'handful' — vibrobeamers, binoculars, filter masks etc). Larger items such as medical kits, suits of cloth armour, Mycroft's grenade launcher, take 2 rounds to remove.

The TPV has arrived in a pasture. From the position of the sun it appears to be late afternoon. A short distance downstream is a wooden jetty with a rowing boat (big enough for ten people) moored to it — and a small farmhouse is visible about 200m away. It is deserted.

Taking the boat is the only available method of reaching Fairfax quickly. It will take three hours to reach London and as it will be dark by this time, the team will be breaking curfew. This is no great hazard until the boat reaches the Tower of London. At this point the river is swept by searchlights from the Tower (throw 5+ to avoid the beams), and if the boat is spotted a machine gun will open fire — without any real intent to hit. Two motorized launches will intercept the boat if it is still illuminated by the searchlights (throw 10+ to move the boat out of the light). Each

Strange 'happenings': The GM should roll once on the following table. DMs: -1 on Days 1, 2 or 3; +1 on days 10, 11 or 12.

0: An NPC approaches the party and informs them he is in possession of an atom bomb (or similar), and would they like to see it. The NPC is, of course, certifiably insane.

1: A sudden fall of hailstones appears out of a clear blue sky. Roll 4+ to avoid injury (1D-3 wounds). Many of the hailstones are red in colour.

2: Unseasonable weather — the GM should determine what are the most unlikely weather conditions for the parallel.

3: A rain of frogs, fish, mice or snails occurs. The GM should determine whether this causes damage or danger to the team.

4: Aurora Borealis display — radios and other short-range communicators become inoperable. On a throw of 9+ any computer will malfunction.

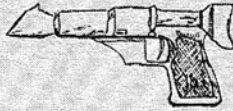
5: Earth Tremor — any character who does not throw 7+ will be thrown to the ground and take 1D wounds. Buildings will suffer minor superficial damage.

6: The pull of gravity is increased or decreased by 10% for one hour. At the end of that period gravity returns to normal.

7: Spontaneous Human Combustion — an NPC within sight of the players will burst into flames and be reduced to a small pile of ash within two combat rounds. The player characters will be unable to help.

Weapons

Vibro-beamer (1400 grams; TL 12): The basic weapon of ZeroZero agents, the vibro-beamer fires a burst of concentrated ultrasonic sound that shakes the target to pieces. The weapon is the same size and general shape as an automatic pistol with a fitted silencer — 300mm in total length. The integral magazine capacity is 20 shots, and this can be recharged from a suitable power source in 10 minutes (40 combat rounds).



Mini-RAM Grenade Launcher (4500 grams loaded; TL9): Similar in appearance, size and weight to a shotgun with a folding stock, this 20mm grenade launcher fires one shot for each pull of the trigger. A six round magazine is inserted under the barrel, and the grenade load may be tailored to suit the user's requirements — eg flechette, flechette, HE, HE, HEAP, flechette. Magazines are 350mm long and 25mm in diameter and weigh 750 grams (individual grenades weigh 125 grams). A sling is provided to assist carrying, although von Neuman normally carries his in a carpetbag.

Weapons Matrix

Attacker's Weapon	Defender's Armour							Defender's Range					Wound Inflicted	Dexterity Requirements					
	Nothing	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat	Combat	Close	Short	Med	Long	V Long		Req Lvl	Dex	DM	Advn	Lvl	Dex
Vibro-beamer	+4	+4	+2	+1	+4	+4	-2	0	+3	+1	-1	no	4D	7	-2	10		+2	
Mini-RAM Grenade Launcher														8	-3	11		+1	
HE	+4	+4	+2	+1	+4	+4	-3	no	no	+2	+1	-6	5D						
Flechette	+6	+6	+2	-3	+6	+3	-7	no	no	+2	+1	-6	2D						
HEAP	+2	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2	-1	no	no	+1	0	-5	5D						

boat is manned by five men armed with shotguns. If the team is captured it will be held indefinitely in the Tower of London, awaiting execution. The GM should determine the chances of escape before the original 13-day ZeroZero time limit expires.

Once past the Tower it will be easy to dock under London Bridge and enter the Maze — roughly the same area as the financial centre of London today. The Maze is similar to the slum areas of the 15th Century (this London never had a Great Fire), and is in a very dilapidated condition. The streets are little better than open sewers, overhung by the upper storeys of buildings. Street gangs roam at will, bullying the inhabitants for landlords, pimps and pleasure. However, the growing Royalist presence (and uncertainty as to its future) mean that most 'neutral' Maze dwellers are keeping out of sight and trouble.

Harry Fairfax is waiting in the Hilton Tavern, a genial den. When approached he will leave his game of dice and lead the players to the snug.

Fairfax will give them directions to a room Monkton has rented over a small drapers on Threadneedle Street. The room is used for meetings of the 'St Paul's Theatre Group' and occasionally as a place to sleep. If he is not in his room, Monkton could be anywhere. Most of the people who try to follow him fail or end up dead. Fairfax does not know whether Monkton has a permanent base or where it might be.

Monkton always carries a shotgun — and never misses with it. Fairfax knows of two cases where men died at Monkton's hands — both were big men, and had survived shotgun wounds before. Fairfax suspects that Monkton has tampered with the gun — or that he is a sorcerer. Beyond this Fairfax will be unable to help them.

Fairfax was being watched by three of Monkton's men, who will leave to tell their master that the team has arrived (if Monkton was warned by Ono no Komachi) or that Fairfax has met people of obviously extra-parallel origin.

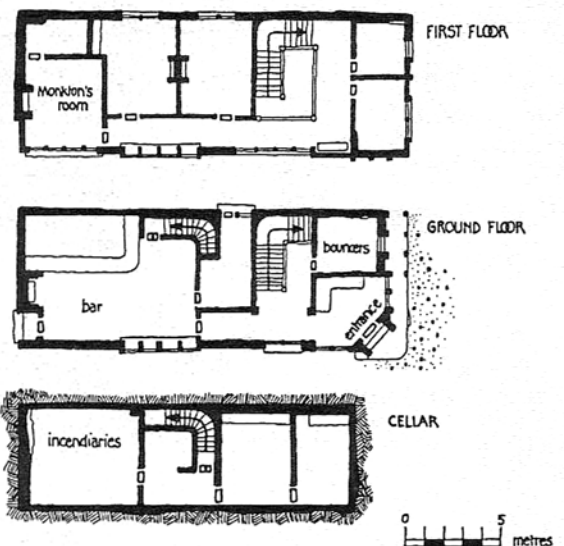
Monkton will immediately leave his room in Threadneedle Street and go to the Merry Jackdaw — a 'gentleman's club' on the corner of Cheapside and Bread Street. He will order two men to remove all evidence of his presence — and then lose themselves.

When the team arrive the room will be locked and unoccupied. The owner of the draper's shop, John Haselrig, was disturbed by the sounds of Monkton's hurried departure and got up to complain. Brushed aside by Monkton's men, he still wants to complain to someone. While moaning about 'stage players' and their lack of consideration for others, he will tell the team that they have gone. He will let the team into the room on a throw of 8+ (DM +1 per level of *Bribery Skill*, +1 if Strength 9+), and on another throw of 4+ (same DMs) he will mention that one of the men said that he 'wished he could go to the Merry Jack.... as well'.

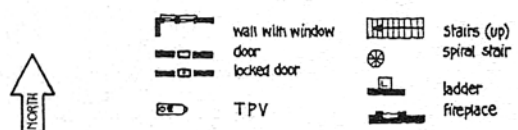
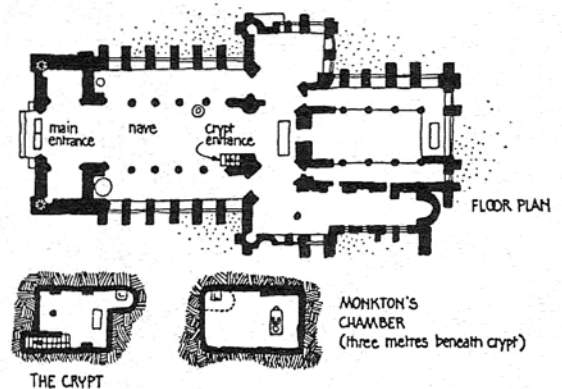
The room contains a bed, a table, three chairs and a wardrobe. A search will reveal three shotgun cartridges (modified as described in the **Disruptors**) and a religious broadsheet from St Paul's Cathedral. Anyone examining the cartridges may notice the tampering (throw 7+, DMs +1 per level of *Shotgun Skill*). A character with *Medical Skill* (and a medical kit) will be able to synthesize prophylactic shots for the nerve poison on a throw of 8+ (DM +1 per level of *Medical Skill*).

00-73-87 The Maze

The Merry Jackdaw



St Paul's



KEY

Questioning Maze-dwellers may (throw 6+, DM +1 per level of *Streetwise Skill*, repeat the throw every five minutes) reveal that the 'Merry Jack' is probably the Merry Jackdaw, and where it is located.

The Merry Jackdaw Gentleman's Club is staffed by three barmen (average UPP 778622, *Brawling-1*, *Shotgun-1*), two of whom spend their time playing cards in the back room; and five girls. A single shotgun is kept beneath the bar. Apart from Monkton and the employees, there are three 'gentlemen' being entertained in the bar.

Nobody (other than Monkton) knows that the Merry Jackdaw is also a huge incendiary mine, to be exploded (like others at strategic locations in the Maze) when the Royalist rising starts, starting a Fire of London. The door to the cellar, and the incendiaries, is locked — and the staff do not have the key.

As the team enter the barman will greet them in a friendly fashion, although he will realize that they are not here to avail themselves of the Jackdaw's facilities. He will tell them which room Monkton is in — as he is more than certain that Monkton can look after himself — and will



The STAR FRONTIERS® Game

Although the STAR FRONTIERS® and Traveller games might seem very similar, there are deep-rooted differences. This section is intended to be a guide — and that is all it can be — for GMs who want to run the *Fire Opal of Set* as a STAR FRONTIERS module.

Characters in Traveller are defined by Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Intelligence, Education and Social Standing on a scale of 1-15 for each Characteristic. These are written down in a shorthand form called the Universal Personality Profile (UPP) in the order above, and in hexadecimal numbers (0-9 mean exactly that, A = 10, B = 11, C = 12 etc). While none of these Characteristics conforms exactly to Abilities, as a rough guide 1 point of a Traveller Characteristic equals $6\frac{2}{3}$ points in a corresponding Ability in the STAR FRONTIERS game.

Skills in the two games are used very differently. In the module various mentions of 'throw 7+...' occur, with 'DM +1 per...' immediately afterwards. The '7+' part is the number (or more) that must be thrown on 2d6 for something to happen (or not happen!). Traveller uses only 6-sided dice. The 'DM' in this case stands for 'Die Modifier' — a number added to or subtracted from the dice throw. In most cases look at the context in which the skill is being used and then try to find the closest subskill in the STAR FRONTIERS rules. Note that some skills (Admin, Streetwise, Wheeled Vehicle etc) have no direct counterparts at all.

Equipment is, in many ways, the easiest section to deal with. Look at descriptions and choose the nearest equivalent from the existing equipment lists. For example, the vibro-beamer can be seen as a pistol-sized Sonic Disruptor, with a maximum range of 50m or so.

Psionics are a problem. Until the official rules appear (if they ever do), a 'psionic' character in the STAR FRONTIERS game should make an Ability Check based on the average of Stamina and Intuition, to see if the psionic activity succeeds — but guard against letting psionic characters do anything by willpower alone!

Above all, go for the correct 'feel' and don't worry too much about the numbers — after all, it is supposed to be fun!

casually mention that 'John has his shotgun'. He will also warn the team not to include the other customers or any of his girls in their private quarrels.

Monkton (see the **Disruptors**) arrived alone lugging a heavy carpetbag, and went upstairs with a girl. He has drugged her and will use her body as a shield (treat as the equivalent of Mesh) while he lies, stripped to the waist, in the bed. Under the bedclothes is his shotgun, and between his feet is a grenade with a four minute fuse. The pin has been taken out, but the lever is held in place by Monkton's feet. Monkton believes the fight will be over (one way or another) in four minutes — the grenade is his way of striking back from the grave.

His normally brown eyes have been turned startlingly bright blue by a pair of contact lenses. The location of FireFrost — which the team has been seeking — is encoded upon the right contact lens.

Monkton's carpetbag contains spare shells for his shotgun, a medical kit, a set of priest's robes and a set of large keys for the crypt beneath St Paul's — the faded tag has the word 'Crypt' upon it.

On Monkton's death his TPC 'bleeper' will summon a squad of Rooks to destroy his TPC and TPV — stored in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. The team should have realised that Monkton's TPV or TPC represent their only hope of contacting ZeroZero and passing the location of FireFrost to WOTAN. They should also have sufficient clues to the location of Monkton's equipment — the robes, religious broadsheets and keyring.

As an extra hindrance to the party, Monkton's grenade or a panic below during any fighting (or some such contrivance by the GM) will cause the Merry Jackdaw to catch fire. 60 combat rounds later (15 minutes) the incendiary mine below it will detonate, causing a latter-day Fire of London. If the team still have not realized that they should be heading for the Cathedral, descriptions of the Fire's spread — preternaturally aided by the Entropy Effect — and panic stricken Maze-dwellers heading towards the only obvious point of safety — the Cathedral — should guide them in the right direction.

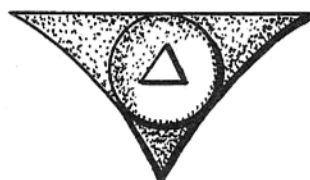
The Cathedral is untouched by the fire, and crowded with worshippers seeking salvation from the fire. As the team reach the main entrance the Rooks (two teams — see the **Disruptors**) summoned by Monkton's implant will appear on the steps, surrounded by a pyramid constructed of tubular black material that has an oily sheen to it. The near-mindless Rooks will dismantle their TPV (usable only by them), clipping the sections to their armour. During this time, the native Londoners will be panicking — as their appeals to God seem to have resulted in the appearance of these demonic beings.

The Rooks will enter the Cathedral after clearing the steps and entrance by firing randomly into the crowd. Both teams will proceed down the Nave, firing down the central aisle to move the crowd, to the crypt entrance. One team will take up station here and continue to fire at the crowd, the other team will descend the steps to secure the crypt area.

Once the crypt is secured — or if resisted — the group at the top of the stairs will descend into the crypt and from there into Monkton's chamber, cut into the foundations with a laser. Once there, the surviving Rooks, once opposition is dealt with, will surround Monkton's TPV and TPC and detonate their internal self-destruct devices, effectively destroying their objective. Any character in the chamber when this happens will take 12D in damage.

The Rooks will only attack team members if they attack first or enter the crypt. In both cases, the leaders will attempt to 'register' their team's fire. The random firing by the Rooks to panic the crowd will not affect the team members if they remain calm and under cover.

If the team can prevent the Rooks from destroying Monkton's TPV and/or TPC they will have no trouble in contacting ZeroZero and passing the location of FireFrost to WOTAN.



Credits

Original concept and plot: Bryan Talbot and James Brunton
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