

COLONIAL TIMES

THE JOURNAL FOR THE 2300AD SCI-FI ROLE-PLAYING GAME

DISEASE & DEATH ON AURORE

AN EXPOSÉ & SCENARIO ON THE KAIFER ROT

HIGH-FLYERS DOWN UNDER: AUSSIE COMPANIES MAKING GOOD

WHAT TIME IS IT?: TIMEZONES AND THE SPREAD OF GMT

PATRONS: ZORYANA VOVK ON AURORE

LIONS, TIGERS, & DROPBEARS: THE HAKENKLAUE ON VOGELHEIM

OUT ON THE EDGE: THREE NEW WORLDS TO EXPLORE

YOUR WORLD: NEWS FROM THE CORE & THE COLONIES

6

AUTUMN 2014


STYGIAN FOX



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SIGNALS FROM THE DEEP DARK

TOPICS BEING DISCUSSED ON FACEBOOK, G+, AND ELSEWHERE

FACEBOOK

A Link Heavy Section This Issue.

In French, Jacques Attali argues in favour of an economic union of France with Francophone West Africa. (The idea makes some sense to me, but I don't think that an economic union that doesn't also allow for labour mobility between the countries of the union would fly.)

<http://goo.gl/Hy4BQh>

Randy McDonald

The Tank In The Room

Just thought this to be kinda cool.

<http://goo.gl/Mtyahf>

Tim Costello

Skylight

Your spaceship has windows, how quaint.

<http://goo.gl/Fq9NOo>

Wesley Street

GOOGLE+

Botany Bayview

So Colin and others....

When the MGT 2300AD rule-book clashes with Colonial Atlas, and I want to pitch a module to Mongoose, which wins in canon conflict?

Specifically Dart and Wheel critters on Botany Bay. The fact that Dart look like Drop Bears would work well in the Botany Bay that the NT News would love idea I am messing around. 2300AD says there is nothing more annoying than insects...

(Although one idea is to have genetically modified crocs)

Darryl Adams

Submissions to Mongoose

Still looking for submissions for 2300AD, adventures/ small source-books preferred.

Colin Dunn

(See Colin's contact info at the back of this issue)



Q EDITORIAL

On an early Autumn day I write this to you, dear reader, in the hope that you can help.

Firstly, let me apologise for the lateness of this issue. I am usually ahead of a deadline and this issue's lateness, coupled with the 'moth-balling' of my other magazine 'Dragons of Britain' has made me understand that I can't create these magazines without the generous submissions of other people.

If you have art (rights free), fiction, an article, scenario, or indeed anything else for Colonial Times (or something Arthurian for Dragons of Britain) then please do get in touch. This issue very nearly didn't happen, much in the same way DoB hasn't.

All those who have provided content have my enduring thanks and appreciation. Those who have contributed have a small section of links at the back to their profiles or work so you can go and appreciate them, maybe hire them, or just say hi and that you found their profiles and art via Colonial Times.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank staff at GDW and Mongoose for giving us the game we love so much. If you're the kind of person that appreciates action as much as words then I urge you to visit Far Future Enterprises to pur-

chase CDs full of 2300AD, Traveller, and Twilight 2000 material, DrivethruRPG, and Mongoose publishing and purchase their products.

By supporting publishers who make the content, we can actively keep them going. Only by being customers can we make 2300AD continue. Or, like me, you can start a fanzine for the games you love.

Don't forget to spread the word about 2300AD to all your friends who may be a little jaded with generic fantasy or space opera.

Far Future Enterprises
<http://www.farfuture.net/>

Mongoose Publishing
<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/rpgs/traveller/2300ad.html>

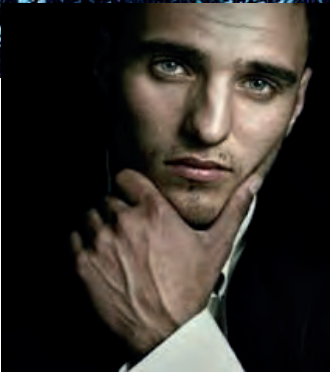
DrivethruRPG
<http://goo.gl/aWSr3b>

Good luck with your next mission into the black.

Steff. J. Worthington
Editor

The Blue Light of Newly Opened Eyes

An Exposé By 'Frontier' Reporter Harry James Covanti



Harry James Covanti

It's a strange feeling. Like you've been asleep in the Summer and have wandered out to the garden where, in your vision, the sun's UV has tainted everything blue, except there's no real brightness causing discomfort. That's what it felt like, heading out into the Tanstaafl countryside after only being planetside for four hours. Everywhere you looked, at least everywhere you looked that wasn't being farmed, there was blue grass, blue scrub, large blue plants that passed for trees, just blue. As, what the Auroran's affectionately term, "An Earthworm" I was used to seeing green. My own experience of growing up in Pennsylvania had made me accustomed to the wide open spaces of verdant fields.

I knew from the start my second foray off-Earth was going to be different.

It was surprisingly quick getting through Port Blackjack customs. I had my press accreditation and my permits from the Tanstaafl Home Ministry and they helped me

get through 'PB' in record time. I thought I was lucky but judging by the number of people queuing to go off-world I guess I was just heading in the wrong direction. I couldn't see one tourist in that line. As you would expect it was full of families with limited possessions trying to escape this war torn world while they could. What is more heartbreaking is that those who cannot leave, members of the security and vital support services, are sending their children up the French Arm under the guardianship of their neighbours who can. It's hard to describe the fear and sorrow. No one witnessing parents who worry they will never see their children again had a dry eye. Yet despite those damp eyes, some were critical.

"We need people to stay. We're not gonna fight off the bugs if everyone leaves." said Adam Dreyfuss, a local resident with a heavy Dutch accent, "I get the kids being sent away, but everyone above 15 should be running drills right now, not taking their families to Hochbaden or wherever."



With this in mind I chance upon a huge hologram on the nearby wall. It shows what looks like an airman or 'Blue Whale' pilot taking measurements at the water's edge as the tide rushes in to kill him. The slogan reads; "Use common sense! Aurore can be dangerous!" I'm not sure if I should take the intelligence of this guy as representative of all Aurorans, but if not, why the picture?

I headed outside and thinking I may have bitten off more emotionally than I was aware, I was heartened to see that my driver (and security) was waiting for me in his Bridgeport-Swift 'Badger' off-roader with a smile that, I swear, was broader than his face.

Bhavdeep Singh was a mercenary who had arrived here to fight the Kafers but a recent injury put him out of action. According to the agency that held his contract, Singh was injured when a Kafer knifed him in the shoulder from behind during a particularly successful raid by the 'Honourable Lions' against a small Kafer scouting force. When I asked Bhavdeep how the fight made him feel, he said;

"Gutted. I wanted to use my Kirpan (a curved knife specific to the Sikh religion) but I couldn't reach it as it had fallen to the ground so I had to shoot it in the face instead."

I could tell I was going to like Bhavdeep. Or I should say "Barry" as he kept insisting I call him. A hold-over, presumably, from his training days at Sandhurst in Britain. Barry suggested we first head out to Sky, a town about 60km away where Barry lives, so I could acclimatise.

Heading out of the Downport I can see why the phrase "Everything is for sale in Tanstaaff" is such a popular saying. I

only had to step to Barry's car on the kerb to be propositioned by one of Thomas 'Long Tom' Bellamy's "Original Entrepreneurs". The First Citizen caused outrage when he legalised prostitution a year ago and used the "O.E." euphemism. It's easy to see why visiting space crews call Port Blackjack, "Port BJ".

As she walked towards me, she couldn't have been more than 17, our eyes met and I just felt pity. Inescapable pity. This is what war does to desperate people. It pushes them in directions they'd sometimes rather not go. I pushed Lv20 into her hand and got in Barry's car.

"You shouldn't do that, you know." Barry said as he pulled away from the kerb, "I know you meant well but her pimp will want to know where she got the money. The cops are OK with hookers, but they come down hard on thieves. With her being on the clock and getting money without working... She might face a slap or two. Pimps want to stay on the right side of the law."

Still in shock from how thin she looked I couldn't believe what Barry was telling me. If you actually pimped someone out in Altoona you'd be looking at 5 years in the state penitentiary.

"Pimps want to stay on the right side of the law." Just let that sink in.

We drove along the N-3, still in reasonably good condition despite nearby bombardments and a lack of maintenance, until we reached the outskirts of Sky. There was an informative TRP checkpoint consisting of a fat guy in an ill-fitting uniform who just waved us through into town. I'm not sure why he was there as, according to Barry, there were no Bugs around here and he couldn't stop them if they suddenly "weighed-up" on him and denied the cop of his snooze time.

During the journey Barry could tell I was

Editor's Notes On The Kafer Rot

The following information contradicts canon and the information provided in 'Kafer Dawn'. It is rare for such fungal infections to be fatal in such a rapid time. 'Kafer Dawn' lists the time from contracting the 'disease' to death as 2d6 hours. I have spanned that time out to create a more realistic timeline and credible pathology. This way, anyone who contracts Kafer Rot can still take part in the scenario and probably play until the end but be aware that they are going to die for the duration. Good groups will have a sense of nervousness over infection and also a good deal of pathos and sadness and the impending death of their colleague. In the playtest of this scenario, the infected player took a 9mm exit from the situation at the end of the scenario.

**Groombridge Mycelium
aka The Kafer Rot. XTG-a
by Michael Groombridge,
PHD, MSA Hon.**

When Birkbak started his pioneering research into DNA repair his background in Mycology enabled him to discover the treatments for many of the cancers we no longer have to worry about today. From 2028 onwards, cancer just meant going to the doctor and taking a pill for few months.



a little depressed by what I'd seen so rather than accepting my silence as an invitation to keep quiet, he took the typical Tanstaafl attitude that it was tough, that I should snap out of it, and he was going to help me with that by talking about the International Boxing Championships (Heavyweight Division) of the last 15 years. I was happy to see Foundation Square in Sky.

We parked and Barry pointed out that this was where the town was founded in 2267 and also where the Tanstaafl Colony had their one and only execution. In '71 the town only had a couple of hundred people and was getting by on regular visits by the Tanstaafl Rural Police until the serial rapist, John 'Jackie' Kilden, was caught by the local mechanic Josie Nighthorse and her posse. It seems Kilden was a bit "clinical" and was spouting off curses

saying the girls deserved their fate. Without much ado and, to be fair, very little protest from Kilden's family (such is frontier life) Nighthorse strung him up in the town square as a warning to others who might think they were so far on the edge of civilisation that they could get away with crimes like that.

The TRP had a problem. It was a lynching, no doubt. Execution is illegal in the tolerant and business minded colony so the TRP went to Sky loaded for bear and seeking to arrest the posse responsible. The facts on the ground changed the outcome however. When the TRP arrived they realised the level of resentment against Kilden, the apparent lack of hostility to his family, and the popularity of Nighthorse. Alden Teller, the TRP commander, took Nighthorse into the local bar and, so the story goes, told her he was going to offer her a job and she'd better

PORT BLACKJACK

accept it or he'll shoot her in the street. The two came out of the bar, shook hands and Nighthorse was declared the Peacekeeper of Sky. Teller told the assembled crowd that lynching, knifing, or murdering of any kind, no matter the crime, was illegal but in this case Nighthorse acted as a prospective member of the TRP. It was a compromise of sorts.

When Teller faced angry questions from the First Citizen as to why he hadn't arrested Nighthorse he told him; "You can't unscramble eggs, he's dead. That's it. Yeah, it was a political move, we'd have never gotten out alive otherwise, and now we have a TRP Peacekeeper in Sky who nobody will fuck with."

As we headed down Market Street locals were waving hello at Barry, obviously a popular guy, and he was replying with a friendly nod and a big smile. His 5 room apartment was modest but clean and welcoming from the light rain that was just starting.

"You'll take tea?" It felt like a command to be honest but I was still eager to try it, or what passed for tea out here, and get down to business.

"So here's the plan..." I said, in a hurry.

"Easy, young fella. It's night time here. I know it looks like dusk to you but it's always gonna look like that. Let's have some food and settle you in. We can go over it all tomorrow. Besides, 'There ain't no such thing as a free lunch!' (a quiz show) and 'Interplanetary' (the documentary series) are on telly tonight."

Apparently, it's rare to get through a night without the broadcast or the electricity going off temporarily so people grabbed their entertainment when they could. What 3v could be delivered by rebuilt microwave tower or by cable that survived the bombardment was dire beyond belief. I was unprepared for how dull I'd find Tanstaaf 3v (punctuated by a frankly shocking amount of local ads) but my host was genial so I "settled in".

I slept soundly, my body was prepared to

With his pioneering work we understood, for the first time, the immense and untapped potential of fungi beyond simple immunosuppressants, antibiotics, and antifungals.

Ancient cultures in China, Japan, and Egypt knew well their healing properties. Mushrooms were considered food fit only for pharaohs.

Today on Aurore, we have something that would've intrigued Birkbak a great deal. An alien fungus that is far more efficient at breaking down organic matter than its Terran counterparts and is ruthlessly aggressive in spreading to new environments.

The first case I encountered was a farm hand from one of the distant townships. He was brought into the path lab after having died from an undetermined cause. There was pronounced internal and external haemorrhaging and a 'furring' of some unknown substance in his mouth, trachea, lungs, and upper intestine. Unfortunately, the men from the Tanstaaf Free Legion who brought the deceased in also fell with the same symptoms a day or so later. Realising that we could have an outbreak on our hands, I initiated a heightened protocol and began to look more closely at what appeared to be a serious but undefined infectious disease. Regrettably, 4 more were to die of the same symptoms



"There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch!" with Ricky Dakota, offering a Lv300 top prize. ©South Aurore TV Media Group



but not before they had made their own mind up as to what had happened. Talk around Port Blackjack spoke of 'virus', 'Kafer bio-weapon', and other such unfounded speculation.

I had originally arrived at the colony to support the Mycoprotein program which helped balance out the diets of the colonists while 'pay-dirt' was still being imported. I had no idea I would be seconded to Tanstaaf's health Authority but despite my protestations, Dr Teller was insistent. Now, with my first example of 'The Rot', I could begin preliminary investigations (although in truth, my small lab wasn't suited to this kind of work. It was built to be little more than a quality assurance dept for the mycoprotein).

Within days I was surprised to find that not only did I have a new lab but also a small cadre of scientists to assist me. The First Citizen seemed to be taking no chances in fighting this infection (although it took 3 meetings to persuade him that it wasn't a virus.)

After the initial subject was analysed more started to show up in the lab and it became apparent that this infection was due to a fungus and was unlikely to be a Kafer bio-weapon. I've seen what a bio-weapon can do in the Central Asian War, they're less deadly and far more

let me sleep while acclimatising and the heavy drapes helped. If you closed your eyes and listened to the rain, you might think for a second you were back on Earth. Apart from the lack of bird song.

I'd come to Aurore to just do another flavor piece. The governments on Aurore were petitioning the French Empire, or anyone really, for a permanent picket line of ships to stand against any future Kafer incursions and The Frontier thought it would be a good idea to help out and get some good footage in the process. I was less convinced. My Philadelphia Union season pass had just arrived and I was going to miss a lot of important soccer games, my wife Alice is pregnant, and I didn't see the point in coming all this way when we had stock footage from a few years back.

After arriving I could see why they wanted some new footage. Much of what you may remember of Aurore from 'The Grand Tour' season of Interplanetary is now rubble. The Bugs did a number on the colonies, hell, we couldn't even get to Novoa Kijev. There was so much more to reveal about Aurore but I had only enough time to do a fleeting tour of Tanstaaf and that was now thrown into confusion. Someone hadn't filled me in on all the details because Barry was convinced I was there as an investigative reporter. I hadn't done any background beyond Harry McPatrick's comic line from his 'Travellin' stand up; "Just don't hug the trees, OK?"

By 8am we were on the road to the Thomasson farm. I'd noticed that a lot of people that were being pointed out to me by Barry had names from the SU.

"One of the quickest ways to get settlers, I suppose. Promise them they'll be living with their own kind when they get here. Lots of Norwegians, Swedes, Finns, etc, here in Sky. Most of Tanstaaf is Texan,

American, Canadian, some German, Poles, what have you.. but here, in our tiny corner of Aurore, it's Scandinavians. It's a good way to encourage new towns... as long as they don't mind mixing it a bit when they get here. I've been lucky. Sky is a good community really."

Apart from a lynching, of course.

We headed about 12 km from Sky going 'Hotward' (towards the Hot Pole) and the roads were beginning to crumble and turn into just laid rock tracks. Off the N-network they were really just make-do surfaces anyway and this road was no exception. The off-roader was making good speed and the suspension was holding up so it wasn't long before we reached the farm. I asked if we'd knock and say hi first so we didn't alarm the Thomasson family. Barry just turned and looked sadly over his shoulder at me and carried on towards the back field.

The Thomassons weren't at home anymore. Gunnar Thomasson had about 10 acres and had managed to secure funding, maybe by liquidating some Norwegian property, for some paydirt and livestock. We pulled over and Barry just cut through their fence like it wasn't there. I'm guessing no one was going to complain.

We walked about 40 feet and Barry handed me a paper face mask.

"Just to be safe, ya know?"

The X-mail I'd received at home from my Line Editor at 'The Frontier' had just said 'We're sending you to Aurore. No arguments. This is big. We're not using locals in case of 'conflict of interest'. Work with your security guy, take note of anything 'unusual'. So I guess I was about to find the 'unusual'.

Another 60 or so feet we came across the carcass of one of a breeding pair of Bagot Goats. Laid down as if at rest, it's hide was exposed from it's mid-section leaving parts



all over the place. Oddly, there was no smell, or flies, but there was a mass of what looked like tiny dandelions that had settled all over the central part of the animal. And the field. And an old tractor.

I couldn't breathe. My head started swimming as I realised what this was I was looking at. The Kafer Rot. I was inches from it and Barry had led me right to it. He was trying to grab me as I was lurching, I was pushing him away, what was he thinking?

I remember looking up into the Auroran sky and seeing Barry's face just grinning at me.

"You OK, young fella? You had a nasty turn and fainted." he said almost looking embarrassed.

"You led me right into a ... a nest of Kafer Rot! You trying to get me killed?" I spat. "No, no, no, fella. C'mon Harry, I wouldn't do that now. It's safe. They've got this stuff here called 'DeadSpread'. It's like a sticky bleach. They can't burn dead people or livestock out in the open 'cause the spores take off like they've got wings. So they spray this sticky stuff on them carcasses. It's from a large canister. It kills off most of them and makes the rest stick together until they've got time to dig a huge pit. I think they just forgot here. Even so, in this case, I thought a mask would still be wise."

Barry told me they didn't really use it on people unless it was absolutely necessary. Dr. Teller at the ministry (son of the famous TRP Peacekeeper) wants bodies bagged and sent to the city to be carefully incinerated in a controlled space (read: 'cremation suite').

As the house was still too dangerous to enter without full HEV suits we continued to another farm. Barry didn't know those folks (it was here I realised that Barry had known the Thomassons per-

sonally) and that we'd have to look from the outside due to a prohibition placed on the property. The next farm was only 10 minutes away.

Another silent farm.

"It was bad here." said Barry, "They were Amish, I think, or something similar. They saw having big families living and sharing the land together as God's work. Their youngest got the Rot and they didn't have an Uplink, 3V, or Drift, or anything so they didn't know what it was. The kid killed the entire community with his coughing while dying in bed. The TRP said it looked like all his relatives came into his bedroom to pray for him. Poor fools. In a week they were all dead. Sgt Keith said it happened so fast because of the confined spaces. "

On the fence was pinned, at 100m intervals, a poster. The TRP were in so much of a hurry to get out of there that they never bothered adding the relevant dimensions.

I started taking photos and saving them to the hard clip on my Drift. The usual uploading them to the X-mail beacon in orbit was pointless as the Kafers had shot them all down. They were a little slow in saving and I just assumed that the cell was nearly dry, except it wasn't. Then I noticed the tripwire I'd installed had been activated. After a nasty surprise by French militia trying to hack my Buzztone (remember those?) during the Flemish War I installed a silent key system into my Drift. There's no prompt, no klaxon, no popup, nothing, but if you don't enter a code upon launching it registers you've been in there.

It showed 3 entries. My storage was slow because the images were being replicated and siphoned elsewhere. To where though? How were they doing it? When I told Barry he said, "Stop taking pictures then, young fella."

I put Barry's advice to the back of my mind and resolved to find out more on who was

focused on transmission. It is better to debilitate an army and have them suck up supplies and manpower to care for them than it is to take a few hundred men to dig a trench and burn the dead.

This fungus didn't have an engineered transmission focus. It was designed to infiltrate systems but it's modus operandi was haphazard. If it does indeed turn out to be a bio-weapon then either the kafers know very little about our physiology or they are very good at masking it's purpose.

The intent of this organism is to spread inside a warm host with no particular pathology and then to wait until the host is dead so the accumulated gases cause the host to rupture. This post-mortem bloating and rupture releases the spores which have been spreading inside the corpse, a breeze sends the fine and light spores high into the air and covers those nearby in a fine 'dust'. On non organic objects the 'dust' or spores are still viable for about 4-6 days, after which they become inert and safe. I'm not sure if it's the life cycle of the fungus, something in Aurore's atmosphere, or some other environmental element that renders the spore inert. Within the 4-6 days however, anyone



TMA-023993-4a (rural)



Tanstaaf Medical Authority

Warning!

This area has been affected by the infection known as 'The Kafer Rot' (Xenovirus-Tanstaaf1/Groombridge-A). It is a criminal offence to enter this area while this cordon is in force punishable by a maximum of 20 years imprisonment.

The cordon are is _____ by _____ .

This area is patrolled regularly by members of the Tanstaaf Rural Police and they have full powers of infection containment allowed under martial law.

If you are experiencing ANY health difficulties such as:

- * fits of coughing
- * constant headaches
- * blurring of perception
- * blotchy or patchy skin
- * 'furry' sensation on the tongue

You are to wait on the boundary of this area until the T.R.P. can arrive to administer aid.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alden Teller'.

By order,
Dr. Alden Teller, M.D.
Director of Health,
Tanstaaf Interim Authority

hacking my Drift later. Probably some local reporter. I pulled out my old Canon from the trunk and started using that.

One thing that I couldn't shake. The silence. There wasn't a sound apart from the breeze and Barry occasionally saying "Yep" and "Bad state of affairs." We packed up and started back down the road towards Sky when Barry noticed dust from a hover a few miles down the road. They were travelling at some speed and kicking up dust on the track. Through my camera I could see it was a Songbird or Jailbird.

Barry immediately threw the vehicle into a shallow dell in the terrain and he decided we were going to go as fast as we could through the scrub and onto the adjoining nexus road back to the capital.

I looked at him in confusion and he shook his head slightly and shouted over the noise of the engine, "oh sorry, were you expecting someone?" "No." I barked in frustration, "Then we'd best keep our heads down. There's no one round here. If they're looking for us then they're doing it at a speed that makes me bloody uncomfy. If they carry on then it's all swipecy. If not, then somebody wants us detained for some reason." he said as we rose past a hill and slowed to a stop to observe the farm and road we'd just left and from an elevated position.

They pulled into the verge where we had been and stopped. There were quite obviously looking for us as four of them got out of a black Songbird, all in suits, and proceeded to imitate Gophers, necks outstretched, two with Farseers, and scanning the horizon. Luckily we'd hid the vehicle behind the crest so they couldn't pick up heat from our vehicle. We didn't know who they were and we thought it best not to find out. Af-

ter about 10 minutes they got back into their car and drove back in the direction of Tanstaaf. Ten minutes after that we drove back to Sky. When we got to Market Street we stopped a block down from Barry's place and walked up slowly, keeping our eyes open for anyone unusual. After Barry's neighbour, 'Big Al', confirmed that no one had been visiting, we went in and tried to figure out who was following us and why.

We had no real ideas. They weren't TRP but looked official in some capacity, after all, who wears a suit in the Auroran countryside? This made us think they were also off-worlders. We were unsure on whether I should keep my appointment with the original source of the Kafer Rot story, a Doctor of the Health Authority, referred to me by my Editor's contact. Maybe he was compromised? Maybe he was responsible for our new 'fans' at the farm? But wasn't this why I was here? The idea of being rough-handled and kicked off world wasn't as bad as having come all this way for nothing so, despite Barry's advice to the contrary, I decided we would still meet our contact, this Doctor who was deep within the Tanstaaf Medical Authority, someone who was respected, and wanted the Sphere to know about the truth behind Kafer Rot.

We returned to Sky and I suggested, as it was my last night on Aurore and it was a public place, we went back to the Last Call bar to have a few drinks. Barry was uneasy at first but once he realised we weren't being watched he agreed.

Barry called our 'Doctor X' from the phone in the bar so it couldn't be traced back to him in a hurry (everyone in Sky used the same phone as it was one of the only few remaining phones in use, being connected to Tanstaaf by cable). The Doctor was nervous, saying he'd had a visit from 4 guys he'd termed 'Goons.'

coming into contact is at risk from infection. As of writing this, anecdotal evidence suggests anyone breathing within the dispersion zone of the spores will almost certainly be exposed. There is nothing this fungus seems to find more comfortable than the soft tissues of the mouth, trachea, and lungs. Despite trying for 4 months I am yet to find a cure. The data I've collated from the many TFL units that have encountered the Kafer Rot makes me thankful it hasn't gotten into the townships yet but also frustrated that there is so little information on the fungus. Of the 320 known patients who have been exposed to this fungus, all have died. Then problem is that nearly all of them were out in the field, fighting the Kafers. The mortality rate stands at a flat 100%. I need static test subjects that I can examine to see if different environments matter and if we're just lucky or it can thrive on terraformed soil. I am going to commence with my experiment, 'Case Purple', to see if that yields any further answers.

Our best chance is to minimize the rate of exposure. Teller has authorized the TRP to post prohibition notices at the infected sites but it's not enough. We need to find out what kind of environment fosters the dispersion of the spores and I'm hoping Case Purple gives us the answers.

Examination showed the fungus spread quickly and across a wide variety of medium suggesting that it is highly adaptable. A typical single spore germinates into a homokaryotic mycelium, which cannot reproduce sexually; when two compatible homokaryotic mycelia join and form a dikaryotic mycelium, the resulting 'bloom' can be fast spreading and fatal for the host. In many cases a mycelium may be tiny or, like the Groombridge Mycelium, be extensive and quite visible.

The mycelium first secretes enzymes which break down and absorb the environment (be it soil, plant life, or animal life). Through testing on rabbits we discovered that when ingested, a single spore is sufficient to cause catastrophic organ failure, the thread-like hyphae spreading quickly through tissue, cutting blood flow, rupturing vessels, and restricting organs from functioning. Each cough in a confined area would then spread the nascent spores further amongst the life around it. In all, from our in-vivo studies and post-mortem evidence, we can estimate that from exposure to death takes, on average, 7 days. Disregarding environmental factors, the infected can carry the spores for 2-3 days without showing any outward signs than a cold. Once they start cough-

Continued on Page 16



They asked him a lot of questions about strangers and had gotten a punch to his left orbit for laughing when they had asked "If he'd seen any suspicious characters." and he replied "What? Apart from you four and half of Tanstaafl?" I heard Barry trying to get him to meet today, as much to get me my story and off-world more than any other reason, but DrX was adamant.

"Today was too dangerous. Maybe tomorrow."

I'd like to say we spent the evening watching 3V but while it was on, all I did was worry over why Barry had taken to single mindedly clean and check his firearms and read the Tanstaafl government report on what was technically known as XVT/G-a to outsiders, but known as 'The Kafer Rot' to everyone here.

The report written by Michael Groombridge, a Mycologist based at Hammer campus, Tanstaafl University, was not happy reading. There was much they didn't know, and was filled with conjecture, but the scant few facts they did know weren't encouraging. Chiefly, the Rot wasn't a virus, but an extremely aggressive fungus.

Everyone in the Core is convinced it's the new Black Death but the images and vids floating around on the network that show feverish individuals coughing blood doesn't paint the whole picture. The coughing, fever, and all the things we think is the fault of a virus is actually the body trying to defend itself against something to which it has no defence. Yet still, especially on right wing shows like 'Republic' we hear the word 'virus'. I'm sure we all remember that upsetting vid of the kid in a sealed environment coughing blood. That was the fungus ravaging his lungs. Something Dr Groombridge knew all too well before it killed him. Yet, even with

Dr Groombridge's all too brief paper there was much that was missing from it. Transmission rates, the distance the spores could travel, exclusion/quarantine procedures. Worryingly, based on the slim data, there was no way to see how it spread to the Thomasson farm. It could seemingly strike anywhere.

We awoke, had breakfast, and headed to 'The Last Call' to watch the phone. I wasn't looking forward to a day indoors staring at the phone but as it turned out, we didn't have to. Dr X had called early and asked the Barkeep to let us know he'd meet us in the car park of the TMA (Tanstaafl Medical Authority) at 11am.

It was a fine and clear 'morning' at a neighborhood parking lot in the south of 'The City' (Tanstaafl). We arrived early and Barry was looking nervous, which was making me nervous. Our contact had arrived early too and was waiting at the far end of the lot and leaning against his songbird drinking a soda.

Barry started to turn the wheel and we were leaving. "What the f--?" I snapped.


"That's not our guy. That's someone pretending, very badly, to be our guy. I knew this was a bad idea." said Barry as he quickly drove towards the exit.

"How do you... I mean he's wearing a lab coat for one." I said, confused.

"Exactly. For a guy who is desperate to keep a low profile he seems remarkably relaxed in his lab coat. If you wore a lab coat all day... would you wear one when you were out?"

"No." I admitted. "Precisely." affirmed Barry, "We're in trouble."

Feeling out of my depth in a way as never before I felt all the more vulnerable by not being able to beam my work



KAFER ROT (GROOMBRIDGE MYCELUM)

LAB CULTIVATED IN PETRI DISH ON COFFEE GROUNDS.
LOCALS STILL MISTAKENLY REFER TO IT AS XTG-a.

off world. No sat phones, no up-Drift, no X-Mail, the Kafers had destroyed the network sending most of the planet back into the tech of the 19th century. Here I am, in the heart of some kind of conspiracy regarding the K-Rot, and I've got no way to call for help or get the story off-world.

"Where are we going?" I asked as Barry turned a straight right out of the parking lot and towards the city.

"You're done here, fella. My job is to make sure you're safe. Tanstaaf isn't safe for you." Barry replied in a 'don't argue with me' tone. Still, I tried to argue, brought out the usual argument about 'free press', but Barry kept a serious and dour look on his face without replying. It wasn't the Barry I had come to know.

We headed straight for Blackjack and, using Barry's esteemed reputation with an old merc buddy, we entered the airfield and made our way towards an old hangar that looked as if it had never been used but had been allowed to slowly rot away in a corner of the downport. Barry's lack of communication

only heightened the tension for me.

We met with a shuttle pilot who had space for my dataclip and who promised Barry that he would get the clip containing all the photos, my notes, and this report to the The Frontier office on BC, and thence to Earth. When I asked if there was enough space for me on the shuttle (it looked small), I was told that I wouldn't be travelling with him. They would be looking for both me and Barry and the best chance of surviving was a very public exit off-world via public transport. Even if I'm picked up at Port Blackjack, the story getting out would be mine and Barry's chance of not being harmed. As long as whoever was after us didn't have tendrils in the Port Authority, of course.

I'll see what else I can find before my flight off-world tomorrow morning.

HJC

Editor's Note

Usually, when a story is this new, we await the return of the reporter, check sources, and set up marketing for the article and subsequent 3v program. However, in this case, we published as soon as the story arrived without it's author. We at 'The Frontier' believe in transparency and demand the return of Messrs Covanti & Singh if in captivity by persons unknown and an independent investigation into the events surrounding their disappearance and this story.



THE PREF THE WORLD

A SCENARIO OF INVESTIGATION, COVER UP, & POLITICAL FALL OUT BY STEFF. WORTHINGTON

ing the spores are carried on those coughs to anyone in a confined area such as a farm house or office.

Conclusions of Case Purple

When the results came in from CP it was greeted with some excitement in the lab (although I had to conceal where the data had come from). We have determined the likely dispersion pattern and it tallies with much of the information we already knew, such as spores only being present around property that had been exposed to the Kafers, or around people or livestock that had, but also reassured us that out in the open the risk was minimal. Sure, if you breathed it in it

Aurore's First Citizen, Thomas 'Long Tom' Bellamy, is worried. In his career as the leader of Tanstaaf he's had to make a lot of ugly choices. Choices that have led to hardship, anguish and, for a small close knit family out past the township of Sky, death.

As he sits in his office and wrings his hands he debates with his conscience that he didn't know that Groombridge was going to go that far, that he himself wasn't to blame, that it was for the good of the colony, but still, he knows politics. They'll blame him. For a moment he catches himself thinking of his career before the deaths of the Van Ness family. "This is politics. Nothing more." he whispers to himself before Madeleine brings in his coffee, half trying to convince himself that his chief of security is doing the right thing and has it contained.

"I'm surrounded by idiots and psychopaths." he mumbles.

"Pardon, Sir?" asks Madeleine.

"Hm? Nothing." he replies, again desperately trying to pull the wool over his

own eyes. He knows what kind of man Groombridge was. What kind of man John Cadiuex is.

'Long Tom' makes a calculation in his mind and loads his pistol after Madeleine has left the room. He places it back into his draw with the hammer pulled back.

"If and when. ... if and when."

Synopsis

Harry James Covanti is one of the most respected reporters on 'The Frontier', a right leaning weekly news journal available in the Core. His editor, Sandra Laverock, sent him to Aurore to find more on the disease that's reared it's ugly head there, the 'Kafer Rot'.

Laverock hired (through an intermediary) Covanti's bodyguard and guide, Bhavdeep Singh, to make sure Covanti's naiveté of the frontier didn't get him killed. Singh is a mercenary and soldier of some skill and renown and was the ideal choice. A local broker named Bill



Nilsen who had moved to BC had organised the contract and returned to Aurore to set it up.

Everything seemed to go fine at first. Covanti arrived and was given a small tour by Singh but when Covanti's story turned up at BC4 under a cloud of secrecy without Covanti or Singh, Nilsen became worried and spoke with the local 'The Frontier' rep, Andrew Tonur. They both agreed that, due to the content, Covanti & Singh might be in some danger so they have hired the players to go and investigate and, if possible, retrieve Covanti (and Singh if he needs it).

The Undercurrent

2 years ago, when 'Greypatch' (the first form of the Rot that was noticed) appeared outside the confines of abandoned kafer equipment, Dr Alden Teller of the Tanstaaf medical Authority was concerned about public health regarding it and more pressingly, about the public's perception. Worried that they might stir themselves up into a panic he asked the First Citizen to hire a scientist from off world to get to the bottom of the newer variant (the Kafer Rot), what the Rot was, and to get all the facts out into the open so the public might feel at ease and take precautions. A virus with imagined properties can sometimes be more dangerous than the real thing.

Tom Bellamy already had budget issues with reconstruction and just feeding the citizenry so he looked through the scientists he already had planetside. As luck would have it, Bellamy's ignorance led to the right man. Understanding Dr Michael Groombridge to be some "sort of biologist" he moved him from the Mycoprotein Program (a program that was using mycoprotein to balance out the nutritional requirements of the colonists, thus permitting them to spread fresh foodstuffs wider) and asked him

to investigate the Kafer Rot. As public confidence was low and fear high, Bellamy made sure that Groombridge had all the money, equipment, staff, and latitude that the doctor needed. What Bellamy didn't know was that Groombridge was mentally ill. He had been suffering from PHS (Pure Hippocampal Sclerosis), a rare form of dementia. It mimics Alzheimer's in a lot of ways but also has disturbing behavioural deficits and cognitive impairment. Errors made in his career, due to the undiagnosed disease, have led to him being 'managed out' of his previous roles and he has found his way to Aurore, the end of human space.

While his initial findings were promising, finding it to be a fungus rather than a virus for example, Bellamy had no panacea to give the people. It was an organism, not a virus that could be inoculated against.

Groombridge needed more data and set about a plan called 'Case Purple'. He designed an experiment where a family would be exposed and he would see the dispersion pattern of the spores, the incubation period, and how long each resident took to die. In his mind 'Michael' (Groombridge's responsible and empathic self) was working on a model, not real human beings. His mind never made the cognitive link from model and statistics to actual people. In a way, Michael would consciously set the parameters of the experiment and think of it as just numbers, whereas when it was time to start the experiment, 'Dr Groombridge' would sleepwalk his way through it. He would be conscious and responsive and seemingly awake in all ways, except that subconsciously, almost without his knowledge, he would be planning to kill a family. Some of his staff started to suspect that something was wrong when odd items such as micro-surveillance cameras would show up on manifests and Groombridge's

was still fatal, but the wind blew most of the spores away and rendered them inert. As fungus spores usually lie dormant until they find the right conditions for growth this fungus is unusual to say the least. How they become inert has yet to be determined.

Sacrifices were made in Case Purple but it has brought more data to the fore. It will be worth it in the end. It also proved that exposure to the spores in confined spaces was fatal.

Epidemiology Summary

Upon infection, the subject will begin to exhibit signs of a fever, clammy skin, dizziness, and thirst within 24 hours. Within the next 3-5 days they will exhibit patchy skin on the limbs (a greying Sclerotia), a furring of the tongue, non-trauma dysphasia, coughing, pulmonary oedema, and progressive myopia. Within 5-8 days, the subject suffers a drop in blood volume, haemorrhaging from eyes, nose, and ears, evidence of further Sclerotia with the fungus breaking sores on the surface of the skin, a furring of the lungs, brain, and death as the fungus spreads.

The spores are deadly once they start to bloom in the trachea and mouth around day 3. For life forms that become infected and left in the environment then as the corpse rots, the usual build up of gases will eventually

rupture the cadaver and the wind will then spread the exposed spores up to 10 foot away where there is no wind and maybe up to 1/4 mile with a good wind (estimated via computer modelling using the spore mass and the average wind speeds around Tanstafl).

Prevention

At this time there is no treatment for this aggressive fungus. It has a 100% mortality rate. Containment in the field is possible, however. With good safety equipment such as masks and biological PPE, a corpse can be rendered safe by using a combination of bleach and epoxy. I had sent my formula for such a spray to the Home Ministry with a recommendation that all members of the TRP be equipped with spray canisters. The bleach kills the fungus effectively ex-vivo and the epoxy (supplied by Masters Chemical Products) sticks the spores and mycelia together, making seeding on the wind difficult providing they completely cover the corpse. So far, this has been tested with 1 Tanstafl Rural Police (TRP) unit and they have seen no new losses from their unit.

In my view, GM is a naturally occurring fungus amongst the Kafers and is something that they have a natural defence against whereas

temper would suddenly flare up without reason (While 'Michael' was awake and oblivious to Groombridge's action, subconsciously he would still be aware and the torment of this, coupled with his disease, would have him lash out without consciously knowing why he was so stressed).

When a large Mennonite family arrived from Earth and wanted to set up a farm Groombridge was being advised of all new arrivals (in case they brought new medical issues to the colony) and they seemed ideal. He offered them and their wider family new holdings that were 2 farms, bought and paid for, but the farmers decided to stay on Earth (a lie. The farms were built purely for the experiment). All Frederik Van Ness and his brother Rickard had to do was pay for their paydirt, livestock (goats, sheep, chickens), and a years business rates and the properties were theirs. Groombridge's representative, Mr John Cadiuex, told the Van Ness family that Tanstafl was only too glad to gift them the property because they had a reputation of being hard working, honest people. The Van Ness family were oblivious to the tiny cameras, a clear strip of plastic about the size of a penny, hidden throughout the house.

What Happened Next

Only 4 weeks in, at the direction of 'Groombridge', John Cadiuex went and placed a cat infected with the Rot on the Van Ness property. As the cat was still healthy and in it's first day of infection it was no real danger to Cadiuex or the Van Ness family. It was dropped off at the edge of the fields and, being cats, went in search of the only life around. On the second day it was found and picked up by Johann Van Ness, the 6yr old son, and he introduced 'Minoes' (pronounced 'MEE-noos') to his par-

ents and 5 siblings. Within 2 days the cat had grown ill and was looking lifeless and starting to lose fur. It was Johann's job to care for Minoes so he stayed close by, stroking the pet, and watching more of its fur shed. On day 3 it was coughing directly at Johann and it was at this point Frederik, with much opposition from Johann, decided to take no chances and put Minoes to sleep. He took it out to the barn and used a spade, and then buried it outside of the barn (as there were no local predators he wasn't concerned with the corpse being dug up).

Three days after this Johann developed a fever. His mother put him to bed and made soup. She sat by his side when not managing the household and made sure he was well looked after.

At night 'Groombridge' would keep watch for signs of the infection spreading via the cameras (a good 2hrs before watching live he would revue the days footage). He saw how much the family cared for Johann but was concerned only with vectors, transmission, and symptoms.

Over the course of the next few days, all of his immediate family plus his aunt Lotte and uncle Rickard and four cousins, all came to visit him in his small, enclosed bedroom. His coughing worsened and in their desperation Frederik sent his eldest son over to the Thomasson farm 7 miles away to see if they had any communication (to contact a doctor in Sky) or medication that might help. Gunnar Thomasson had some skill in medicine from his time in the Scandinavian Peace Brigade (an NGO concerned with disaster relief) and, like a good neighbour, came back with Arnald van Ness to see if he could help. He tried in vain and returned sorrowfully to his own family carrying the spores

in his throat back to his own farm. Over the next 4 days, the entire Van Ness family would be dead. Two days after that, the Thomasson family would join them. All the while 'Groombridge' was frantically taking notes and cataloguing data.

The bodies of Gunnar Thomasson and wife Heidi were found on their property (Gunnar out on the drive with the spores blooming in his corpse like some human gro-bag, seeding the countryside around his small holding. Heidi's body was glimpsed on the kitchen floor through the window). Gunnar's body was doused with 'DeadSpread' and Heidi's was left to rot inside the infected house. In time, the Tanstaafl govt will burn the house and everything in it using fuel and HEV suits.

Gleefully collecting all the data from not only the Van Ness properties but also the Thomasson house (collected somewhat by the TRP), 'Groombridge' was beginning to see hard data in how it can be avoided and, for now, managed.

It was here that Dr. Nicholas Street, one of the assistants that Groombridge kept at arm's length in the lab, had just about enough of Groombridge's behaviour and was planning to go to Teller and tell him that Groombridge had serious behavioural problems and perhaps they needed looking into. Aware of how his career might end if he just started accusing Groombridge he started building his case by noting down periods of frustration, anger, and the many mistakes that were creeping into his work. After a few weeks he had built up a small amount of data but it still wasn't enough. Many of his colleagues were just avoiding Groombridge now. Street had decided that it was unacceptable as the research was suffering. All this new data coming in was just Groombridge's opinion as

he wouldn't let any of his staff see the source of the data. It was only when Dr Street snuck his way into Groombridge's computer files that he found out why. Seeing the predicament he was in, Dr Street decided to refrain from going to Teller or anyone else in the administration. If he blew the whistle on this, whose to say it didn't go all the way to the top? Some of Groombridge's reports mention frequent meetings with the First Citizen and showing him the reports (in actuality, they were just the numbers. The First Minister doesn't really care for details). On Groombridge's computer and in his personal file system (a collection of holo data chips in a small cabinet on his desk) 'Case Purple' was just sat there. It wasn't hidden. It was just another experiment with the data laid out plainly in files.

Horried, he sent a letter (via transport ship) up the arm to the offices of 'The Frontier' at Beta Canum and Andrew Tonur saying:

"I've found something profound about the Kafer Rot and don't know who to trust on-planet. It could bring down the Tanstaafl government. Can you send a reporter to verify my story? Utmost secrecy is needed. Call this number when he arrives. 01174-311-8946. Dr. Nicholas Street."

He mailed it in a normal mail box and it was concealed in the hundreds of thousands of letters going to and from orbit in the regular X-Mail boat service. When it eventually got to BC some 28 days later, Tonur sent an X-mail to Sandra Laverock on Earth. Tonur had practiced contingency plans in such an event and didn't need to await a reply from Laverock. He was to hire a bodyguard and guide on Aurore to meet the chosen reporter when he arrived (on this rotation it was to be Covanti). "The

we do not. TFL members report seeing a 'downy fuzz' on some Kafer corpses and gear post-battle. I have tried to secure samples, hoping it may be a different strain, but as rewards are offered for kafer heads and gear I have not been able to secure any samples. I have requested the First Citizen put a stop to the practice of paying for trophies and it could be inadvertently spreading the fungus. True, the fungus is almost certainly inert at this stage but we can't be too careful.

If he decides to take my advice, I doubt it will be a popular move. Some of the TFL rely on the trophies to boost their stipend. What started out as a fungal blight on Terran crops has evolved not just into the commonly termed 'Graypatch' infection which can lead to amputations and major surgery, but also the Kafer Rot, something that could do more damage to the Human colonies on Aurore far more successfully than any thing the Kafers themselves can do. It is my estimation that this is a naturally occurring fungus on the kafer homeworld and something the enemy has grown immune to. It is also my judgment that the Kafers don't know that their benign fungus causes so much damage to us otherwise they would be dropping it by the shipload.

(A redacted and an original



version of this paper, as well as Dr Groombridge's medical records, appear at the end of this scenario).



*The Honourable Lions
Mercenary Company*



Frontier' would bank roll the investigation and Tonur was trusted with an expense account at his local Niyazawa Bank. It was at this point that Tonur met with Nilsen and paid him for Singh's services. Nilsen then sent an encrypted X-mail to Singh which read:

"Singh, Harry James Covanti arriving 4/17/00 from Hochbaden. Will investigate Rot. Client's contact Dr Nicholas Street at the Tanstaafl Health Authority. Protection for 2 weeks. Lv10,000 awaiting here upon completion. Nilsen"

Beamed to the system relay in BC the message was 'piggy-backed' all the way to the Eta Bootes system where the X-mail boat carrying it (a Thorez-class Courier) transferred it to an encrypted data file (as the Kafers had destroyed the orbital message relays) and passed it on physically to the Tanstaafl Post Office when they landed at Port Blackjack.

Some 5 days after Dr Street sent the file, 'Groombridge' had decided to collect more data by possibly repeating the experiment. Forgetting where he was and what he was supposed to be doing, Groombridge entered the clean environment room, opened up the petri dishes of Kafer Rot and took a long hard sniff of the samples.

His death took 4 agonising days and right up until the end Groombridge was both fascinated at how the purer sample accelerated the symptoms, and appalled and bemused at how he himself had become infected. He apparently was unaware that he had infected himself.

Dr Street was stunned but not surprised. His problem, from his perspective, had been solved. He awaited a new project leader (presumably from Earth) and carried on his work as usual. However, within the space of a day there were men in suits looking over the lab, then

his files. He resisted but they threatened sanction or redundancy if he failed to comply. There was literally nowhere else to work for a virologist on Aureor, especially as his French was less than perfect and his Ukrainian nonexistent. Two days after these 'suited goons' had searched the lab, Street came home to find his apartment had been ransacked. Nothing seemed to be missing so the police just put it down as mischief rather than a burglary and promised to look at it and get back to him with any updates (meaning never).

The First Citizen was informed of the copying and security breach and then Cadiuex told him what had been copied. Bellamy was horrified and had no idea Groombridge had killed 3 families out in the farmlands near Sky. Cadiuex reminded Bellamy that he signed the orders that gave Groombridge permission to proceed in anyway he deemed fit to find a cure for the Rot and that Cadiuex was to render all assistance. He was up to his neck in it and with certain military leaders thinking they could do a better and less corrupt job at running the colony, he didn't want to give them any excuse to try.

Bellamy decided to hush things up. "Do whatever it takes, Cadiuex" he told the ex French Foreign Legion colonel, "I never want to hear about this again."

The next day he was interviewed by the First Citizen's intelligence chief John Cadiuex. He interviewed a few other assistants in the lab also but Street felt as though he got special attention.

Feeling as though he was being singled out by the security services Dr Street hid all the data that he'd copied on to a small data slip and tucked it away in the lining of his favourite coat. He was aware he needed to keep it safe until The

Frontier sent a reporter or, if things got really dangerous, he could arrange passage off-world.

Over the next 4 1/2 months the situation at Dr Street's work calmed down. No more searches, no more harassment (even though he was convinced he was still being watched), and he just carried on with his work and awaited the new director of the lab. The security had no leads only suspicions that someone had accessed Groombridge's computer and copied data for purposes unknown. Dr Street was, however, well aware of how long a message to Earth and back took and realised that a reporter might be arriving any day. He'd avoided all the usual attempts at communication from unknown sources to his home or office phones in case it was a trap by Cadiuex and the security services and instead rented an office in a damaged and abandoned office block in Downtown Tanstaafl containing just a desk, chair, and phone. He was checking the phone more and more for messages and apart from the occasional voice-X-mail from Tonur on BC giving encouragement and updates, it was silent.

Late one evening, Street didn't notice the men following him on the dark and quiet street just off Broadway. Without warning they grabbed Street, threw a black bag over his head, and shot him with a sonic pistol.

Street woke up in some abandoned warehouse, tied to a chair, and being asked over and over again who he'd spoken to and where the copied files were. To his credit, Street took several punches but never gave them the information they wanted and just feigned ignorance. Beaten and dazed he was released onto a lonely street to find his way home. Only he didn't go home straight away. They followed him to the door of the building housing his office as he went

to check for any messages on his way home. While there he received a call from Singh asking for a meet and that the reporter had arrived. Dr Street said it was too risky tonight but it might be possible tomorrow.

After he had left the security detail that had just abducted him did so again but this time they also broke into his office and found the recorder for the phone. They knew they had their man, that a reporter was on Aurore, and that the situation was getting out of control. They took Street back to the same warehouse but this time they didn't spare their punches. They tortured Street who resisted as long as he could knowing full well that if he gave them what they wanted, he would be a dead man. Sadly, Cadiuex was never a good assessor of capability and one of the 'Goon' went too far and caused Street to have a heart attack and die. His body has been dumped in the war torn remains of Rectenna, some 80km from Tanstaafl.

Dr Street's jacket, and the data slip within it, still hangs in his bedroom closet.

Faced with losing their only lead to whoever was dealing with Dr Street, Cadiuex's men called the 'Last Call bar' like Street did the night before and left a message with the Barkeep to ask Barry to meet him in the car park of the main TMA building in the city at 11am. The Barkeep had never heard Street's voice so couldn't tip Barry and Covanti off. As far as the Goons were concerned they knew the contact's name was Barry (from a previous recorded phone call) and that he had an accent they weren't familiar with but that was it. They decided that one of them would wear a lab coat and 'act natural' but they underestimated Barry's sense of mistrust and Barry turned away without stopping. This time, however, his license plate was captured by Cadiuex's team. Within



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minutes they knew exactly who Barry was and where he lived.

While Barry was taking Covanti to Port Blackjack airfield the Goons were on their way to Barry's home. They didn't much like Sky, all four were security specialists from Tirane and were brought to Aurore by Cadiuex. They hated being on "A backwater" like Aurore and Sky especially. They had already taken a fruitless journey out to Sky when one of the cameras in the van Ness properly picked up a distant vehicle that had stopped suspiciously at the edge of the farmland (Barry's BS Badger) and they didn't want to return to the City empty-handed.

Barry placed Covanti's dataclip with his old merc buddy, Bajinder Singh a shuttle pilot for 'Eagle Air' operating out of Port Blackjack, then waited while he took off to deliver civil defence records to the USS Hampton in orbit. After watching him take off into the sky, Singh then drove Covanti to the main terminal and watched him go through the first checkpoint. That was the last time Singh saw Covanti.

The Fate of Singh & Covanti

With a terrible anxiety building inside him, Covanti went through customs and could see his shuttle on the concourse through the main departure area windows. That's when Port Authority police picked him up. He had questions from Tanstaafl Security to answer and the First Citizen's security advisor, Mr Cadiuex, had come along especially to ask them.

Chained to a small desk in a brightly lit room at Port Security wasn't making Covanti feel at ease. He knew that bad things happened to wise cracking "Earthworms" out in the colonies and Tanstaafl was the worst colony he could

imagine. Semi-lawless, corrupt, and with a leadership desperate to retain control no matter the cost.

If I just stay quiet and ask for a lawyer, he thought, they can't really put anything on me.

The first blow knocked him out. He was stripped naked and then woken up with ice cold water tipped over him. Cadiuex questioned him for 4 hours but Covanti never gave away the location of the data clip (aboard a shuttle or the USS Hampton by now) or Dr Street's dataslip (Covanti had no idea where it was). He knew it was his only chance of staying alive.

Singh, satisfied that Covanti was heading off-world, drove straight back home. His plan was to get his weapons, some of his friends from the Honourable Lions and go on "safari" (A Kafer hunting expedition) for a few weeks until it all blew over. He had a 'jump kit' ready (a survival pack with weapons, ammo, supplies, and clothing) for just such an event or if the Kafers attacked Sky, and he felt confident he'd be able to ride it out until the story broke and all the bad guys were rounded up.

Singh parked outside and hurriedly got out of his vehicle and went for his front door. Something made him turn around and get his Kirpan out of the car and he headed indoors. He closed the door and 3 shots from a suppressed pistol snapped out from the corner of the room and 2 of them caught Singh in the stomach. In the darkness he saw 4 men hiding in his apartment. When one got too close Singh stabbed the Goon's foot with his knife and when he went down next to him, Singh opened up his throat. More bullets rang out and Singh died.

The Goons cursed their misfortune at having to clear up the mess and dispose

of the body.

In a further ignominy, Singh's turban unravelled when they pulled his body away from the door. They waited until the early hours and then left Singh's house, complete with their dead colleague, and left in their car around the corner.

As Singh sometimes heads off into the bush to hunt Kafers with his friends, it's not unusual for him not to be at home for long periods. No one would report him missing and he'll still be there when the players arrive on world (providing the players aren't introduced to the ad-



venture by Bajinder Singh.

Depending on where the players start from this scenario could either be a rescue mission or a double murder hunt as Cadiuex is not about to let Covanti go without finding Dr Street's notes. In Cadiuex's mind, Singh, Covanti, and Street were in collusion and part of a group secretly trying to overthrow the Gold Party and it's First Citizen, With Singh's military background Cadiuex feels that

Singh and other parties have got a black budget to stir up trouble in the colony. Not only is Cadiuex determined to defuse the ticking bomb that is 'Case Purple' for the First Citizen's benefit but also for his own as he is complicit in some of the security service's worst atrocities (such as 'Case Purple').

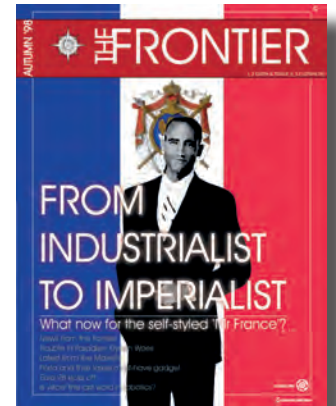
Covanti's Doom or Destiny

Covanti's fate depends on where the players start their adventure. If they are hired on **Earth** or anywhere coreward of **Kimanjano** then by the time they reach Aurore Covanti is dead, his body will have been thrown under a Bladehood to make it look like he's been a victim of his own naïveté. At this point, Cadiuex and his Goons don't know the story has broken on Earth. While they couldn't get the information regarding Dr Street's dataslip from Covanti they will eventually kill him to avoid recognition and capture.

If they start from **Beta Canum** or anywhere frontierward then it is best left to the Referee to determine Covanti's fate. The Goons will only keep him for a certain amount of time while they wait for Cadiuex to decide what to do with him. It is unlikely, but not impossible, that he will be alive if the players dally on Aurore. It is a race against time, whether the players are aware or not, to save Covanti's life.

If they start on **Aurore** then the chances that Covanti is still alive are high. Their lead in to the adventure would be different but will give players more opportunities to resolve the scenario satisfactorily. The trail is less cold, recollections of witnesses fresher, and connections easier to find.

However they start the adventure off-world, the lead-in starts the same way



Basic Research

(The information contained below is available via any datapoint, ship's library, or uplink/Drift device)

'The Frontier' is a right-leaning weekly periodical that emphasises global and interstellar current affairs. It is widely regarded as decent journalism and often adds balance pieces to it's usual right leaning stories which has gained much respect in recent years.

It is well known for sending reporters out into the field where many other news outlets use freelancers or don't bother at all. It defends it's staff to the hilt and recently defended a reporter's right not to reveal his sources whilst under investigation after a civil liberty case in Canada.

It will offer, out of the public glare Lv 20,000 for the return of Covanti or Lv 10,000 if it leads to the arrest of those who have abducted him (if that's the case).

Skill Tests

For the purposes of this scenario, GDW 2300AD skills will be highlighted in red, Mongoose Traveller 2300AD in green where they appear in the text.

To successfully appraise Laverock's or Tonur's offer of payment.

GDW 2300AD:
Bureaucracy, Interviewing, or Appraisal /Routine/Instant.

MGT 2300AD:
Admin, Broker, or Persuade /Intelligence/Instant/Average

Success: The PC realises that certain payments in this regard are restricted and that Lv20,000 is the most the media group is able, or willing, to pay.

'The Pride of Virginia'
Merkur-class interstellar orbital interface Courier

Crew: Bridge 10, Engineering 3, captained by Cmdr August Hill.

*Warp efficiency: 2.00 loaded
Power Plant: 4 MW MHD
Fuel: 400 tons (for 1 week)
Range: 7.7*

Mass: 732.6 tons

Cargo capacity: None

Comfort: -2

Total Life Support: 19 (modified)

Those PCs who can fulfil bridge or engineering stations will get better accommodation. Some "luxuries" have

with an invite to the offices of an important member of staff from the 'The Frontier' media group. For players starting on Aurore see below for their introduction.

After receiving an X-mail from a staff member at 'The Frontier' magazine, the players are asked to attend a meeting at the offices where an offer of employment will be proposed.

The location and staff of the office are dependent on where the players start. All the garden worlds have at least some presence of 'The Frontier' and what the players see there will roughly depend on where that is.

On Earth it will be in New York in a sleek and fashionable office space somewhere near the top of a skyscraper. They will be met by the receptionist Alice who will lead them to the hi-tech glass walled office of **Sandra Laverock**, the Features Editor. Sandra sits behind her desk and has a bank of 3V screens behind her showing other channels (all on silent). She received the package of documents, photos, and Groombridge's redacted report (see play aid #1).

She looks up and abruptly motions for them to sit down on the chairs in front of her (precisely the same number of chairs as PCs). She seems pensive, abrupt, and has no time for irrelevant information.

How to play Sandra Laverock:

Rub your hands when talking. Look behind yourself occasionally to check the 3V screens. Be succinct but never rude. Occasionally her glasses drift down her nose so push them back up to the bridge of your nose.

Sandra is worried. She respects and likes Covanti and he's a great asset to the magazine so wants him safe. She won't

bargain with terrorists or kidnappers and will instead spend any money on others who can retrieve him. She has no idea of the conspiracy or what may have happened to Singh and Covanti but her realistic and cynical mind thinks it's not gonna be good news and he's unlikely to have gotten lost while hiking. She won't mention her fears but will show the players the article that will appear at the end of the week on the newsstands of Earth and Tirane and a few days later, further down the Arms. It was her idea to publish the article in an attempt that if he Covanti has been abducted, it will discourage those who have him from harming him. If the PCs join the adventure at Earth then Covanti will be dead by the time they reach Aurore.

She asks the PCs their fee and whatever the response will offer Lv20,000 take it or leave it. She can find another team of investigators if needs be (the actual budget is out of her control-see Task Sidebar). If the PCs refuse the job then they read about Covanti's mysterious death weeks later. A sobering lesson to respond to those in need.

If the PCs accept the job then they will be given passage aboard a Merkur-class Courier owned by FMG (Frontier Media Group) and used as a mobile production centre. Part of its Engineering Bay has been retrofitted to accommodate 6, rather than the usual 2, passengers but as there is no spin it will be an uncomfortable and cramped journey. It's best to be out of your bunk during atmospheric entry in case you suffer mild contusions. See the sidebar for information on 'The Pride of Virginia' or see p.68 of GDW's 'Ships of the French Arm' for more detailed information on this class of courier vessel.

On Beta Canum the situation will be similar except it will be a smaller and more modest office block in downtown



Carmody. There'll still be a receptionist but she will be under pressure as she seems to be doing 3 jobs at once. Rather hurriedly she motions you into the rather spartan office of **Andrew Tonur**. He's a little less gracious than Laverock and doesn't have the time to be polite. He's running an office on a shoestring and sees Covanti's disappearance as another matter that he has to take care of when it should be someone else's problem.

How to play Tonur:

Always appear busy signing things, answering the phone, or distracted. Keep your words short and to the point. Sigh occasionally.

In truth, Tonur couldn't care less about Covanti but he's been given a job by Laverock and intends to see it through. He cares a little more about Singh and sees him as a good guy to have around and a decent sort. Tonur is a little more streetwise than Laverock and suspects that Covanti is dead and has fallen foul of some conspiracy. He will show the PCs the X-mail received from Dr Street and the article from Covanti (he was the person who forwarded it onto Laverock.)

Unfortunately, all the photos are flavour pieces except for 3 notable examples:

- 1- An image of a goat carcass covered in the spores of Kafer Rot (but treated with the sticky bleach like substance called 'Deadspread').
- 2- The smiling face of Bhavdeep 'Barry' Singh (see image on p23).
- 3- A long distance view, from higher ground, of the edge of a farm. In the distance on the long road by the fence, a Bridgeport Swift Songbird and 4 men in suits can be seen. It's too far even with enhancement to make out what they look like, but they look to be carrying small arms.

He, like Laverock, will offer the PCs Lv20,000 and also supply the article written by Covanti, the X-mail from Dr Street containing his secret office phone number, the redacted Groombridge report, and the photos. He will also, like Laverock, obtain return passage to Aurore for the PCs but will not supply any permits for weapons. They must go unarmed, use contacts when they get there, or have official sanction from a higher authority (such as an intelligence agency)

If the PCs start on Aurore the players won't meet an executive of 'The Frontier' at all and will instead be hired by Bajinder Singh, the shuttle pilot who delivered Covanti's file to a midshipman aboard the USS Hampton who, in turn, delivered it to Beta Canum when he went planetside for R&R.

If the PCs have any military experience, have a broker looking for work, or have posted anywhere that the Militia or Honourable Lions can see then they will be contacted by a sheepish Bajinder. He will suggest they meet in the downport bar at Port Blackjack (a location where there is always a lot of people) and offer them Lv10,000 to find out what happened to 'Barry' Singh. He is concerned for his own safety. It was one thing when he was a Bandersnatch pilot for the Honourable Lions, dropping the team in the Hotback to take the war to the Kafers... there he could see who the enemy was. It's quite another to not know who your enemy is. During the interview he will mention to the players that "I can get you to and from a firefight safely but I'm not cut out for all this cloak and dagger nonsense."

How to play Bajinder:

Appear furtive and always vigilant. Become slightly angry when Barry is mentioned. Point out, when applicable, security lapses from the PCs once they are

been removed to accommodate the PCs as passengers. There is one less Head for example and the usual gym area to avoid muscle loss has been reduced in size. This may cause a little friction with the crew. 'The Pride of Virginia' is able to make planetary landings. On board there is extensive recording equipment in the form of 3V cameras, a (reduced) editing suite, and store for data.



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engaged on the job with phrases like “Put that light out.”, “Quiet! We don’t know who could be listening.”, and “Move away from the curtains... unless you like being a target.” The PCs may assume he’s paranoid but he’s just being careful. A good friend who has killed at least 10 Kafers and was a veteran warrior was killed in his own home. It’s enough to make anyone nervous.

When Bajinder Singh returned to Tanstaafl the next day he called on Barry to tell him that the package had been delivered. He got no answer but just assumed he was out and pushed a note through his letter box.

Bajinder didn’t think anymore on it until he was followed 2 days later from Port Blackjack to his home in the southern suburb of the city. Bajinder pulled over and took his SK-19 from his passenger seat and started walking towards the Songbird that had been tailing him. The Songbird reversed quickly and left.

He met with the other 6 members of the Honourable Lions and told them he was worried about Barry but they seem pretty unconvinced. Bajinder became more worried when he realised Barry couldn’t be out on ‘Safari’ as the rest of his company was here. Bajinder went to Barry’s home and broke in to find Barry dead in the corner, blood on the floor (not all Barry’s), but his weaponry still intact in his gun closet.

When Bajinder told the Honourable Lions that Bhavdeep was dead, they swore vengeance and got their affairs in order. Knowing that fighting, not investigation, is their forte they decide to hire the PCs and club together to get the fee of Lv10,000. With Bhavdeep dead he has no problem handing over all the aforementioned photos, article, etc that he copied ‘just in case’ from Covanti’s file.

He will then drive them to Sky and to Barry’s house. Bajinder will come in with the PCs but will stand guard by the door with his Cobra Supra pistol (see last issue) looking for anyone in the street appearing suspicious.

Investigations

At this point the investigation is mainly a nonlinear sandbox affair with Cadiuex’s Goons adapting around the actions of the PCs. Wherever the PCs go, there will be a chance they will be followed, monitored, and attacked.

Cadiuex is so desperate now that if he thinks it will solve the problem and quieten the scandal he, and his men, will openly fire on the PCs in a quiet street.

At the start of the investigations however, he is content to observe them to see if they recover Dr Street’s dataslip.

Each location has its own set of clues leading deeper into the conspiracy and, eventually, to a showdown with Cadiuex and his Goons and possibly with the First Citizen himself.

Bhavdeep Singh’s House

12, Market Street, Sky,
Tanstaafl & District

The door has been reprogrammed to a multi-key in the possession of Bajinder Singh who lets the player characters into Barry’s house. It is a small and modestly furnished house with 5 rooms consisting of Lounge, Kitchen, Bathroom, Study (in Barry’s case, ‘Armoury’ is a better description), and bedroom.

1- Barry’s front door. While it is electronically locked it can be bypassed with the tasks in the sidebar opposite (as the Goons did), using Barry’s keys (if by some miracle they’ve come into possession of them), or by letting Bajinder let

BHAVDEEP SINGH'S RESIDENCE



you in with his multi-key. It can also be forced.

2- Barry's Bridgeport-Swift 'Badger' off-roader (seen here with its wing doors up and open). Bajinder has the keys to this vehicle (taken from Barry's body) and doesn't see any harm in letting the PCs use it. It's a good vehicle, seats 6, has some good storage space, and can handle most off-road terrain. The vehicle is known to Tanstaafl security and Cadiuex and the Goons will recognise it if the PCs are less than discrete.

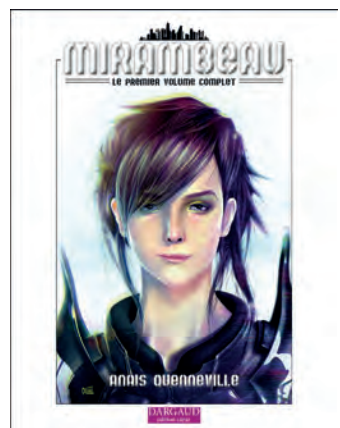
3- A cracked 3V screen. While the living room seems a little messed up, the only real sign of injury is here. There is a pool of blood (Barry's body lay here) and arterial spray from Barry's last kill (one of the Goons). What looks like a spot where Barry, or the Goon, bullseyed the screen is actually where Barry fell after being shot. The 3rd shot, the shot that missed him, is actually in the back of the 3V where it fell after puncturing the

screen. The bullet is a 6mm round usually manufactured for the security services on Aurore. This bullet, when compared with Goon #2's gun, will provide a match. As far as the Goons are aware, the bullet went into Barry. Bajinder and the other Honourable Lions cremated Barry's body and never bothered to recover the bullets.

DNA left by the dead Goon will match the body in the morgue but he had never given blood or been for any surgery so his DNA is not currently on file.

If the players enter the scenario via off-world then the Honourable Lions may not know of Barry's death. Maybe Bajinder is still on one of his runs and the PCs find Barry's body here at the referee's discretion.

4- The Goons ransacked Barry's files here. Since the Kafer attack the Honourable Lions kept paper records in case power was completely lost. There was little of interest to the Goons here as it detailed



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Skill Tests

To successfully spot Barry's hidden gun compartment.

GDW 2300AD:

Disguise, Security Systems, Stealth, or Excellent Eyesight/
Difficult/one minute

MGT 2300AD:

Investigate, Recon/Intelligence/one minute/Difficult (-2)

Success: The PC spots something is inconsistent with the closets dimensions. A push on the back wall could reveal more..

If all rolls fail then Bajinder could just tell them, of course.



IS
YOURS
A
FOOT
LONG?



mostly jobs and expeditions that were undertaken by the man they just killed. It does have the names of the rest of the Honourable Lions, including Bajinder's. If the players take more than 4 days to wrap this up or defeat/arrest/kill the Goons then Bajinder will be found in his shuttle. He will have been tortured, his eyes put out, and his throat slashed.

5- Under his pillow, Barry kept a Stracher P-11 here, loaded and ready to fire. It still resides here, of no use to it's owner. (see p150 of the **MGT 2300AD** core-book or p42 of the Adventurer's Guide in the **GDW 2300AD** boxed set for stats on the P-11)

6- A large wall closet dominates one wall of this study and is paired with a sturdy desk in the centre. The closet has been opened and searched and some of the clothes rest at the bottom. Eagle-eyed PCs will spot something the Goons did not. The wall of the closet is more shallow than the wall around it indicating a hidden compartment. Pushing the back wall of the closet makes it drop down to reveal Barry's small arsenal. Each weapon has hooks for its placement. See the list below for what the closet contains.

7- The bathroom is unremarkable except for the contents of his medical cabinet. There are 2 doses of **Boost*** and 2 doses of **Bounce***. Boost acts as an amphetamine analog and Bounce counteracts the effects of a loss of coordination due to zero-G. The Boost is new and can be attained at pharmacies across Aureore but the Bounce is way out of date as it's been 8 years since Barry experienced any long term loss of gravity (this was at Ft. Windsor, a small Royal Navy training outpost in Sol's asteroid belt sometimes known as the 'ZGS', or 'Zero G Sandhurst'). The cabinet also contains a canister of '**Sunshield**', a very high factor sun screen spray cream (recommended for forays nearer the Hot Pole),

and underneath the cabinet is a large canister of '**DeadSpread**' containing 5 uses. *These drugs are listed in 'Tools For Frontier Living' on p57. Summaries of all drugs and treatments appear in the next issue.

Barry's Weapons Closet

(All weapons listed here are in the 2300AD core book)

Included are:

1x **Fighting Knife**

1x **FAM-90** + 3 clips + propellant bottle

1x **SG-77** +3 clips + 80 loose rounds

1x **M57** +2 clips +54 loose rounds

1x **P11** (Missing. Currently under Singh's bed pillow.) + 1 clip (Present. There is also one in the gun itself) + 61 loose rounds.

All loose rounds are held in boxes and Singh has a permit for all these weapons (being as the Honourable Lions are notable Kafer hunters).

Equipment also present:

1x **Data Recorder**. This was outfitted for security and tiny penny sized cameras face the front door from inside the lounge, show an external view of his front door, a view across his study of his wall closet/armoury, and one of his kitchen. There are no cameras in his bedroom or bathroom. The dataslip shows hours of footage including Covanti and Singh during Covanti's visit (pretty much detailing what was written in the article) and also the breaking in of the 4 suited men. It shows that they broke in electronically and sat in the darkness around the kitchen for 48 minutes until Singh's return. It shows not only Singh being killed but also Singh taking out one of the suited Goons before dying. The Goons curse their poor luck (more likely poor planning) and then they sit it out, occasionally looking through the curtains to

see if anyone has noticed the sounds of the suppressed pistols or the scuffle.

At 02.16am the Goons leave after having sat around for hours and take their comrade with them. The third Goon (the one not carrying his colleague) returns after a second or two and picks up Barry's Kirpan and washes it under the tap and pockets it as a trophy. This will bring curses from Bajinder.

The outside camera then shows the three Goons heading around the corner while holding up their dead colleague as though he is drunk. 10 seconds later they are seen heading in a Bridgeport Swift Songbird (with cover up) past the camera from the corner. If the players don't think of zooming in and taking the car's licence plate then Bajinder will suggest it. The plate **643980-ta-MV** indicates that it's registered in Tanstaaf city and is owned by the Municipality in some fashion.

Bajinder has no doubt that the Songbird in Covanti's picture at the farm, the one that followed him, and this one are the same vehicle and that it belongs to the NST (National Security of Tanstaaf).

1x **Farseer**

1x **Drift uplink** (a Link browsing device, not too different from an iPad Air.

Currently useless as there is no access to the Link in Sky. It stores his permits, contact information (which consists of the rest of the Honourable Lions and a curry house on Beta Canum), and some photos of BC's Beanstalk. These are really just sightseeing photos but an enterprising Referee could use them to create further adventures regarding the Beanstalk).

2x **Luminite flashlights** (1 small, 1 large. The larger one makes a handy club and a few dents in it are from a Finnish trans-atmo fighter pilot who got a bit too mouthy in a bar at Port Blackjack.

8x **Dried Rations**

1x **Water Purifier**

5x **Signal Flares** (in a half empty box of 10)

1x **Gunsmith Tools***

1x **Medkit** (recently replenished)

1x **Surplus Body Armour Vest***

*Items from 'Tools For Frontier Living'

Barry Singh had no ordnance or explosives (they are the responsibility of Balram Panesar (the Honourable Lions heavy weapons and demolitions specialist) and the 6 grenades he had (evidenced by an empty box) were all used on their last mission and Barry was finding the replenishment of his grenades difficult to come by. Of course, the presence of the empty box may make some of the Players a little paranoid.

Upon leaving Barry's home, Bajinder gives the PCs the keys to Barry's 'Badger' off-roader and the 'adapted' electronic key to Barry's home.

"I'd say he'd want you to have his weapons and to stay at his place if you're looking for his killers. Take care of his car though. He'd hate for you to scratch it." Bajinder tries to smile while handing over the keys but they can tell he's taking Barry's death hard.

Specific leads from Barry's House

The players will have a number of personalities that they will want to investigate from being mentioned in the article or Groombridge's redacted report. However, the leads directly from Barry's home point to the Security Service (or NST) being involved. If any of the PCs have access to rare facial recognition software then the Goons are done for. It will easily highlight their profiles and any judge on Aurore would have no choice but to open a murder investigation based on the evidence presented here. If the



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Kafer Rot Exposure at the Thomasson Farm.

This information is specific for the Thomasson farm but can also be used for other locations that have been exposed.

Outside

GDW 2300AD:

*To avoid Fungal Blight.
Routine/Endurance/Instant
Minor Mishap:*

PC contracts Greypatch and needs medical help to fight it. A major or total mishap and the player contracts Kafer Rot. It is fatal in 1d6+1 days.

MGT 2300AD:

*To avoid Fungal Blight.
END/DM-2/1d6
damage/1d3 days.
Two failures indicates the
PC has contracted Kafer Rot.
Death in 1d3 days*

Inside

GDW 2300AD:

*To avoid Fungal Blight.
Very Difficult/Endurance/
Instant
Minor Mishap:
PC contracts Greypatch and needs medical help to fight it. A major or total mishap and the player contracts Kafer Rot. It is fatal in 1d3 days.*

MGT 2300AD:

*To avoid Fungal Blight.
END/DM-4/1d6
damage/1d3 days.
Two failures indicates the
PC has contracted Kafer Rot.
Death in 1d2 days*



PCs don't then they'll have to approach the MTP or TRP if they want an arrest. Bajinder is set against this as he wants to put Barry's murders on a pike but will go along with what the PCs decide. The 3 remaining Goons involved may be arrested by the MTP but they will be out in no time via a convoluted process of favours and blatant bribery.

The TRP are a different matter.

The MTP

The Metropolitan Tanstaafl Police aren't interested in theories and without a body won't open an investigation beyond a 'missing person, presumed dead' file. They are far too busy trying to locate the thousands of other people who disappeared during Kafer attacks than to worry about a mercenary or a reporter.

It's possible that this course of action may be fatal for the PCs. Cadiuex has several members of the MTP in his pocket and will know within 15 minutes that the PCs are sniffing around. He won't go as far as to have them killed yet but he will get the police to harass them for the next few days with on the spot checks, licence validations, and other troubles. If the PCs are carrying weapons without the right permits (Barry's for instance) they can find themselves locked up for a week and then deported. If Cadiuex can 'encourage' the PCs off-world then all the better. If they stay and continue to investigate or if they find Dr Street's dataslip then he'll get his Goons to kill or kidnap the PCs and he'll have security agents he know can be trusted (i.e. corrupt) to back them up.

Sergeant Bill Keith of the TRP

The hard bitten sergeant of Sky County is a no-nonsense and practical lawman. He won't have foreigners coming round here and talking garbage. Born a Texan,

his family arrived in Tanstaafl not long after the colony was founded and he considers himself an Auroran. Keith was mentioned in the article and has experience of the Rot and it's effect. Whether he's at home, the office, or out in his car, he won't have a canister of DeadSpread more than a few feet away.

He's known Barry for 4 years and respects him. Bill would never say he had 'friends' but he considers Barry 'Good folks'. He and Barry would often go to the 'Rogers Rimfire' gun range at Junction, 200km south of Tanstaafl, so they could try out new weapons and get a few beers and goat chilli afterwards. He hasn't heard from Barry for a couple of months but he doesn't find that unusual as he would just assume he was on safari. "Tough bunch of God's warriors, those Sikh's."

Bill Keith has always had a practical outlook with the law even though it's gotten him in trouble a few times. He prefers to deal with problems personally, sees violence as a failure in policing, and is liked and recognised by most folks in the county (see accompanying map). He evaluates each incident and then arrests or doesn't depending on the crime. Sometimes he'll let a joyride by rambunctious teenagers slide, a loaf of bread stolen by poor folks, and will sometimes drive a drunken reveller home. The downside is, he doesn't consider spouse-beating to be a crime and when it "goes too far" he won't arrest them. He'll give them a beating they'll never forget instead.

Bill Keith recently sold his late brothers farm after he passed away from a heart attack and is quite well off for money. He will be saddened and resolute when he hears of Barry's death. He will not hesitate to bring his guns, armed nephew, and a belly full o' grit when the time comes to get some payback for Barry.

“To Hell with my goddam pension. These assholes got it comin.”

Other Leads

As well as Sergeant Keith, Covanti's file, and the information gained at Barry's house, the players have a number of locations to investigate. The Thomasson and Van Ness farms can be explored but there is still a danger of infection by Kafer Rot if the PCs enter confined areas such as the farmhouses themselves.

The Thomasson Farm

Little can be learned here in this house of tragedy. As the Thomasson farm wasn't part of Case Purple there are no signs of surveillance. Bill Keith paid a visit as no one had heard from the Thomassons for a week and found Mr Thomasson in the drive and his wife was seen lying on the floor through the kitchen window. The Referee may be able to instil a moment

of pathos here as a selection of spices used in the Punjab can be seen on the shelf in front of Heidi's body. The Thomasson's weren't fans of spicy food but always kept some spices (artificial spices due to expense of importing real spices) for Barry when he visited at suppertime.

Sgt. Keith used DeadSpread on Gunnar and left Heidi where she lay. He wanted to bury them but it was just too dangerous. He collected some samples and wrote a report and sent it into the Tansaafl Medical Authority, who in turn, gave it to Groombridge.

Kafer Rot exposure at the Thomasson farm is dealt with in the sidebar on the previous page

The Van Ness Farms, Barry's drug stats, the scandal, Dr Street's dataslip, the encounters, and finale will be explained in detail next issue when 'The Eyes Of The World' concludes.

InterPlanetary



with Tara McKenzie

The Collectors

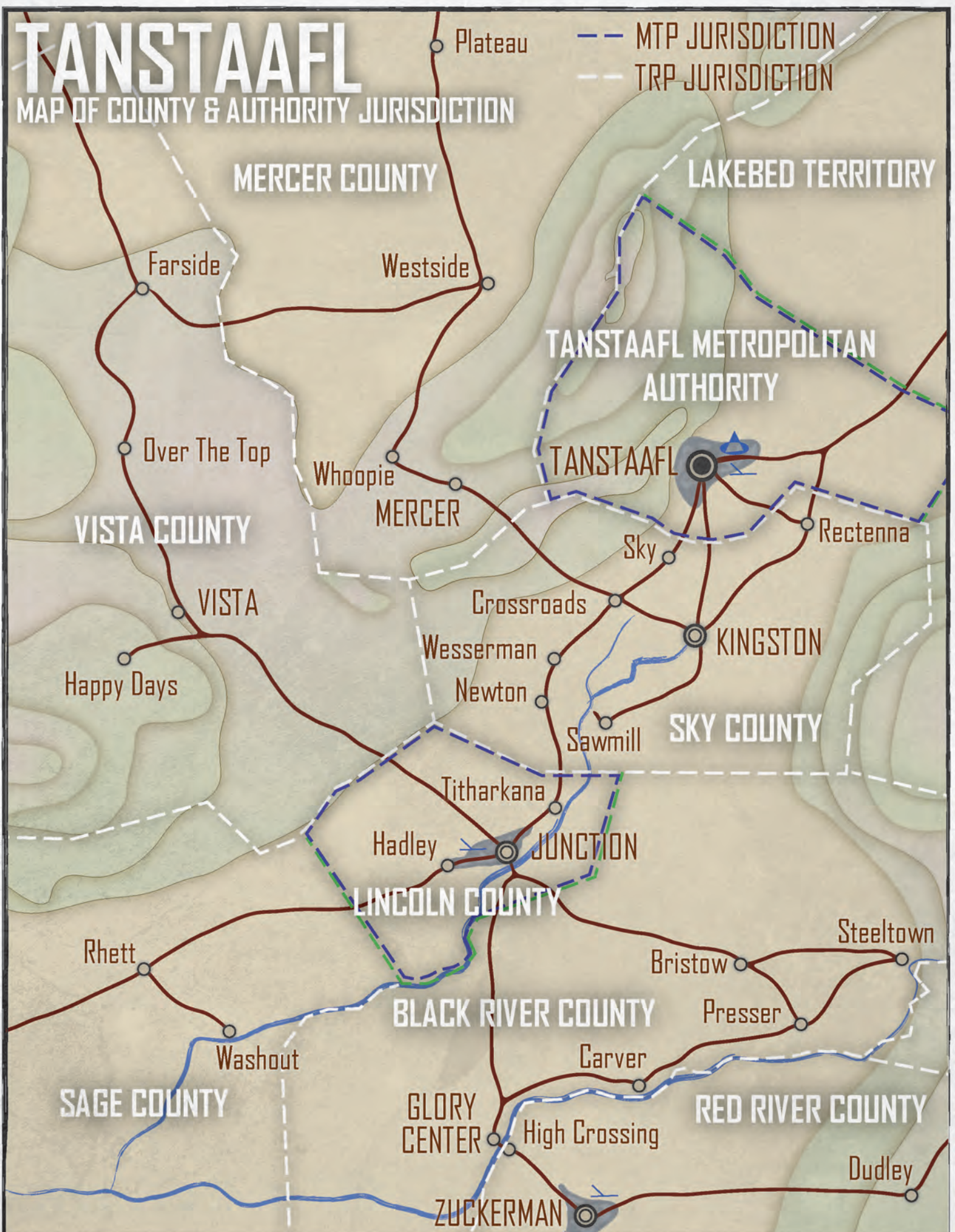
Prices of Twilight era antiques and relics have been rising year after year. But who are these collectors who put such value on items from Earth's most destructive period?

Tara McKenzie and her co-host Oscar Mbezu take a look at some of the amazing collections from Earth's past in this month's InterPlanetary. Consult local listings.



TANSTAAFL

MAP OF COUNTY & AUTHORITY JURISDICTION





HIGH-FLYERS DOWN UNDER: AUSSIE COMPANIES MAKING GOOD

by DARRYL ADAMS

While much of the Australian Sub Arm is dominated by American corporations, the Aussies themselves have a strong tradition of commerce from long before Twilight. Some of these businesses fill some niches that suit the Australian temperament and skill sets.

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DPS is a leader in the growing market of planetary xeno-ecosystem containment systems (or protecting people from alien creatures) Based in New Canberra, Tirane, DPS have teams of consultants in

many systems around human space.

The DPS are renowned in creating and deploying systems to protect human installations from a homestead (or as the Australians call them: station) to townships and cities. Unlike other methods favoured by many people (that is killing alien creatures) DPS will to work out the most passive means of deterring the local wildlife and avoid killing it.

A DPS consulting team will investigate a location, and will work with any local government department or group that monitors local wildlife. It will also attempt to work out how the local fauna



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and flora interacts. If there is any terra-forming, DPS will also try to model the climate change and other environmental issues that will arise in the short to medium term.

Once the modelling is completed, DPS will either attempt to protect the human habitat with fencing, natural barriers, technological deterrents or natural deterrents (like pheromones emitted from plants or animals).

DPS will also offer solutions from environmental problems, from bush / forest fires, weather events, land subsidence and erosion. Solutions include xeno-ecologically sensitive land clearing, simple to complex fire fighting systems, disaster shelters and methods to keeping a habitat in one piece during extreme weather events.

DPS consulting visits are not cheap, nor do they give a 100% guarantee (the unofficial motto of DPS is “harden the %^#@ up princess”), however the success rate of their efforts and the quality of the installations they construct means they are in heavy demand wherever the environment, fauna, flora or all three is attempting to kill you (or as DPS says, a slow day in the Aussie Outback).

Rio Tennerfield Mining



Rio Tennerfield Mining (RTM) claims it predates the Twilight, and has some fragmentary evidence to back it up. However it is in the last 50 years that RTM has be-

gun to make huge inroads into the competitive mineral extraction market and mining technology.

Based in Broken Hill NSW Australia, it has major mining operations on Tirane, Botany Bay and throughout Australia and many nations on Earth.

RTM is also the major producer of Road Trains, large multi-carriage vehicles that combine the efficiencies of rail and the flexibility of road trucks. These large ore transport vehicles run on either high tensile plastic rails that can be laid quickly and cheaply onto most surfaces, or run on most road surfaces (from graded gravel roads up). Speed/pulling capacity is generally determined by the gradient and quality of the running surface, however even on a poor surface with a high gradient the Road Trains can achieve 20km/h and pull up to 25 carriages. On a flat gradient and rails, 100 carriages can be pulled at 50km/h.

One facility on Botany Bay shows the flexibility in RTM in their mining philosophy. A filtration plant is used to extract precious metals from the oceans, and has the added bonus of making potable water. This was based on Australian Army filtering systems, used since the 20th century and it has been developed into a small unit that can be transported on the back of a ground vehicle (Aussie parlance Util-

ity or Ute). Many Aussie settlements are being sent these filtration units for free, with RTM and the Australian Defence Force sharing the profits from minerals extracted.

RTM is currently looking for investment to expand into King, where it hopes to enhance production by making better equipment for the miners. Some work has already started, as consultation with both American and Australian miners on the difficulties of mineral extraction on King and studying the work patterns of these miners. One solution being touted is Radial Mining and Delivery Integrated System, where a orbital launch platform is moved closer to a group of mines, and the use of automated road trains used to deliver minerals to the launch vehicles. It is hoped to increase productivity by reducing the time required to ship then transship the ore off the planet.

Prospectus to the King Development Bonds are available at most Financial Services institutions and at any Australian Embassy/Consulate/High Commissioner office.

for industrial, contractual and colonial level disputes. Not recognised as a law enforcement or judicial service and charge highly for their services, they are still in high demand as their neutrality has been proven in numerous dispute resolutions.



A BPS team will only attempt a conciliatory service if all parties involved with a dispute. It can also provide investigative assistance and legal counsel if there is a legal bases that such services are legal in the jurisdiction they are in (such as occupational safety audits, contract discovery process and independent financial audits),

BATMAN

DIPLOMATIC SERVICES

Batman Diplomatic Services.

Batman Diplomatic Services (named after John Batman, founder of the Melbourne colony and later city) is a private company that provides conflict resolution through out human space. Based in Melbourne, they have a presence in most arms of exploration and have a dedicated fleet of stutterwarp ships to transport teams to most worlds.

BPS can serve as a conciliatory service

BPS also works closely with Australian Commonwealth Department of Foreign and Colonial Affairs and Trade (aka DF-CAT), providing support services to foreign and colonial missions where Australian diplomacy is required.

There is no truth in the rumours that BPS has embedded Australian Intelligence Agency operatives, or that it operates its own covert operative teams.



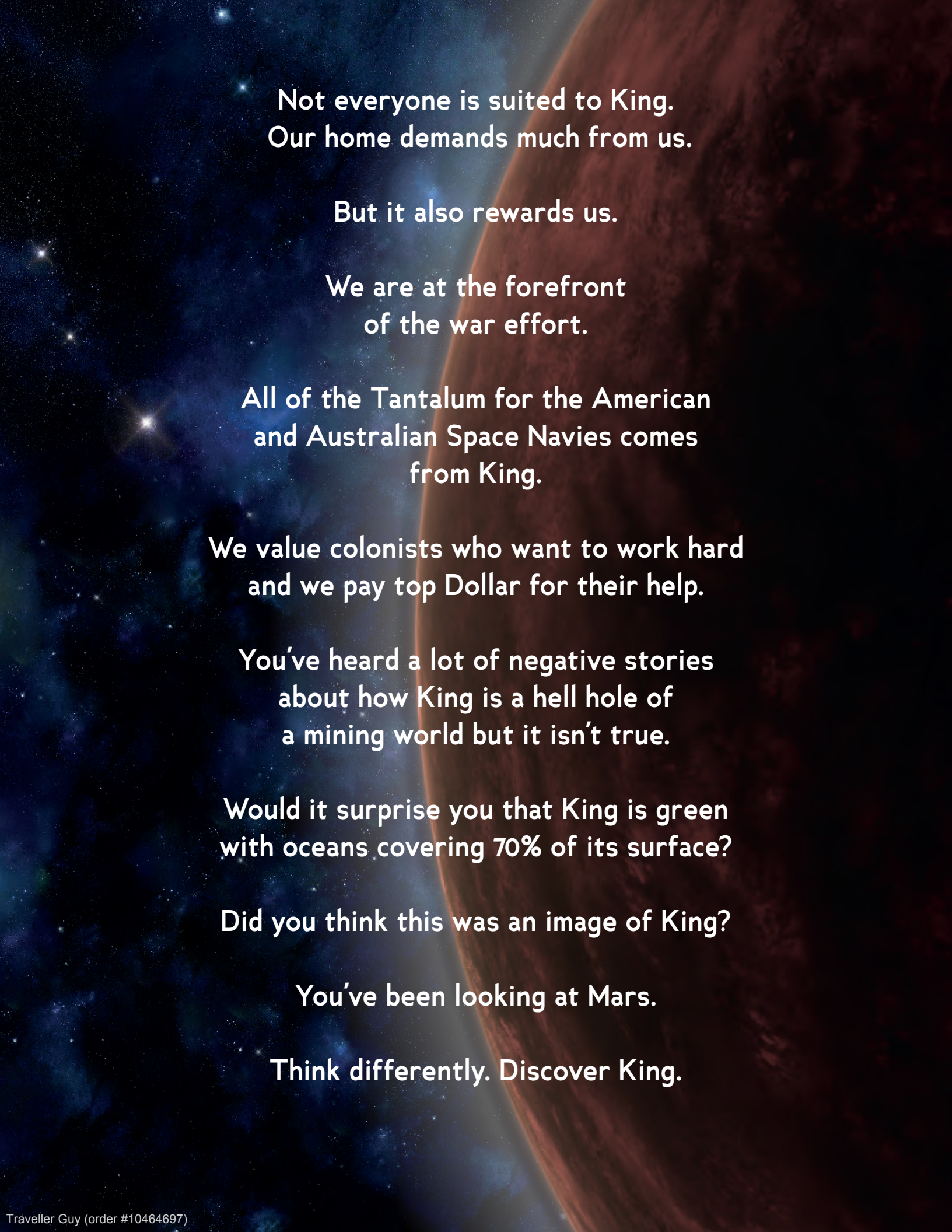
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What Time is it?

AN EXAMINATION OF GMT ACROSS THE CORE & COLONIES

BY RM RHODES

One of the less controversial provisions in the Melbourne Accords was the use of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) as the Universal time zone for all space-based habitats. At the time, the general consensus was that time zones exist to ensure that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening (more or less). A location where the sun rises every forty five minutes (low Earth orbit) or every two weeks (Luna) is less apt to need time zones because they are more likely to use a 24-hour clock and ignore the external sunrise/sunset cues.

As a result, every habitat on the Moon (for example) runs on exactly the same clock, regardless of location. It has since been recognized that when communication lag can be measured in seconds, time zones become very artificial obstructions. As habitats were put in place in L-4 and L-5, this convention was followed and it extended to colonies (later outposts) on the various planets in the Solar System as the years wore on.

When Tirane was colonized, the time zone issue came up again.

Tirane's "day" is not exactly the same as the standard Earth day, but its close enough that new colonists were willing to live by the local rhythms. Because colonies were created on all of the major land masses across the breadth of the planet, time zones were instituted, mostly in an ad hoc patchwork manner that still causes occasional issues.

As more garden worlds were discovered and humanity spread to worlds under alien stars, time keeping became more complex. The only hard and fast rule is that off-world habitats and ships keep to GMT, regardless of what system they find themselves in. The situation on planetary surfaces varies wildly, but all centralized timekeeping systems across Human Space have a standard subroutine tracking and showing the time and date in terms of GMT, providing a universal point of reference.

Although local time varies from system

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to system, all of Earth's colony worlds fit into one of two broad categories: they either use the local day/night cycle as their basis for their day or they don't. The decision to use local time basically boils down to whether the planet's rotation period is short enough to fit to a human diurnal cycle. The longest local day in use is on Aurore, with a day that is 61 hours long. Doris is a close second with 45 hours and the days grow shorter from there, right down to the nine hour rotation on Hermes, where a local day is measured as three sunrise/sunset cycles.

In addition to a modified day/night cycle, many of these planets have severely modified their "week" to accommodate the variable number of hours available. Beta Canum colonies, for example, operate on an eight day work week and Aurore's work week is wrapped around their 61 hour day/night cycle. There is considerable variation across the colony worlds, but in all cases, the standard

calendar from the home country is followed for reference, if nothing else.

Planets that follow local time can be sub-divided by how many time zones they require: one, two or many.

The vast majority of the recently established colony worlds only need a single time zone because all of the settlements are relatively close together. This includes planets like Daikoku, Doris, Hermes, Kimanjano, King, Paulo, Crater, Syuhlahm, Cold Mountain, Kwangtung, Montana, Ellis, Botany Bay, Kingsland and Kie-Yuma.

Some colony worlds have been settled widely enough that they require more than one time zone. Half of this list (Chengdu, Dunkelheim, Nous Voila and Aurore) only need two at this time and the other half (Tirane, Beta Canum, Joi and Heidelshemat) need three or more. Adding additional time zones was normalized with the settle-

ment of Beta Canum in the early years of the 23rd century, so the process is well understood and is even considered to be relatively commonplace. If questioned, most colonists would consider multiple time zones to be an inevitability, not an oddity.

When settlers or explorers venture too far outside of the primary time zone(s), their standard timekeeping system automatically references the current longitude with relation to the standard time zone and adjusts all synchronized time displays accordingly.

Those planets that don't follow local time tend to be outliers for one reason or another. For example, the Beowulf rotation period can be measured in weeks, making local time meaningless, so everyone on the planet follows GMT. The erratic passage of their sun across the sky discourages the colonists of Austin's World from trying to tie their diurnal cycle to it. On the other hand, colonists on Dukou are so uninterested in surface conditions that they completely ignore it in favor of the clock their body was built around.

Tidally locked worlds present an interesting problem. Two of the three tidally locked colony worlds (Aurore and Crater) use local days that are generated from tidal effects and multiple primaries. Nibelungen, on the other hand, has almost negligible tidal effects and the whole colony runs on GMT – one of the larger colonies (in terms of geographical distribution) to do so. Regardless of the planet, most communications on-planet will reference both local time and GMT in their headers, but almost no communications sent off-planet mention local time. A quick and easy way to spot a new visitor to a planet that operates on local time is whether or not they instinctively use

local time – most people are so used to GMT that they are reluctant to let it go. Conversely, a colonist who finds himself in an environment with a 24 hour day and a 7 day week may find it difficult to acclimate.

Outposts and ships follow GMT, of course. However, in 2290 a doctoral candidate at the University of Alicia on Beowulf conducted a study that determined that the optimum length of an artificially established local day is actually 28 hours long, not 24. This has caused a considerable amount of controversy, especially amongst Earth-based academics. Interestingly, a large portion of the experimental proof for this thesis came from decades of practical application among libertine traders and associated belter communities. The only planet-based population that uses it in any significant proportion are the Life Foundation colonists on Austin's World.

An hour is an hour everywhere that humans have settled, but how they tell time varies considerably and the smart traveller headed to the frontier would do well to keep that in mind.



**CAN
YOU
FILL
THIS
SPACE?**

**THEN
COLONIAL
TIMES
NEEDS
YOU!**

**WE
NEED
ART
AND
TEXT**

**SEE
CONTACT
INFO
ON
CONTENT'S
PAGE**


STYGIAN FOX

41

NEW WORLDS WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED

Expedition Members (Player Characters)

Incidents of Note

Name_____

Location_____UWP X991000-0 De

Claimed by_____

Terrain Notes_____UWP: X991000-0 De

cinema

STEFF. J. WORTHINGTON

One of the things that games and RPGs that tie-in with movie and tv properties have going for them is a visual reference. We can all say exactly what the USS Enterprise on Star Trek looks like, what Replicants are from Blade Runner, and what kind of blue Sting glows when Orcs and Goblins are abroad. Some games, like futuristic Call of Cthulhu or Continuum: Roleplaying in the Yet suffer from a lack of this because not only do you need to create a sense of atmosphere but you also have to explain what a fusion grid is or how the intricacies of how time travel by thought can ruin your day.

Themes By Association

Thankfully, while 2300AD has no movie or tv series to fall back on for reference, it has many of the hard-sci-fi tropes we've become used to. Cargo loaders, pulse rifles, and other facets of the genre are so entrenched in the game that 2300AD is not only its own setting but can be used to power a number of settings ranging from the Ridleyverse (Prometheus, Alien, Aliens, Blade Runner) to the settings seen in Event Horizon and Avatar. Of course, many of the following suggestions are subjective and may not reflect your view of 2300AD but they feel like the ideal primer for those who haven't yet experienced the game.

Core Viewing

'Outland'

A US Marshal fighting corruption in a

mining station on Io. For me, the film most like 2300AD.

'Gravity'

Two astronauts work together to survive an accident in space. While set much earlier than 2300AD, it gives us insight into how dangerous space can be. An often overlooked danger.

'Space: Above & Beyond' (TV show)

A group of US marines fight an alien menace. While it stretched credulity a little, the enemy 'Chigs' are as near to the Kafers civilisation as anything has come.

'Moon'

A worker is about to head home to his wife and is desperate to regain contact with Earth. Realistic and well thought out.

At The Frontier

'Alien/Aliens'

Varying crews fall foul of a hostile alien. These choices are more about the look of the crafts and tech than the alien itself. The style of the design and architecture conforms to the classic heyday of the 80s 'hard sci-fi' genre.

'Blade Runner'

An ex-cop is brought back to hunt down Replicants, or artificial humanoids who have escaped their enslavement. The feel of LA in 2019 is how I imagine many cities in Tier 2 nations to look.

Out on the Rim

'Avatar'

The tech looks quite 2300AD-ish and it's a good example of combat walkers in action (while they last).

'I, Robot'

Although this film has robots that are much more common than you would find in 2300AD, it does give us a nice view of life in a Tier 1 city.

'Total Recall (2014)'

Another example of a downbeat city mostly suited to Tier 2-3 cities.

'Cargo'

Again, another view on the tech and style of the future from inside a huge cargo ship with this little Swiss gem.

Signals from the Dark

Silent Running, Cloud Atlas, Sunshine, Contact, Total Recall: 2070 (TV), Almost Human (TV), 2001, 2010, Mission to Mars, District9, The Abyss, Pitch Black, Predators, Westworld, Ai, The Cell, Gattaca, The Island, Solaris, and Minority Report.

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PATRONS

by GAVIN DADY

ZORYANA VOVK ON AURORE

Zoryana is a handsome middle aged woman with grey-blond hair which she wears short. She has a stocky, but trim build and keeps in shape by running. She wears plain clothes, and is most comfortable in a flight suit or overalls. Whenever she can she wears a field cap from her time in the 417th Search and Rescue wing, which is amongst her most prized possessions. Zora still has her Ukrainian air force flight suit, field and dress uniform, but chooses not to wear it now she is no longer in the military. She owns a dilapidated Range truck and two 50t cargo containers that she has skilfully converted into a garage and living space at the edge of the Landing field at Port Blackjack. She has several raised beds of paydirt in her back garden which she uses to grow vegetables and flowers, some of which she sells or barter for extra income.

History

Zoryana (Zora to her friends) was born in Vinnytsia in the Ukraine on a cold January day in 2254. Her parents were mid level civil servants, and she enjoyed a comfortable, middle class upbringing. She attended university in Kiev and studied Post Twilight Recovery history, specialising in the Franco-Ukrainian co-operation in the years following Twilight, and the Ukraine's recovery. Zora's studies revealed that the recovery of the Ukraine had hinged on a massive program of airlifts from France to the Ukraine and back again, carrying food to France and equipment and materiel back to the Ukraine. Whilst investigating the airlifts she spent time with the Air Force Liaison team investigating their records of events, and as a result become interested in aviation. She enrolled as an air force cadet to further

this interest and quickly discovered she had an aptitude for flying. Upon graduation she entered the flight academy and graduated as a search and rescue pilot qualified in fixed wing, tilt rotor and aerodyne aircraft.

Three years into Zora's first deployment she was involved in a live-fire training exercise in which her aircraft was targeted by an automated air-defence system. Her aircraft was shot down and three of her crewmates were killed in the ensuing fire. Zora suffered from severe but undiagnosed post traumatic stress and developed an alcohol addiction which quickly became debilitating. This resulted in a series of insubordinate outbursts and altercations that blocked her promotion chances for several years. Eventually, with therapy and a change of duties to a recon flight, she overcame the worst of her condition and was able to return to her role as a pilot.

In 2282 the Central Asian War broke out. The close co-operation between Russia and the Ukraine meant Zora was deployed to the front lines as a deep insertion and pathfinder pilot. Just before her 30th birthday Zora was on a mission to extract a Russian SpecOps team from deep behind enemy lines in the Tajikistan highlands. The Russians had been working to destabilise the alliance between local Tajiki warlords and Manchurian forces. Her aircraft came under fire and she was forced to evacuate before a full extraction was completed, leaving several members of the SpecOps team behind. Intelligence reports later revealed that the soldiers were captured by Manchurian soldiers, tortured for information and then handed over for execution by Tajiki warlords. The surviving members of the SpecOps team blamed her for leaving too early and attempted to have her subject to a court martial. Zora's flight crew backed her story and, because of the sensitive na-

ture of the mission and the desire to keep events quiet, her version of events was believed. However, the enmity remained and Zora was physically assaulted by two of the team following the case being dismissed.

Following the end of the War Zora spent a number of years as a pilot in the multinational peacekeeping force, performing recon and observation flights. After she rotated out she was offered a role as a liaison and instructor at the Ukraine's a new colony on Aurore. Keen for a fresh start, Zora accepted and transited to Novoa Kiev, where she became the Air Force Liaison to the Colonial Government. Her duties were mostly ferrying government officials around the dispersed colony, with occasional long distance trips to the French Colonies and Tanstaffl. She also trained new pilots on the unpredictable Aurore weather and the peculiarities of flying and navigation in the unique Aurore environment.

The Kafer attack in 2298 found Zora in Tanstaffl with a trade delegation looking to forge closer trading links between colonies. The initial strikes destroyed her aircraft at Port Blackjack and her passenger deserted her. The destruction of her links back to Novoa Kiev meant that Zora became stranded in Tanstaffl with no way of getting home, and no idea if she had a home to go to. Looking to try and forge some kind of links with officialdom, Zora contacted the Tanstaffl government to seek aid in setting up some sort of relief effort. The Tanstaffl government, however, had little interest when there were far more pressing matters to deal with closer to home.

Since then Zora has set herself up as a mechanic at Port Blackjack, and joined the TFL as a militia volunteer. With the Kafer infestation of Snapfire remote missiles, she has little chance to do any flying these days, but she does try and keep her skills

Zoryana Vovk

DOB: 17th January 2253 (46)

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Body Type: Endomorph

Background: CoreWorld

Nationality: Ukrainian

Homeworld: Earth

Str 6 +0

Dex 11 +1

End 8 +0

Int 10 +1

Edu 9 +1

Soc 7 +0

Traits:

Robust/2

Heavy/1

Ally/2

Hard to Kill/1

Enemy/2

Addiction/1

Career

*7 terms: Air Force (Flyer)
(5 terms)*

*Frontier Citizen (worker)
(2 Terms)*

Skills:

Flyer (Tilt-Rotor)/3

Athletics (Long Distance Runner)/1

Social Science(History)/2

Infomantics/1

Drive (wheeled)/1

Computer/1

Art (Balalaika)/1

Gun Combat
(Slug Pistol)/1

Gun Combat
(Energy Rifle)/1

Heavy Weapon
(Launcher)/2

Recon/1

Mechanic/2

Comms/1

Sensors/1

Melee/1

Survival/1

Possessions:

Range Truck
SVB Laser Rifle
Rawlings Redbird
Inertial Armour vest
Farseer
Mechanical toolkit
Mul-T-Tool
Garage and workshop
Paydirt flowerbeds
Misha the dog



ZORA VOVA

sharp by scrounging whatever time she can for flights over safe zones. She is very active in the Ukrainian expatriate community and is highly regarded as a vocal advocate of support for re-contact with Novya Kiev. She also keeps close tabs on the mercenary scene in Port Blackjack and is a regular at merc bars where she is trying to find out any information on Novya Kiev, and has cultivated a number of close friends that she can call on for assistance.

Personality:

Focus: Clubs - Violence

Zora's personality is shaped by the two major events of her military career, the air crash and the failed extraction. In her mind Zora knows that she could have stayed behind a little longer to extract the rest of the Russian team, however when her aircraft came under fire all she could think about was watching her previous crew burn to death. She is also very distressed by the recent events in Novya Kiev and as a result of this and the earlier traumas she is suffering from survivors guilt. Her attempts to find a way to get back to her home are partly because she feels that she might be killed in the attempt.

Zora's alcoholism has returned, although she has so far managed to keep to her rule of 12 hours bottle to throttle, and her guilt will never allow her to fly with passengers if she feels she isn't 100%. Her fears only really take hold once she is drunk, and on a day-to-day basis she is pleasant, approachable and fun, if a little cynical and sarcastic.

'Old Demons'

Below are 6 scenario options for Zora (aside from possibly being of some use in this issue's main scenario)

- **1** Zora has been getting anonymous death threats. Normally she'd keep this to herself but while out with some friends getting drunk she let it slip. One of her companions, a Sergeant in the Tanstaaf Militia, was sober and remembers. Fearing that Zora is in danger and making light of a very real threat, the Sergeant hires the PCs to investigate further. The trail leads to one of the men from the Russian SpecOps team who was originally thought dead. With a new name and identity he intends to make Zora pay for abandoning him to years of torture.

- **2** A report comes in that a fire team of the Free Legion are caught in a ruined village and surrounded by Kafers. She curses the rest of the platoon that left them behind and absolutely will not be stopped as she organises a rescue effort. She practically enlists the PCs and uses whatever transport is available, despite the risks, to relieve the beleaguered fire team. Zora has ghosts to exorcise and she intends to be successful or die trying.
- **3** The PCs see Zora trying to cope at her job despite being hung over and having the shakes. Something goes wrong on a mission to the Hotback and Zora's capability may seem at fault. Do they go to a commanding officer with their concerns? Is it eventually revealed to the fault of another? Are they prepared to acquire Zora as an enemy?
- **4** Zora risks one of the few rotor vehicles left in Aurore to pull the PCs fat out of the fire. Now rescued, Zora has a favour to ask. She desperately needs an update on the situation in Novoa Kiyev and is looking for a hit squad to a) get up to date reports on the Ukrainian colony and b) if possible, take out a high ranking kafer officer. The PCs owe her. Do they accept what is essentially a near suicide mission?
- **5** A Militia company finds a landed CV-130 'Colossus' heavy lift tilt-rotor aircraft* out near the Hotback when scouting for a rumoured Kaffer horde. It was left as none of the militia have been trained in piloting such a craft. Such an aircraft would be vital in moving aid and troops around the safer skies of Tanstaaf.

The authorities cannot ignore such an opportunity and ask Zora to hand pick a team to go to the site and get it in the air. It is a risky venture as Kafer surface-to-air missiles are competent and the horde may be closing in on that position. Will the player characters undertake such a mission? Good pay, the respect of the colony, and a possible heroic war movie twenty years down the line is up for grabs.

• **6** Driven half mad by her survivor guilt, Zora steals one of the few tilt-rotor craft left in the colony (an SH-30*) and leaves to scour the countryside for troops in need of evac or rescue. Refuelling at abandoned depots she listens in on direct line comms for those in need and then rushes to the rescue. Emblazoned in patriotic colours, she has gained the reputation amongst rescued soldiers and militia as 'The Ukrainian Angel' or 'The Valkyrie'. The First Citizen is not happy however. He needs that aircraft to transport dignitaries between Tanstaaf and the French colony to the north. Do they go and bring back Zora kicking and screaming? Or do they join her in her one woman quest to make up for her past guilt?

*Both of these aircraft appear in *'Tools For Frontier Living'* from Mongoose Publishing.

Further events are up to the referee.

**CAN
YOU
FILL
THIS
SPACE?**

**THEN
COLONIAL
TIMES
NEEDS
YOU!**

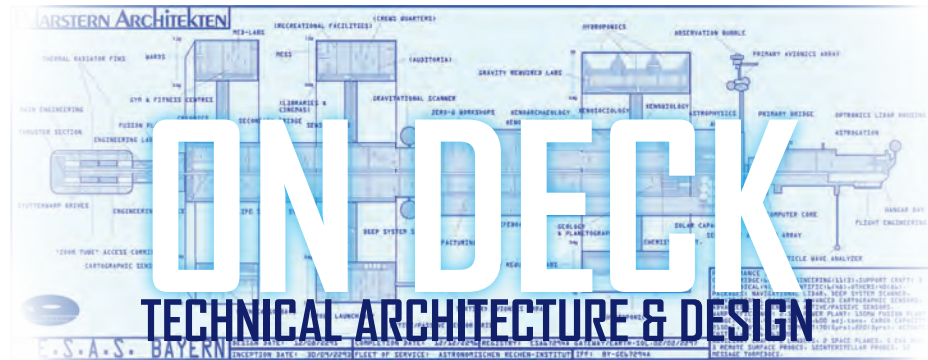
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NEED
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AND
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**SEE
CONTACT
INFO
ON
CONTENT'S
PAGE**



STYGIAN FOX

49



Robots and Drones by Colin Dunn

The following robots and drones are provided to serve as allies, adversaries, or simply “colour”.

Included are the highly-obtrusive Cam-Bot, a four-legged mobile camera that is larger than it should be, the silent Drift-Cam and the Warden, a small tracked security robot that also sees limited (and illegal) combat use.

The Cambot is as much a product of social engineering as it is of mechanical engineering. Cambots are fairly large, about the size of a large dog, though they can stretch up on their four legs and reach average human height.

The CamBot design is dominated by an unusually-large camera lens, far larger

than modern optics would require. The technical capabilities of the CamBot are little better than the typical microbot spy bot, however. The purpose of the CamBot is to be very obvious, to conduct overt surveillance and intimidation. A typical use would be to move a couple of dozen into a restive crowd, to record actions and to be obvious that they are doing so. Often times, this quietens the crowd, though an occasion it spurs them into increased violence. Either works fine for most security forces, as the increased violence gives them an excuse to escalate actions against the crowd.

CamBots are also used for less questionable purposes, including site security, mobile security, and in news reporting.

TL: 11

Frame: Standard (Tall)

Size: 2

Slots: 6 (10)

Armour: 1

Strength: -

Dexterity: -

Hull: 2

Structure: 1

Mass: 25 kg



Intelligence: 4

Education: 2

Arms: No

Locomotion: Legs (4)

Brain: Parallel, CA 1 PP 1, 2 Memsticks, running Level 0 Skill pack – Recon-0

Traits: None

Equipment: Audio Sensor, Basic Optics, Advanced Optics, IR Vision, Low-Light Vision, Transceiver (5km range),

Weapons: None

Cost: Lv25,300

The Warden is basic track-propelled security robot. About the size of a very small car, the Warden is equipped with a “smarter” brain than the similar Sortech FE-909. As well, since it is a tracked vehicle, the Warden has a much better terrain-crossing ability than the wheeled FE-909, and can be used in just about any dry-land location. Armament is quite light, as befitting its role as a security chassis, and consists of a sonic area denial device (SADD), along with a machine gun, which is typically loaded with dye-filled gel rounds for target take-down and marking.

On some worlds, the armour and weaponry is subject to a field refit, and the Warden is pressed into use as a light combat vehicle. The machine gun is retained, but reloaded with more lethal ammunition, and the SADD system replaced with a missile launcher or magazine-fed recoilless rifle.

TL: 11



Frame: Standard (Long)

Size: 4

Slots: 15

Armour: 14

Strength: -

Dexterity: -

Hull: 4

Structure: 4

Mass: 1890 kg

Intelligence: 7

Education: 2

Arms: No

Locomotion: Tracks

Brain: Brain: Parallel, CA 2 PP 2, 2 Memsticks, running Level 0 Skill pack – Recon-0, Gun Combat-0

Traits: None

Equipment: Audio Sensor, Basic Optics, Advanced Optics, IR Vision, Low-Light Vision, Transceiver (50km range), Radar, Inertial GPS, Spotlight

Weapons: Medium Machine gun, SADD Projector

Cost: Lv85,250s

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ALIEN LIFEFORMS BY COLIN DUNN



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Hakenklaue

A native of Vogelheim, the coyote-sized hakenklaue (hook claw) is distantly-related to the titans. It lacks the serrated beak of its larger relatives, and instead uses the single hook-like talon on its forelimbs to snag prey while on the run. It is a chaser-type predator, and often appears in packs of up to 20 individuals. As a pack, they are capable of taking down prey much larger than themselves, and are indiscriminate in what they hunt.

The two front “teeth” are actually a modified beak, made of similar keratinous material.

Behaviour and Diet: Carnivore Chaser
Preferred Habitat: Open Plains
Movement Mode: Walk

DEX: 8
END: 7
INT: 0
INS: 7
PCK: 3
Size: 5
STR: 3

Mass: 40 kg
Skills: Survival/1, Athletics/2
Traits: Fast/2, Acute Eyesight
Attacks: Claws 1d6
Armour: 0
Number: 5d6
Reaction: A5/F10



protodimension magazine


is a freely downloadable publication that covers all aspects of horror-conspiracy-weirdness gaming.

As well as the usual roleplaying game material such as adventures, locations and equipment we also publish short fiction and showcase artists and music that relate to our preferred genre. We even have the occasional interviews with noted gaming industry people, when we can snag them!

If you are interested in seeing what we have to offer, or perhaps even contributing something for a future edition, check the link below for our entire back catalogue. Contact details and submission guidelines are also to be found there.

<http://www.protodimension.com/zine>

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Jean Fournier, Président du PPE.



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YOUR WORLD

THE LATEST NEWS BROUGHT TO YOUR FINGERTIPS



*Emperor Nicolas I
of France*

“It’s not vengeance or sour grapes, but justice and fairness.”

Emperor Nicolas has faced criticism after approving the motion forwarded by the PI (Partie Impériale) to enact punitive economic penalties and trade sanctions on Elysia. The move comes as the Emperor faces increased pressure from the business community over Elysia’s predicted move to nationalise all French owned businesses and facilities in the new nation.

The Emperor was abrupt and to the point; “They (Elysia) have ‘appropriated’ property that does not belong to them, not to mention the loss of the huge investment that the French people have in Elysia. There is a certain amount of redress that is forthcoming. I seriously doubt that the Elysians could pay recompense for what their government has taken by force so my government has decided to ease that burden over time by enacting measures that will compensate those who have lost businesses in Elysia. They will have to wait for their restitution but we’re not here to cause hardship on Elysians. We are doing this merely to right an injustice.”

Jean Fournier, President on the ex-French colony said “I’m stunned at Ruffin’s attempt to dress this blockade in an attempt to do something for ‘our own good’. These facilities were built and staffed by poorly paid and little respected Elysian workers. It’s a scandal and we will reject this attempt to strangle our nation.”

The Imperial government denies strongly that there will be any ‘blockade’ and the measures will be purely economic sanctions aimed at their citizens holdings on Earth and other worlds, and Elysian commodities.



“A Reckless Act.”

The famous (or infamous) philanthropist Butler Bukowski is expected to be heavily fined after he went through with his promise of transplanting Orca to Beta Canum. Governor of New Africa, Dennis Williams, told Your World that it was a reckless act and could endanger BC's ecosystem.

“Nonsense.” said Bukowski. “We’ve done extensive tests, there are good food stocks, ample habitats, and this means that the Orca will be free from extinction.” Whether the 10 mating pairs will thrive, and in a healthy fashion, remains to be seen. This week the OQC filed a complaint against Bukowski for mislabelling the Orca as ‘Fish Stock’ upon export from Earth. Currently, the environmental groups on Earth are divided by issue.

A New Home For Diversity

Plans to use the Melbourne Accords to create a colony purely for gay and transgender people on the Latin Finger have been labelled as “preposterous” by Javier Alvez, the president of the Inca Republic. Movimiento por la Diversidad (MD) have announced a setting up of a fund to start their own colony. The leader of the group, José Manuel Da Costa, said “All who are gay, bisexual, or transgender (via surgery or DNAM) will be welcome in our new colony! It's a new beginning!”

It's believed that this effort is directly a result of harsh laws and edicts from the ultra-Catholic Alvez who is vehemently homophobic. While most of humanity stopped seeing this as an issue centuries ago, it seems as though the Inca Republic still struggles with it.



Alvez has come under fire from Pope Michael II as recently as 4 weeks ago due to his stance on homosexuality. “It is clear to all of us that the Lord has given us trials to overcome. After Twilight we, as a species, learned to look past or accept those trivial details that mark us different to our fellow human. We needed to in order to survive. It was only once we suffered and learned to live together that we were fit enough to meet His other creations. Mr Alvez has shown us all that Humanity is still not ready for all of God's wonders. The Lord shows us true intolerance in the form of the aliens from Arcturus. He shows us that we must all come together to survive.”

Despite his strong words, the Pope has fallen short of excommunicating Alvez and has said he'd prefer to help him see the error of his ways. He has, of course, given his blessing for the new colony.

Alvez has also faced further controversy by calling DNAM gender reassignment “Gender bending” and “gender hopping.” While it was a clumsy attempt to appear remotely tolerant, Da Costa labelled it ‘cynical’.

“For those who are transgender it is offensive. They don't just ‘hop’ into a part time gender. It is who they are.”



“We’re all worried.”

The city of Udaipur, capital of Rajasthan, is on high alert after the car bomb last week that killed 14 people and injured 37. Police Commissioner said there was a great deal of tension in the city but the police were vigilant and similar terrorist attacks unlikely. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by Provolution in retaliation for Rajasthan’s stance on cybernetics. Last year, the nation made it illegal to receive cybernetic enhancements for purely cosmetic reasons.

A Tragic Loss

Tragedy struck recently when two Australian tourists were swept away by the incoming tide 200km north of Thunder Valley. Why Alice Freemont and John McKendrick were out that far from any settlement is unknown but John’s father, Bill, said that John was always a ‘go-getter’ and would “search out the lonely spots in the universe to test himself.” Sadly, it seems that La Gouffre got the better of John and his fiancée. Their gear and the remains of their tent were found by a Militia unit but their bodies are yet to be recovered. The First Citizen, Tom Bellamy, offered his sympathies but also warned that Aurore is not a world to take lightly and that the area the couple were lost in still has wandering Kafer bands.

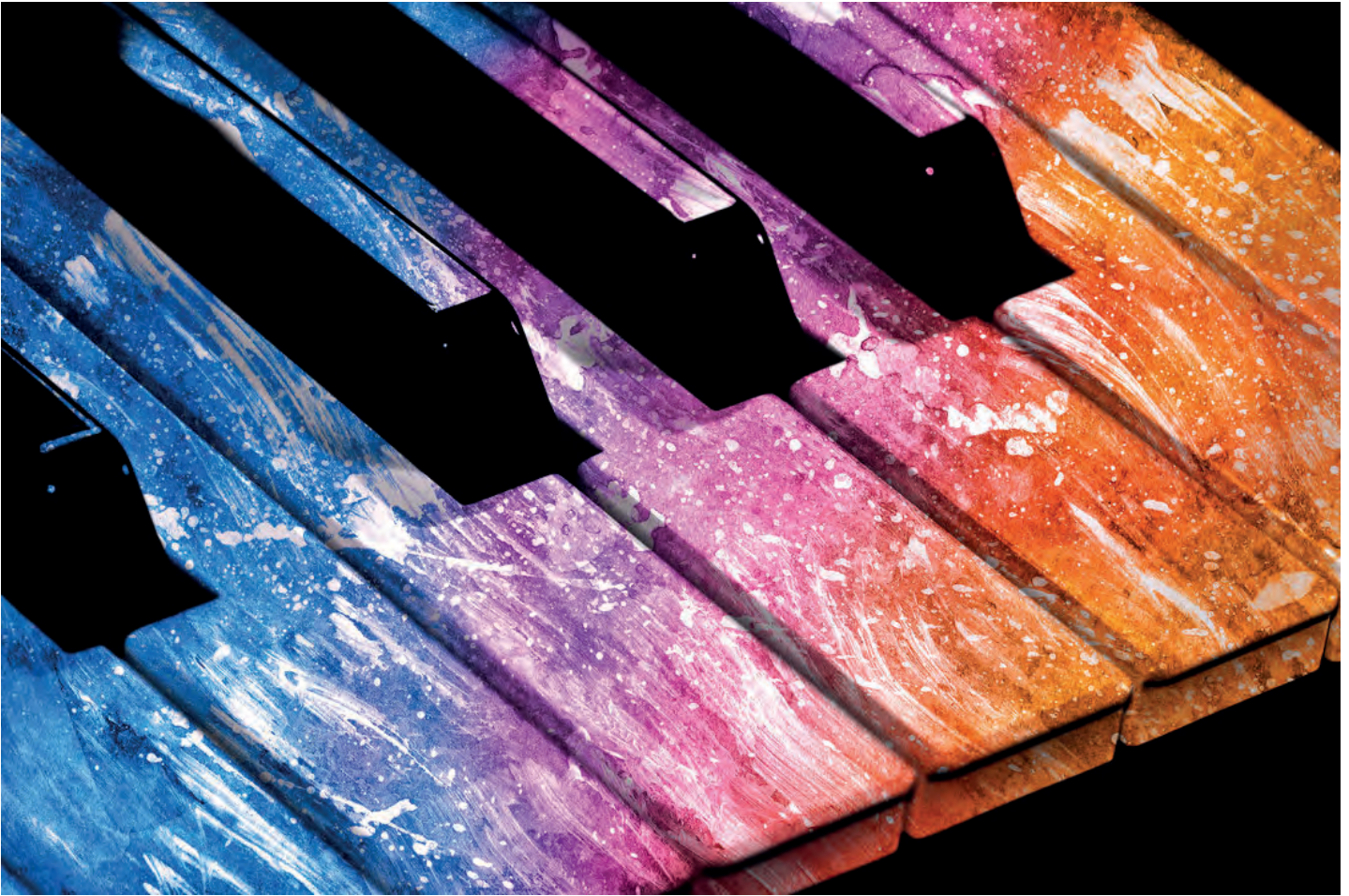


A State of Independence

The debate is becoming heated in the run up to the Referendum for Hawa’iian Independence. While a sizeable segment of the population wish to remain an American state, more and more each month are declaring themselves for independence. The fate of the islands lies in persuading the sizeable majority who have yet to decide. With noted Billionaire Samuel Lynch offering to pay for interface facilities if independence succeeds, there is much riding on the outcome.



YOUR WORLD



Life on 'The Grand Tour'

Louise Van Kepp begins her Grand Tour at the weekend visiting 8 worlds on the French and Chinese Arms. She'll be taking 44 pieces on the tour and they will give those on the Frontier a chance to see her wonderful art (such as 'Music is my paintbrush' pictured above). Her exhibitions will take the Azanian artist to worlds such as Beta Canum, Tirane, Kimanjano, Beta Hydri, Haifeng, and Joi. Check local press for tickets.

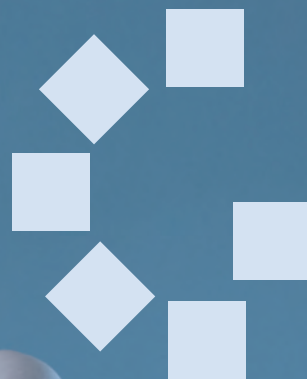


The High Life

Fancy becoming the lord of your own castle? Hohenschwangau Castle in Bavaria is up for auction and is expected to raise several million Livre for the Hautten family who emigrated to Kimanjano a year ago. Once home to the kings of Bavaria, it was a NATO listening post and depot during Twilight and then bought from Bavaria by the Hautten family for 1 Taler in 2034 as long as they promised to sustain the upkeep.

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YOUR WORLD



The Mother of Stars

ESA scientists at the FEA (Far Exploration Array) in Premiere orbit at Beta Canum have mapped the supercluster at the far edge of our universal horizon . Named ‘Galonseren’, ‘Heart of Stars’ in Welsh, the supercluster is the 17th so far discovered, is linked by a filament to the Ophiuchus supercluster, and vaguely forms a heart shape roughly 180 parsecs across.



Mobile Beer

Beer itself may not travel well but hops and other ingredients do. Mike Peters (pictured left) is busy readying a delivery to from the Greenwing Brewery in Albany, New York to Nous Voila. He hopes that a partner brewery there can re-formulate the famous Greenwing no14 stout so that it can be enjoyed there. If successful, Mr Peters hopes to licence local breweries on worlds all over human space to make the beer. however, he's a practical man, “If it doesn't taste exactly the same then it won't happen. We're proud of what we do here and want to give jobs not only to our workers but also to colonists in breweries all over, but we're not about to sell our brand down the river to do it.” I know I wouldn't want Greenwing no14 to change.



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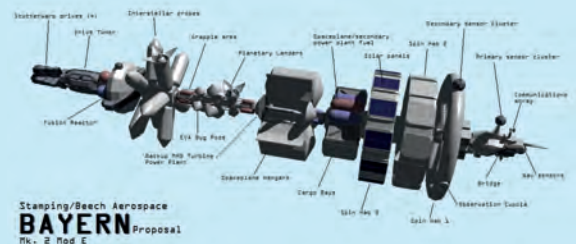
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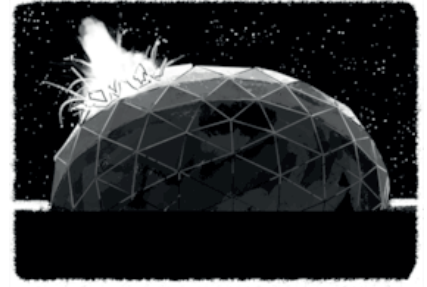
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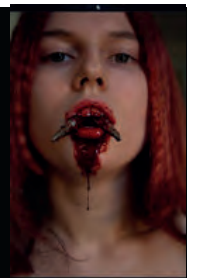
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