

ShadowrunTM In Space

*an original adventure by Alan K. Bradbury
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“One Lone Hero”

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“Oyez! Oyez! This court will now hear the case of Galactic Space Marine Corporation and the people versus Josephine Jenks, erstwhile captain of the GSM shuttlecraft AKS-226-V2D-4 (GSM registry), commonly known as the Wunlon Hero. Will the defendant please step forward and be identified?”

From the rear of the courtroom came a woman who appeared to be in her mid thirties, well tanned and fit. She wore the dark off-green prison uniform as if it were an honor to be so dressed. A vague smile played at the corners of her wide, thin-lipped mouth. For the bailiff she allowed herself to give thumb and retinal scans and have a sample of skin scraped for DNA testing. When the bailiff returned with positive identification confirmed, Ms. Jenks stood at attention before the judge’s bench for the reading of the charges.

“Ms. Jenks,” the judge began, “you are entitled to be represented by counsel. Do you have a lawyer?”

“No, your honor.”

“Would you like the court to appoint a qualified defender to speak for you? It is your right under the multinational treaties which govern space law.”

“Your honor already knows the only lawyers allowed to practice in these courts are corporate toadies who’d gladly sell any innocent victim of corporate displeasure out. It is also my right to defend myself, and I claim this right.”

“Such an outburst impugns the integrity of this court and will not be tolerated. Any further such and I shall be forced to find you in contempt. Is that understood?”

“Yes, your honor. I shall say no more on the subject and let the record of these proceedings speak for itself.”

“That is better. Huh?” The judge knew he’d been tripped in a way he could not object to without impugning his own



very scanty integrity. The way to prove her wrong was to proceed with dignity, honor and integrity, upholding and enforcing the laws he'd been sworn to. And in this case, as with most Judge Lopez presided over, that was out of the question.

"Ms. Jenks, you are charged with the sabotage of your employer's vessel, the *Wunlon Hero*, with the loss and destruction of said vessel and its cargo, with theft of cargo, and with the murders of three of your crew, to wit, copilot Marjorie Hotchkiss, communications officer Miloslav Smokov, and purser Rudolf Gottschalk. How do you plead?"

Josephine fought off the urge to drop to her knees, clasp both hands together and say, "Like this?" It was not a moment for mockery. She held herself stiffly erect and tried to keep her voice level. She said, "Not guilty to all charges, your honor. Have the prosecution present its evidence, that I may refute it."

Ms. Jenks was allowed to sit at the defense table, a barren expanse of expensive lumber designed to host a fleet of lawyers and their brief cases. She was well aware of the impression this would have on the courtroom. The prosecutor's table was crowded with GSM legal staff. She decided to milk the situation for sympathy.

Before GSM's mouthpiece could begin his opening remarks, the shuttle pilot said, "Defense requests paper and pencil."

Judge Lopez frowned and turned to the bailiff. He replied to the judge's raised eyebrow, "For their own safety, prisoners are forbidden sharp or potentially dangerous objects like pens and pencils."

When the judge turned back to the defense table Josephine again had the faster tongue. "Defense moves for a mistrial, your honor, on grounds that defense is being forcibly forbidden even the simplest tools with which to make notes and prepare, much less present, a defense."

"Motion is denied. Bailiff, under the circumstances, can't we relax this rule for the trial?"

"If it please the court," the GSM lawyer said from in front of the bench, "as a gesture of magnanimity, my colleagues will provide the

defendant with a legal pad and pen."

Judge Lopez nodded in relief. One of the armed guards standing behind Ms. Jenks brought the writing materials over and placed them before her. She smiled at the judge and thanked the guard and prosecutors.

GSM's lead lawyer began with an account of what happened. "On the fourth of last month the *Wunlon Hero* was flying a routine mission from the Salt Lake City spaceport to our transshipment AE in geosynchronous orbit. Its cargo was mainly but not entirely construction materials for a new resort being built in lunar orbit by a consortium of investors. There were no passengers this trip, thank goodness. The odd bit of freight is very important, a thermo- and radiation-shielded packet about a foot high, half a meter deep and a meter and a half long. While the rest of the cargo is accounted for, this parcel has completely vanished under very suspicious circumstances, your honor. The shipper has refused to divulge the contents, but had it insured for the legal maximum of 1.2 million international credit units. The prosecution alleges and intends to prove that the defendant deliberately and with malice aforethought set plastique explosive compound onto the cargo bay doors, stole the missing cargo packet, and detonated the explosive, causing the deaths of three of her crew members by decompression. The shuttle *Wunlon Hero* has been recovered by salvage shuttle from our AE warehouse. We will begin the evidence and testimony with this report, GSM and people's exhibit A..."

Josephine quit listening. The corp lawyer would belabor the uncontested physical evidence because he had nothing to tie it to her except innuendo and rant. GSM had bought the judge and the conviction. This was a foregone conclusion. But the shuttle captain knew the stronger she could present her case, the easier her sentence would be and the easier it would be to call for a retrial when the truth could be proven, and win back her pilot's license.

It all boiled down to one thing: How badly



did GSM want to humiliate a former best pilot? It was revenge, but not merely for the deaths of the crew. The missing cargo packet was the key to the whole affair. Where was it? What was in it?

Josephine ran her mind back, paralleling the testimony GSM was presenting in the court. She knew about the packet; the whole crew did. All had speculated about it, privately and with each other, before the launch. Most thought cutting-edge electronics, a few biomechanical or biological specimens for vacuum and null-grav testing. Jenks had her own suspicion—*orichalcum*, the stuff of magic and enchantment. The case was big enough for all to be right.

Somebody had thought it valuable enough to sabotage a ship for it. It could be held for ransom or sold for untold wealth on the black market, the shadow market.

Josephine knew why they accused her instead of one of the other two survivors. The ship's automated security cameras were the main reason. There was only one recorder, so it rotated through a random series of cameras in various locations, changing roughly every thirty seconds. Once the launch activities were settled into the routine of flight, Captain Jenks had started a routine check of the vessel. The ship's engineer had left the bridge about ten or fifteen minutes later to work on a faulty microprocessor chip in his quarters. A dwarf, the only "awakened" crew member, Horace Besterman had survived only because his cabin had remained pressurized while most of the rest of the ship had broken open to the airless void. The only other survivor was the engine room engineer, Ruth Pratt, whose compartment had also remained pressurized and who had her space suit and quarters beside the engine room.

Josephine walked back through her memory of the tour. First stop had been the purser's office, after a quick check of the four empty passenger cabins to make sure nothing had broken loose during take off. Rudy had no one to be in charge of this trip. Josephine recalled he had a fondness for beer, but drunk or sober he would always keep meticulous and accurate records. She had then

stopped at the galley for a sandwich before moving back to the engine room to visit with Ruth Pratt. Ruth, curiously, had been absent from her post and Rudy had come back to take watch until she returned. Ruth was separated from her husband, a newscaster in one of the many cable news networks, an aggressively lonely man. Ruth knew engines backward and forward and could handle any emergency. She was a valuable crew member.

Rudy had come aft while Josephine was in the galley, wanting to ask Ruth something, and had stayed while Ruth ran an errand. Rudy had mentioned a leak in a suit air tank to his captain, and she'd promised to check on it.

She'd passed Ruth in the crew's quarters corridor. Crew rooms were less spacious than passenger cabins but still had space for Horace's microtronics tool kit. Ruth had hardly had time for more than a suit and a complaint of the mess Rudy would have the engine room in by the time she returned. Josephine had looked in on Horace, who asked her to secure his door so he could work in peace. She'd sealed it for him and went to check on the leaky space suit tank.

Then the thought of the mysterious packet in the cargo hold had taken hold of her. She brought the suit to her quarters to check where the leak was, and she needed to put it on to get to the monitors. The leak was in a valve, and the tank was down one-fifth of its supply when it should have been full. Captain Jenks had worn the suit to the cargo bay, without its helmet, rather than put it away in the emergency suit locker. She'd been seen on the security camera in the hall, then later in the cargo hold where she had discovered the plastique on its doors.

In the instant she'd recognized what it was, she'd turned to flee. Then, noting the security camera had clicked off, she'd returned to her quarters to retrieve the helmet before reporting to the bridge.

Then it had been too late.

It was circumstantial evidence, she being in a suit but conveniently *sans* helmet, in a booby trapped cargo hold just before the explosive went



off, and the packet also disappearing, but circumstantial evidence was enough to damn her in her employer's eyes and damn the innocent in this mockery of a corp trial.

The prosecution finished its presentation of the physical evidence and reports of various investigations. Captain Jenks had paid sufficient attention to have a good idea of what had been claimed and proclaimed.

She stood. "Your honor, defense has been denied due process by having no access whatsoever to this evidence. The defense moves for a twenty four hour recess to be allowed to examine these exhibits, as is the right of counsel for the defense."

"Objection, your honor! Defendant has no counsel, and the motion was placed improperly."

"Objection sustained. Motion denied."

"Defense moves for mistrial on grounds of denial of due process."

"Denied."

"Defense moves for summary acquittal on grounds of denial of due process."

"Will you cut that out!"

Captain Jenks smiled and curtsied. "I've got to know what's in these reports if I'm going to make a case, your honor. So do you, if you are going to judge this case fairly."

Judge Lopez sighed, knowing the court record would be available for review by appellate courts. "That's true. Court will recess for one hour to allow myself and the defendant to review these documents. Come to my chambers, everyone. Bailiff, bring the exhibits."

An hour later the judge extended the recess and ordered lunch brought in. The physical evidence wasn't damning at all, just the security camera tape that showed opportunity and the absence of the packet which gave motive. Josephine was quick to note the evidence that supported her innocence. Among these was the fact that not the slightest trace of sticky plastique had been found on her, her suit, her quarters or any of her possessions, not even on the life pod she'd ridden back to earth.

When court reconvened the prosecution

called two witnesses. These were the other two survivors of the explosion. First was Horace Besterman, the maintenance engineer. The dwarf told of his activities, including working on the chip, the shock of the blast, the good fortune that the bulkheads around his room had held, and his attempts to raise the bridge. He'd thought himself the sole survivor. He'd used the communicator in his room to take over the bridge communications and call for rescue. His S. O. S. had alerted GSM to the plight of their ship.

Captain Jenks had cross-examined the witness. "From the time I sealed your door until rescuers pulled the Wunlon Hero into an airtight dock, did you ever leave your quarters at any time for any reason?"

"No, I did not."

"That is your testimony, that you stayed in your room the whole time?"

"Yes."

"No further questions."

Ruth Pratt was called. She testified she'd been alone in the engine room when the explosion came. Rudy had left earlier. There had been minimal damage to her part of the ship, the main breaks coming farther forward. She had had time to get into her spacesuit and patch the leaks, but the engine room had lost all air in about an hour anyway. She hadn't thought of searching for potential survivors, but only of potential damage to the engines. She'd put all her efforts into making sure nothing had happened to them because of stress on the structure of the ship. Not until they were close to the Artificial Environment had she tried calling out on her suit radio. That was when she learned Horace was still alive and trapped in his room, and that rescue was imminent.

Josephine as her own defense lawyer cross-examined. "When you left your engine room after the launch and before the explosion, where did you go?"

"I went first to the bridge with my launch report, then to the galley, then to the 'fresher."

"This took you twenty minutes?"



"Some things you do there take longer than others. I had a grease spot on my wrist that didn't want to wash off."

"After the explosion you suited up. Did you leave the engine room to enter the rest of the ship, say, to search for survivors?"

"I did open the door, but then I thought what if I opened a sealed room and someone was alive inside it? I stayed with my engines and waited."

"We've known each other for a long time, Ruth; shipped together I think sixteen times. That's exactly what I would have expected you to do. No further questions."

"Jo, I'm so sorry for you."

"Thank you, Ruth."

The next witness the prosecution called was Josephine Jenks. The soon to be ex-captain refused to take the stand. "Your honor," she protested, "it violates every principle of jurisprudence to require a witness to testify against herself!"

"Were you going to testify on your own behalf, young lady?" Judge Lopez scowled.

"I was planning to."

"Then get up here and stop wasting the court's time!"

Josephine rolled her eyes to the ceiling, sighed, and took the stand. The GSM lawyer made her tell of how she had spent her time aboard the ship, with plenty of interruptions.

"Is it policy to leave the bridge during a shuttle flight?"

"Yes, sir. Captains are required to be on the bridge only during take off and preparations for docking. Leaving the bridge between those times gives the co-pilot training and experience, and ensures the captain will be fresh when returning to duty."

"Are you happy to be rid of half your crew?"

"Your honor, I object!"

"Sustained. Counselor, don't insinuate before the witness."

"Yes, your honor. How do you feel about the deaths of three of the crew you are responsible for?"

"I miss my very dear friends and co-workers more than you can begin to imagine. When I find out who set the plastique, there will be hell to pay."

"Why didn't you notify the bridge immediately on discovering the plastique you set?"

"Objection!"

"Sustained. Don't make me warn you again, counselor."

"I'm sorry. Why didn't you notify the bridge?"

"I saw the security camera light up. Bridge monitors those. I thought they knew."

"What did you do?"

"Ran to my quarters and put the suit helmet on. An obvious precaution, but one that saved my life."

"Then you went to the escape pod?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bringing the missing cargo packet with you."

"No, sir."

"What happened to our missing cargo packet?"

"I do not know, sir."

"I believe you do, and that you are lying under oath to conceal its whereabouts. I think you want to sell its secrets and retire."

"Sir, I believe it was removed by the salvage crew with the rest of the cargo, and that you are using it to try to frame me. Your honor, space is my life, my father and mother, my lover, my child, my heart and my soul. There is no more cruel thing you can do to me than force me to stay on the ground for the rest of my life. I wish I had that packet and could bargain with it for the retaining of my license and reputation. Would GSM trade the packet for letting me ship out again?"

"No. We're convinced you're guilty of theft, sabotage and murder, but convincing an impartial court is a delicate matter."

"I'm as innocent as a newborn baby!"

"Prove it. Why didn't you go down with your ship in the grand old tradition?"

"My ship had already gone down. Bridge was



cracked wide open, as was my chamber and several interior walls. I had no idea there were any survivors. I just set the locator beacon on the lifepod and rode it down—to find GSM waiting for me. The leaky air tank in my suit meant I couldn't ride the wreck to orbit and wait until I got within suit radio range of a rescue. I had to ride the pod or die."

One of the GSM lawyers at the table muttered, "You made the wrong choice." He might have thought it was under his breath. On the other hand, Josephine thought, it would have solved a lot of problems if she'd been among the victims, for GSM, for the saboteur, and maybe even for herself.

But she didn't think so. Something stunk about the whole operation. She had no idea what, but she was going to find out if it took her last cred. Then heads would start rolling! Captain Jenks had been careful to make a few good friends during her years in GSM employ. They would come in useful as soon as the trial was over.

"When and where did you jettison the cargo packet?"

"Objection, your honor!"

"Sustained. How many times do I have to tell you, counselor?"

"We know you took the cargo packet because it wasn't on the *Wunlon Hero* when it was brought in. Too many people helped dock and search it. You were the only one to leave the vessel."

"Nice bit of logic, but what can you substantiate that with? It wasn't in the pod, either."

"You're a good pilot. You could have dropped it en route and calculated where it would land."

"Within a few dozen kilometers. And then, knowing how it was shielded, how could I find it again?"

"Locator beacon?"

"Which everyone else can listen to? And from jail? Besides, I don't know anything about radios. Check my files."

"We have been through your files."

"Of course. You'd have to go through them

to prepare your case. If you're finished, I'd like to get to the defense portion of this trial. But think—if I had stolen the cargo and dropped it somewhere, someone else would have picked it up by now. You know that as well as I do. But that isn't the reason I didn't steal it."

"What is?"

"I'm an honest pilot. I don't steal."

"Can you prove that?"

"Certainly. Discounting myself, who is GSM's top pilot?"

"Captain Hunsaker."

"He was available to take the *Wunlon Hero* aloft, and by both seniority and regular rotation, he should have been its captain. But you passed him over and gave the flight to me. Obviously, you trusted me with this cargo more than any other pilot."

"Obviously, and you had GSM completely fooled."

"Wrong, counselor. Someone has fooled—and victimized—both of us. By using me as a scapegoat, you are allowing the real perpetrator to get away with the crimes and covering up his trail."

"This is your testimony?"

"Yes."

"You may step down."

Josephine cross-examined herself to emphasize the total lack of hard evidence against herself, then let the prosecution sum its case. Having exhausted its preparations, the prosecution rested. Josephine stood beside her table. "Your honor, the prosecution has failed to prove even one of the charges against me. Noting this, the defense also rests."

The judge's eyebrows weren't the only ones to shoot skyward at this turn of events. But on a moment's reflection they dropped to their normal position.

Judge Lopez didn't take long to deliberate. He had his orders, but he also had the evidence and there was none. So he ruled to try to cover both angles. "Captain Josephine Jenks, these are very serious charges which have been brought against you, and your testimony has not removed



the shadow of doubt about your innocence. But neither has it been proven that you are guilty of any of these charges. Therefore it is the ruling of this court that your license to pilot spacecraft be suspended until such time as the missing cargo packet turns up. Until this evidence has been found, you are to remain on earth and under the supervision of a parole officer, but shall be free of other restrictions. If the lost packet turns up under circumstances that verify your claims of innocence, your license shall be reinstated, and full back pay awarded with reinstatement without prejudice. If the packet turns up under circumstances that implicate you in its disappearance, the charges will be prosecuted and you will face the full penalty of the law. If the packet does not turn up within two years, your license will be restored and you will be free to seek employment, but will not be allowed to work for Galactic Space Marine or any related company. Do you understand this ruling?"

"Yes, your honor." Josephine was satisfied with the ruling. She intended to find out who had set the plastique herself, and would have nearly a free hand to do so. A parole officer's supervision was a small burden to be free, and two years was a fairly short exile from her beloved space. The former space pilot already had plans for how she would proceed. A regular private investigator would have too many ties to the industry. She'd never be able to trust one. But a shadow investigator, a corporate espionage agent who could get into space and investigate the AE and its rescue vessel, a shadowrunner, would be the perfect choice. Her limited resources would have to stretch, but with the help of her friends she thought they would. And in an emergency, she could foot the bill with the contents of the missing cargo packet, safely hidden under three miles of the Pacific Ocean, several pounds of pure orichalcum. But where was it going? Why? What use did the metal of magic have in a deep space resort? That would have to be seen . . .

Gamemaster Notes and Set up:

The Great Salt Lake Desert may not be the driest and sunniest place in North American, but it's close. This is why it has been touted as a potential site for a spaceport since the end of World War II. FASA missed this when setting up Salt Lake City in its Native American Nations supplement, but it is easy to add one. I have placed it at the eastern edge of the desert proper, at Knolls, within easy reach of Skull (formerly Spring) Valley and Tooele (formerly Tuilla) Valley. The maglev rail line being built to connect the coast ends in Wendover in my game, but connects to the east. Across Nevada it is still in the planning stages. Tooele Valley is already becoming a major air freight connection, with a freight-only airport far enough from Salt Lake International that planes can land and take off without interfering with each other. This would mean the Tooele/Grantsville area has been built up tremendously during the sixty years between the present and game time.

Space freight would be handled from Tooele Valley in much the same way because facilities are pre-existing.

Shadowrun Salt Lake is under the rule and laws of the Ute Nation but is still mainly non-Native American and the Mormon Church is still the dominant social influence, if not political (and political is still quite possible—the Church is very strongly pro-Native American in its doctrines and practices). I have named Salt Lake's mayor as Philip Rath, a Ute chief and the last governor of Utah before the NAN revolt. He is in his eighties but still sharp and still very much in control of the government of the city, though the nation is in other hands. He does not figure much in this adventure, however.

Space—FASA in rejecting this module said, "We aren't sure how we're going to handle that yet." They still aren't years later!



But the problems are easy to figure out. Magic: Shamans get their power from totems who are tied to the earth's umbra, so shamanic magic grows weaker as one gains altitude and drops off entirely by space. Hermetic relies on principles rather than borrowed power, hence would work the same anywhere. Space is a factor in game design, as witness the orbital banks, which referee the corporate wars and keep the world's money supply reliable in value. This means artificial environments in geosynchronous orbit (where communications satellites are already located). People live and work there, and of necessity play there. Therefore, shuttle service to and from the AEs must be regular. Many types of research and assembly works best in a null-grav vacuum, which makes orbiting research and manufacturing facilities are a component, and orbiting resorts for the spacers and the rich of groundside. Again, shuttle flights for passengers and freight is a required part of the equation. Many companies could be providing these services and shuttles; GSM is just the one involved in the game adventure.

Crews for these shuttle flights would have to be rotated regularly. Because of the special nature of the skills and knowledge required to fly shuttles, training has to be available to the public. Temp services can retain people with the knowledge but not enough experience to prove reliability to employers. They are a great way to spread the extra people around to where they are needed, and get them the experience and reputation for reliability that will enable full time employment. Temp services will be used to get a shadowrun team or part of one into space for this adventure. We'll name a couple of them: Startemp, Inc., and Crews At Large Inc. or CAL-Temp. Both will have offices in the Tooele Valley part of the Salt Lake Metroplex, a city of some 2,000,000 people spread from what is now Ogden to what is now Provo, wider than Seattle but about as populous. And shadowy.

Say your game is set in Seattle or San Francisco or elsewhere. Does this create problems?

Not at all; it just means your players won't have as much background knowledge of space as people who live and work near spaceports. If it irks you to use Salt Lake, please feel free to move the spaceport and support facilities to somewhere you're more comfortable with, such as Cape Canaveral, Vandenberg AFB or Edwards AFB. Take the temp services with you. This way you won't have the players dealing with Ute customs and immigration at border crossings. You'll have California and/or Confederate American States instead.

Behind the Scenes

(for GM eyes only!):

Ruth Pratt is the saboteur in the story. Her husband is newscaster Warren Pratt, who owns his own cable news network, PrattNewsNet or PNN. He is a Walter Cronkite figure, fatherly, almost grandfatherly, with a well-modulated voice and a delivery that makes him very comfortable to listen to. PNN is run from an orbital AE, and Warren lives there. His ratings have been slipping in recent years as flashier channels have taken a larger portion of the pie. He has fixed bureaus in several major cities around the globe, and a large crew of roaming reporters based in Los Angeles.

Warren's problem is that he is tired of just chronicling events. He sees an end to his career in a few years, and wants to go out with a splash, making news instead of just reporting it. So he has enlisted the aid of some investors and has sunk his personal fortune in what is being billed as a lunar orbital resort, where people can come, spend money relaxing and looking at the moon instead of the earth. That's just a cover. His investors and he are actually building a space ship for piracy. He wants to be the first space pirate in history before he dies, be something that will be remembered as long as humanity plies the space lanes. These investors are partly smugglers and back marketers, and partly organized crime. Magic is required for cloaking and false identification of the ship, hence a shipment of orichalcum was going up for a hermetic mage investor to use to enchant the ship.



Ruth Pratt, Warren's estranged wife, learned of this and decided to stop the pirate adventure once and for all, by sabotaging the shuttle carrying the magic metal. She was planning to steal it and hold it for ransom to get her husband to cease his insane scheme. Captain Jenks beat her to the packet, though, and dropped it into the Pacific with a beacon that only she holds the activator to. It is a very short-range beacon that can't be accidentally triggered from the surface of the ocean.

There is already too much money tied up in the pirate vessel, and only public exposure will stop its commissioning, public exposure which Josephine Jenks and the PCs will have to be instrumental in obtaining.

Involving the Player Characters:

I use in Shadowy Salt Lake a troll fixer named Squaretoe (perfect name, eh? There once actually was a bar in Salt Lake City named Squaretoe's!), who runs a bar and restaurant for runners. In Seattle, Reno's in the equivalent. The players will be invited to Squaretoe's or your game equivalent and offered the job of clearing Captain Jenks' name and reputation so she can have her license to pilot ships restored. She has enough money to offer a retainer and expenses of a reasonable nature. All she really wants is her license back so she can fly shuttles again.

Squaretoe (or your game fixer) takes the PCs into a back room with white noise generator, and gives them the background:

"Runners, I have a job offer. It will involve travel, likely more than any of you have ever thought about doing. A month or so ago a space shuttle owned and operated by Galactic Space Marine Corporation blew up making a routine



flight to orbit. Three people were killed, and a valuable piece of cargo has disappeared. GSM blamed the shuttle's captain, a Ms. Josephine Jenks, and she has lost her pilot's license because of this. She wants her name cleared and her license back. This means the team taking this run will have to investigate the shuttle *Wunlon Hero*, now in GSM's orbital warehouse and shops. Are you interested?"

Runners respond likely with, "How much does it pay?"

"There is a retainer of 5000 nuyen, plus an expense account of up to 20,000. If and when her license is restored without prejudice, there is a payoff of approximately 100,000 nuyen promised."

Expect experienced runners to try to negotiate the price. This is when the fixer, Squaretoe or



whoever, will bring Ms. Jenks into the room for the PCs to negotiate with directly. She cannot access more than 150,000 nuyen without raising the packet and selling the contents, orichalcum plus highly sensitive control electronics for the pirate ship, but will promise their reward will be great. In a pinch, she will offer the player characters a pound or two of orichalcum on completion of the mission. That should be incentive enough.

Josephine will stay to answer questions, using the information in the story. The deceased crew members are detailed here:

Marjorie Hotchkiss, 31, copilot with four years' experience with GSM, single, living in Salt Lake Metroplex, Tooele area in an apartment. Not socially active much since a long romance turned sour years before. Her boyfriend was opposed to her becoming a shuttle crew member. Hobbies and interests: rockhounding, hiking, space history, and computer games. Has surviving sister in Chicago, parents in San Francisco.

Miloslav Smokov, 44, born and raised in the Czech Republic, taught electronics until a VITAS outbreak took his wife and baby daughter, at which time he came to America looking for radio work and ended up with GSM. Has been a spacer for three years, but worked with GSM as a ground communications technician before then. Lived in an apartment in Salt Lake, Magna area, and had a part time live in girlfriend, Noelle Smith. She kept his apartment when he was in space, and split his ground time with him and some other boyfriends. He has no living relatives.

Rudolph Gottschalk, 29, purser or person in charge of passengers. He had been employed by GSM nine years, since finishing college in Sacramento, and lived in the same apartment complex as Marjorie. Divorced, his main interests were beer and trivia. He likes TV and spends much of his off time glued to the boob tube with a beer in his hand. He also liked exercising, and kept his weight down to keep his job. His ex-wife has remarried and lives in New Orleans. He has a brother in rural Virginia.

Surviving crew members are **Josephine Jenks**, 33, pilot and captain, whose home is an apartment in the Grantsville area of Salt Lake, near the spaceport, and whose interests are totally space; **Ruth Pratt**, 40, ship's engineer with fifteen years with GSM, a job she got mainly to be near her husband, though she had her degree before she married Warren; and **Horace Besterman**, dwarf, engineer with degrees in electrical engineering and electronics from the University of Utah. A lifelong Utahn, Horace lives in the Magna part of Salt Lake Metroplex in a mainly dwarven section. Because of the spaceport and the mines, dwarves are the most common awakened people in Salt Lake. He is married with three children, and has family in the same area as well.

This gives the players several leads to follow. One, the Wunlon Hero in GSM's AE in orbit, is the primary place to look for evidence. Josephine will let on as she did in the trial that the missing cargo was taken from the wreck there and hidden. The shuttle will be rebuilt, but work has not yet started on that. It is sitting in a dry dock of the orbital AE. Two, the crew members bear investigating and may know something useful, or speculate in useful directions. Three, deckers can get into GSM's records, and a break in at their dirtside offices might yield useful information. Four, the destination of the shuttle's cargo is known to be the lunar orbital resort, which can also be investigated dirtside by deckers and others.

Runners in Space:

At least part of the team should be encouraged to go up to the orbital AE and nose around. Knowledge and experience can be faked with false credsticks and chips. For a temp service to take an applicant seriously will require some other preparation.

First, the runner should be reasonably healthy and fit, as take off still puts five to eight gravities of pressure on people. There should be no obvious illegal cyberware or bioware. Smartgun links can be disguised with a flesh-colored patch over the



palm ports. However, no projectile weapons of any kind are allowed aboard a space ship. The reason for this should be obvious—they're high risks of letting vacuum into a vessel. Applicants will be required to take a physical with drug screen, so should quit their bad habits early enough to avoid showing traces. Applicants should have necessary licensing (again, a fake credstik will cover this), and/or education qualifying them for a shuttle job. They definitely need to be able to do a job while being paid to! Whether it's purser (records and taking care of passenger needs), engineer, communications or whatever, they have to be able to at least fake competence adequately to fool the rest of the crew. Just being a passenger will NOT get a PC into GSM's facility. Passengers are restricted to certain facilities and locations set up for non-working visitors to space. They will not be allowed off a shuttle at the GSM warehouse and shops. One has to be crew, even if employed by a temp service like Startemps or CAL-temps. This will allow access to the AE, which maintains quarters for crew between missions.

It won't matter which temp service is used. Either can get runners onto a GSM shuttle, which all have long serial numbers and short names like Pleasant Piper, Vacuum Biter and Rhysling's Revenge. All shuttles are similar in shape and facilities—cramped crew quarters, passenger cabins holding up to eight passengers, two to a room, and a large cargo hold. There are emergency space suits at various locations, and life pods for emergency rides back to the planet or to nearby orbital facilities. All jobs have strict regulations and rules, which are made available at each working location on a vessel. All crew are required to follow procedures exactly.

GSM's Artificial Environment:

All AEs are spherical, that being the shape that holds the most volume within the smallest amount of surface. They are inflated, hardened and carved into shape, or filled with structures

built inside. The balloon used to start building one can be blown to quite immense sizes, and it's typical for an AE to be about one to four miles in diameter. Radiation and meter shielding is added to the original bubble; airlocks are built into the skin which can be of any size from one man to large ship. GSM, a big player in cargo and passenger traffic, has a three mile diameter AE, with almost all of it used as a warehouse and dry-dock for ship repair. Living quarters aboard it are more spacious than on a ship but still cramped by groundside standards. There are sleeping rooms with full telecomlinks, a cafeteria open 24 hours, and recreation facilities of many kinds. No illegal recreational drugs are allowed, nor BTL chips (chipping is frowned upon in general, but still fairly popular), but alcohol is allowed and recreational sex is allowed between consenting adults. You have to document the consent first. It's expected that greenies (vacuum biters) will want to wander around and see the facility, so that won't draw any special consideration. Trying to pry company secrets loose will arouse the curiosity of the company security staff, though, so discretion is advised. Runners wanting to look at the Wunlon Hero who go through channels making the request will be allowed a supervised visit. It is a famous disaster, after all, and they expect crew to want to look. An unsupervised visit should be made very carefully, lest security find out.

Getting on the bad side of company security forces will result in a quick deportation, possibly in custody on a ship to earth, possibly to a tourist facility where the clumsy runner can find his own ticket back, or for severe hose jobs a boot out an airlock without a suit. But if the runner is careful not to arouse suspicion, she may have a fairly free hand looking around.

The wreck of the Wunlon Hero is quite a sight. The cargo bay doors were blown wide open; the frame work holding them twisted badly, and interior structural beams bent and warped. Oddly, while much of the cargo was damaged, only the one packet was missing, a box about a third of a meter by a half meter by one and a half meters.



The damaged cargo, structural parts for the lunar orbital resort, is still aboard, but the intact pieces have been sent on their way already.

Freight for the lunar resort is going outbound on a regular basis, enabling a runner already on the GSM orbital AE an excellent opportunity for going farther out. It will be easier for a runner to examine the cargo heading to the lunar orbital than the Wunlon Hero's wreck, and if this is done, a simple roll of gunnery skill at target 4 will reveal that some of the materials being shipped are weapon components. (Fallbacks: Demolitions target is 5 and armed combat 6.) These are both energy and projectile weapons of ship-mounted size. The frame members are also strong enough to be withstanding thrust, not the fragile beams an AE would require.

Dirtside Investigations:

The typical shadowrunner has too many implants that could come loose under spaceship acceleration to risk a launch. Also, a shaman would be without his magic, which can be terrifying and repulsive. While deckers would be naturals for a space crew, one would expect, many of them aren't particularly good physical specimens. Fully-cybered street samurai would have trouble explaining their implants—and a built-in weapon would have spacers scurrying for suits and security forces as fast as they could scramble! Not every runner can or should be sent up into space. So what are those stuck on the dustball going to do? There are several options.

Investigate the Wunlon Hero's crew is one. Horace will welcome some sympathy for the lost crew members, and will be willing to talk over beers about the ship's explosion. He'll even provide the beers, if asked. The circumstances of his survival are such that no possible blame can be attached to him—meaning, he couldn't possibly have stolen the missing cargo. He has no idea who set the plastique, and will deny having set it himself. He doesn't believe Captain Jenks capable of sabotage, and is puzzled why GSM went after

her so savagely. Horace believes the missing packet contained sensitive and expensive control circuitry for the lunar resort.

Ruth Pratt is also stuck on earth with Horace, and is living in an inexpensive hotel in Tooele until she can ship out again. She won't be as easy to approach as Horace, but if approached sympathetically can be talked with. She will say she believes the missing packet to have been either empty, as an insurance scam, or also sabotaged and blown out of the wreck. (She went looking for it after the explosion, and couldn't find it.) She suspects Captain Jenks may have taken it, but that would be so out of character for her that she won't suggest it to anyone unless she is getting drunk. She will say if asked that her husband is a very good man but his mind is starting to slip a little. She won't betray him, but under the right kind of prodding will suggest that the people talking with her should investigate the lunar orbital resort and the Pratt News Net's warehouse in Tooele Valley. This is going to have to be role-played well by the players, rather than having them make a skill roll. The GM should have Ruth be rather abrupt, look around a lot, and whisper if she is in her cups, but if she hasn't been drinking with the PCs she will clam up at any mention of the visit to the restroom after she had left her post. She was washing off not a stubborn grease spot, but the traces of the plastique. She won't pretend she knows nothing of the stuff; instead if the subject is broached without connection to the wreck of the ship, will display quite a lot of knowledge about it.

One way of approaching the survivors is to pretend you represent one of the victims or a family member of one. This will allow questions about the ship's explosion and questions about the crew and cargo. Calling ahead for a meeting with this or another plausible pretext will get Ruth to meet in a public place like a restaurant. Horace alone will agree to a meeting in his apartment; Ruth will at very minimum expect to go to the hotel's restaurant or bar.

Investigation of the GSM offices in Salt Lake



will have to be done by shadow means; any open attempt for a public interview will be brushed off, and the company spokespeople will refer inquiries to the company lawyers. The corp's matrix security is a red 5. Records relating to the trial and wreck are in the hands of the company's legal staff, and will have to be traced by first finding out what law firm is handling the casework. This can be found by tedious search of the company records. The firm is Saxon, Barton and MacKenzie, of Salt Lake. Their offices are downtown, and their matrix security is a red 4. Theft of any record from their datafiles (meaning if anything is deleted) will set off an alarm, and contract deckers will release a search and destroy program to harry the decker taking the file(s). Files can be copied without this alarm, however. As most GMs don't take the time to roleplay out decking maneuvers, we use the shortcut of one role to break into the system and role-playing the decisions afterward. This is the only serious trap.

The shipping records for the cargo will show its entirety was shipped under and for the Lunar Orbital Resort Limited Partnership. Records will also show that PNN and Warren Pratt are the managing partners of this group. The warehouse shipped from is wholly owned by PNN, and its address is in Tooele Valley. There will be no record of what was inside the missing cargo packet, just that it was insured for the legal maximum of 1.2 million nuyen. This claim is pending, and the lawyers' records will show that GSM's insurers are fighting its payment, demanding an accounting of what the packet contained. Pratt will not ever reveal this, but unless the PCs intervene, it will be paid anyway.

Those who have learned of the PNN warehouse, either from the lawyers or from Ruth Pratt, may investigate it. As with those in the GSM orbital AE, physical examination will show components of heavy weaponry, both cannon and energy weapons. It will not show anything but "parts" and "components" in the inventory and shipping manifests the warehouse is holding and

shipping to the lunar orbital resort. No parts are named in the warehouse's records. Whoever is keeping the accurate list of what is shipped is not keeping it in the warehouse or its matrix (red 3) accessibly files.

This information is actually being stored on the lunar orbital itself.

The organized crime partners, who are Caribbean-based smugglers, are handling security at the warehouse. There are standard alarm and camera systems, which should present little trouble to shadowrunners, and two armed guards on the premises. These are humans in armor jackets and helmets, rating 5/3, armed with heavy pistols and radios that can summon police back up. Use the Corp Security Guard in Shadowrun II, p. 205, for their numbers. One guard will be in the security office at all times; the other will be on rounds or on break. The warehouse does have contract astral barrier protection, provided by a grade II initiate mage working with a Hermetic guild in Salt Lake. This mage is a limited partner, but not the one working on the orbital.

The Lunar Orbital Resort:

Proof of the deception being staged by Pratt is available at the orbital resort itself. Runners who take the shuttle up to it, delivering cargo, will find a crew building a space-going ship, not a bubble-built AE. Construction is far enough along that it will be recognizable from shuttle ports. The shape is a cylinder, not a sphere. The crew doing the construction will be the pirates when it is finished.

This is not a place to be obviously nosy. Taking some surreptitious images from the shuttle will be easy; getting to wander around will be harder. A ship's officer will escort an off-duty crewman around, pointing out what is supposed to be the resort's facilities—guest rooms (really crew quarters), recreation areas (every ship needs them, especially pirates, but part of these are actually planned to be a holding area for captured prisoners and a torture chamber), the open side which is said to be the lunar viewing area but which is merely the unfinished part of the ship.

As long as the new crew member on tour goes along with the pretense of the resort facility, she will be able to ask a lot of questions and might get a lot of



information. But pointing out the obvious—that this isn't a bubble-built AE—will make the officer huffy and cut the tour short. If pressed too hard, the guide will summon the mage partner to deal with the troublesome vacuum biter, or maybe just some regular guards who will administer a painful beating in ways that won't leave obvious marks, as a warning.

The mage partner is a third grade initiate Hermetic mage who is using the circumference of the pirate ship as a conjuring ring. He will not be able to get any elemental except fire, and that only with extreme difficulty, hence will not use them to take care of troublesome people from the freight crew. The mage's name is Dylan Powell. Instead he will use mana spells that affect the mind, trading the bad memories for false ones that confirm the artificial environment lie. He is too busy to do this with everyone; only the most persistent who can't be stopped any other way. People who at least pretend not to care as long as the freight is accepted and they can return to geosynchronous orbit on schedule will be ignored.

Portions of the ship are already pressurized, areas where the crew live and the bridge, wherein the controls are being installed. The structural members are being moved into place on the open side facing the moon, so that pretense won't be able to be held much longer. That area will become the cargo hold when it is finished. The places where the weapons are being installed are covered from view by freight crews.

The clincher for the condemnation of the pirates is the giant Jolly Roger flag (skull and crossbones) which is to be applied to the hull when it is finished. This will be aboard the freight shuttle when the runners are its crew, rolled inside a tube but with a miniature image of it on one end of the outside. This is a thin plastic film that will adhere to the skin of the pirate ship when attached. The tube is only four feet long, so it will fit exactly inside a crewman's locker. It is about three inches in diameter. Stealing it will be another way besides images that will betray the Pratt partnership. It is something that won't be suspected of being missing until after the runner is safely away.

Payoff and Tie Off:

Once runners return with evidence that the Pratt partners are building a pirate ship, even proof that arms are being sent out to it, should be enough to convince the courts that Pratt is up to no good, and prove Ruth

is the saboteur. Josephine will get her license back, and will pay the PCs off with orichalcum from the packet. If the news is public enough and the PCs get any publicity out of it (even if only on the shadow nets), a representative of the seven orbital banks will also contact the runners, and present each with a platinum (unlimited) credstik which will set up a fee-free account for each PC involved. The Orbital Banks will recognize the pirates as a threat to their safety and stability. The weapons could have been used to blackmail them and give one man control of the world's finances. The effects would be dreadful. Changes in the way shipments will be made, including random searches of cargo spacebound by an interbank security force to prevent weapons from being put in orbit will be made. Karma could be bountiful.

If the PCs are less than successful, they can look forward to no further payments and someone else will get the publicity and credit for stopping weapons from getting into space—or there could be the first space piracy acts against shuttles and their cargoes, and all space ships will need to be armed. Pratt could go down in history as the first space pirate.

Some GMs will complain of the lack of maps. You can draw yourselves some if you wish. The *Sprawl Sites* book will have adequate offices and warehouses for this adventure. Most of the encounters are made to be role-played through, not dice & paper stuff. Thinking and planning, being wise and clever, is the essence of good game-mastering. GMs of younger players might have some rebellion if there isn't enough combat. Combat encounters can be introduced in several places, notably the warehouse and the lunar orbital (though combat in space is going to be unarmed or hand weapons that can't cut through the thin skin of a spacecraft!) and the GSM AE. You know your players and what they like. Customize the adventure for their desires as needed. Innovate. Help your players build the story of the discovery and quashing of the first attempt at space piracy.

And don't be too surprised if the players decide to confront the pirate crew and demand to be allowed to join them! What next? After raiding a few shuttles, let an interstellar vessel enter the solar system and have the pirate save the world. Or go down in flames trying...

