



The Color of Terror



COLOR OF TERROR

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HOW THINGS STAND

The remnants of humanity, regardless of former standing, now all share the same title: refugee. The brutal truth is the Cylons won and humanity lost the Second Cylon War. The military and the civilian government leadership struggles daily with preserving what remains of what was once the Twelve Colonies. One other truth about the Cylon attack was that it was indiscriminate in who survived and who did not. That some of humanity's finest escaped the fall of the Colonies is unquestioned. It is, however, also unquestioned that the indiscriminate winnowing process provided by the Cylons allowed some of the dregs of humanity to survive as well...

GAME MASTER'S NOTES

Presented as part of a Fleet setting, the Color of Terror is a full length adventure in three acts. Act one consists of "A Work of Art" and "A Little Help?" The second act proceeds to "Down in the Weeds" and "Lost in the Woods," before concluding in act three with "On the Trail" and "Resolution." While designed for Novice level characters in mind this scenario can be used by characters of other experience levels as long as the GM adjusts the task difficulties and encounters accordingly.

A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

During what had been a maintenance worker's normal shift, he discovers a horror. He finds a woman brutally murdered, but as terrible as the loss of another human life after the Cylon

Cataclysm is, it was what was done to the body afterwards that is the true horror that alerts the Colonial Marines that they have a serial killer on their hands. The body was carefully posed in such a way as to appear to be observing a macabre work of art painted on the bulkhead using the victim's own blood as a medium. The need to protect every possible human life now that each is so precious adds even more urgency to the necessity to prevent more killings. However, the most driving factor in the case is the need to solve the murder before word of a serial killer leaks out and due to the inability to escape the close confines of the ships of the Fleet causes mass panic among the survivors.

ACT 1

SCENE 1: A WORK OF ART

The scene opens with a wide view of the Fleet moving past a fixed point in space at sub-light speed. Several ships flow past until the view focuses on a single ship, obviously a freighter, but otherwise nondescript. The view shifts to the interior of the freighter. Read aloud:

A man in maintenance coveralls moves down a series of corridors. The dim lighting and large pipe fittings visible everywhere, make it abundantly clear that this is a very remote part of the ship. The steady stream of invectives he is emitting also makes it clear that he's not happy to be where he is.

"Frak, frak, frak, frak, frak! Just my luck the frakking secondary FTL

inducer coil relief valve has to fail on my frakking watch! I'll be down here for hours in the crappiest part of this crappy ship. I did not need to start my frakking day like this!"

The man reaches his destination and opens the hatch. He all but leaps back at what he sees and emits a startled scream; dropping his tool kit, he races wildly back up the corridor screaming nearly continuously as he flees.

The characters are summoned to their ready room with a terse: "Report immediately." On arrival their officer in charge (OIC) Lieutenant Terry Burrell looks flushed and is clearly agitated. When he speaks, it's without preamble and without his customary friendliness.

"First, you are to repeat what you are about to be told to no one and you are to report only to me. Is this understood?" On receiving an affirmative answer, Burrell continues.

"There has been a murder on the freighter *Cassiopeia*, but not just, if you can use this term, a regular murder. This thing looks like the makings of what could well turn out to be a serial killer. I need you to get down to the flight deck, there is a shuttle spooling up as we speak, get over to the *Cassiopeia* and see what you can figure out from that gods awful mess, any questions?"

If the PCs ask any questions, Burrell is very short on answers as he has only got the initial report to work with. A woman in her early 30s found dead in a remote part of the ship's engineering section. The *Cassiopeia* is a bulk freighter largely converted into a quasi-passenger ship, but the conditions are anything but luxurious. In fact, the nearly five hundred refugees are living in accommodations that would be substandard for a crowded troop ship.

The PCs can draw standard equipment from the quartermaster, but any special gear will have to be signed off on by Burrell. However, the orders they have just been given make it clear that they do not have much time for side trips. On reaching the *Galactica's* flight deck, the PCs pile onto the waiting shuttle and immediately launch for the short trip the *Cassiopeia*. Captain Jacob Gellen meets the PCs at the freighter's airlock. Read aloud:

"Thank you for coming so quickly. I'm just amazed that something like this could happen. On my ship no less! It has to be one of those frakking refugees. No way could one of my crew even dream of such a thing. Gods what a sight, but you'll see what I mean soon enough. I'll escort you to secondary engineering myself."

The marines are welcome to ask Gellen questions, but he doesn't know very much beyond having seen the murder site and

keeping up a steady conversation on how none of his crew could possibly be responsible for such a thing. If any PC can make an AVERAGE (7) *Alertness + Perception / Empathy* roll, they will see that Gallen is completely convinced in the innocence of his crew in any part of the murder.

The trip takes several minutes and give the PCs a clear indication of just how remote this part of the freighter this compartment is located. Burrell even comments that "if it hadn't been for the FTL inducer coil relief valve failing, the body could have been down here for weeks before someone found it." Thus in the captain's mind his crew has already done their duty in this deplorable matter. On reaching secondary engineering, the captain steps back to allow the marines first look. Read aloud:

On looking through the hatch, the first impression, despite the dim lighting, is the abundance of the color red. As things come into focus, the scene is one of complete horror. A woman's pale body has been propped up against the bulkhead of the small compartment in a reclining pose as if viewing the work of art that has been painted on the opposite bulkhead. If not for the repulsiveness of the medium used to make the image, the painting itself would be a stunning recreation by the master of his era, the revered Fellis Mantos, of the Firefalls of Canceron lost on Caprica in the Colonial Museum of Fine Art.

However, the fact that the painting has been rendered in the blood of the murdered woman twists the renowned masterpiece into some macabre thing that causes both the mind and body to shudder in revulsion.

Gathering clues from the crime scene will use several skills. The initial impression of the scene is an AVERAGE (7) *Alertness + Perception* roll to realize that this crime is clearly not the work of a typical murderer and Gallen was right to call for a more in depth investigation. A more detailed sweep of the compartment is a Complex Action (55) of *Intelligence + Perception / Investigation* with each roll taking ten minutes. After gathering the details of the scene, the PCs must succeed in a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Medical Expertise / Forensics* roll to establish time of death. If none of the PCs have the necessary medical experience, the data will have to be sent to *Galactica* for Doctor Cottle to examine and report back, which causes a delay of three hours.

Regardless who examines the forensic data, the results are the same. The woman has been dead for no more than six hours and was strangled with a synthetic cord, dying less than an hour before being placed where she was found. She had no defensive wounds or bruising. The killer was extremely efficient in the use of her blood, making only minimal post-mortem incisions over major arteries to obtain the victim's blood. None of the tools used to create the artwork were

found in the compartment and the killer left no fingerprints, hair, skin, or fibers behind. Whoever was responsible for the killing was meticulous in cleaning up after them self

Finally, a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Medical Expertise / Psychology* roll will realize that the positioning of the body was deliberately placed in such a way as to appear as if the victim was meant to enjoy the artwork, indicating that in addition to being a skilled artist, that the killer wanted the painting to be appreciated.

Once the data from the crime scene is gathered, the body can be moved and sent to *Galactica* for a more in depth autopsy and toxicology report. An AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Perception / Deduction* roll will know that the body should be kept hidden. The best way to accomplish the move is an AVERAGE (7) roll of *Intelligence + Knowledge* and uses a fake "emergency" to seal the airtight doors between secondary engineering and the airlock where the shuttle is waiting. This keeps the body completely out of sight. Failing the above rolls, results in moving the body in plain sight and word of the murder becomes common knowledge in the Fleet within hours. Once the body is on the shuttle, go to the next scene.

ACT 1

SCENE 2: A LITTLE HELP?

The characters have a wide variety of choices as to how to proceed, but the most likely options are interrogating the

passengers and crew of the *Cassiopeia* or returning to *Galactica* to process the evidence they have already collected.

If the PCs choose interrogation, they have the authority to question anyone that was onboard during the timeframe of the murder. However, with the crew of the *Cassiopeia* numbering three hundred and the ship modified to carry close to five hundred passengers, the task is Herculean at best, impossible at worst. The interview process is a HEROIC (95) Complex Action of *Intelligence + Influence / Interrogation or Willpower + Discipline / Interrogation* with each roll taking twelve hours. The massive list of suspects and the task difficulty can be reduced to a FORMIDABLE (75) by a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Computer Operations or Hacking* roll to scrub the ship's personnel manifest versus who was aboard at the time of death of the victim. Regardless of difficulty, the task will take several days to complete.

Processing the body of the victim with a full autopsy yields little beyond the cause of death and timeline of the murder, but the toxicological report does yield something useful, the victim had Rohygnos, a banned soporific known in the Colonies as a 'date rape' drug in her system. The drug is known for causing a rapid loss of unconsciousness with amnesia for the event. While fairly easy to manufacture, the limited manufacturing capabilities of the Fleet means the killer's supply almost certainly came from a pre-Attack supply as no Rohygnos has been

produced by *Galactica's* medical lab. Making discrete inquiries into the Fleet's shadowy black market will require a HARD (11) *Willpower + Covert / Streetwise* roll to learn that there hasn't been enough demand for anyone to have tried to set up a illegal lab to produce this particular drug.

If the characters did not conduct interviews, the trail goes cold at this point. If they did start the process, they are on day three of the task, when they get an urgent call from Lieutenant Burrell who reports another body has been found, this time on the *Cloud Nine*.

“We got us a major cluster frak out there and if you don't put a clamp on the situation, we're going to have complete panic in the Fleet. There is no question that this is our guy as this time the victim was found in the pool storage locker. I won't go into what the tourists were doing there, but the point is, the locker is in a much more accessible place. Our two horn dogs ran screaming from their intended love nest screaming like a pair of stuck sows. Damn our luck, if the woman didn't know enough about art to identify the piece as 'a disgusting re-creation of Apollo Triumphant done in the victim's blood'. She also pointed out that, our victim, male this time, was found deliberately posed as if viewing the painting. The news agencies have already gotten a hold of the story and its being broadcast live throughout

the Fleet. I need you to drop what you're doing and get your butts to the crime scene immediately.”

After acknowledging Burrell's orders and while en route to their shuttle, an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Art* roll will know remember that the original masterpiece was in the Museum of Fine Art on Gemenon and is also by Mantos. When the PCs reach the shuttle, it is clear that Burrell called ahead as the crew is waiting with the shuttle fully ready to depart. It is only a short flight to the *Cloud Nine*, but when the marines disembark, they are met with a scene that can only be described as distilled chaos. There is a mob of scared visitors to the ship clamoring to board the shuttle as well as several reporters hollering out pointed questions that the PCs do not have answers to yet. An AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Discipline / Morale* roll to realize that if they do not take some sort of urgent action that there is almost certainly going to be a stampede of terrified civilians trying to reach the shuttle. An immediate AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Influence / Persuasion* roll will calm the passengers enough to restore order and get the crowd to disburse peacefully.

Dealing with the reporters who have whipped themselves into a shark-like feeding frenzy, requires a different tack. The marines can either choose to dazzle them with brilliance or attempt to baffle them with baloney. Dazzling the jaded and savvy reporters is an AVERAGE (7))

roll of *Intelligence + Influence / Conversation*. Successfully baffling the reporters is even more difficult and requires a HARD (11) roll of *Willpower + Performance / Acting*.

Failing to quell the crowd results in a rush for the shuttle that can only be stopped with a HARD (11) *Willpower + Discipline / Intimidation* roll with a prominent display of weapons giving a two step bonus to skill, but makes the evening news feeds and results in an epic butt chewing by Lieutenant Burrell in addition to a two plot point penalty at the end of Act One.

Being unable to placate the reporters has the consequence of causing the PCs to not only being shadowed everywhere they go, but imposes a one step penalty to all Influence skill rolls with the reporters for the rest of the adventure.

Reaching the crime scene which has been cordoned off by *Cloud Nine's* security, the marines are struck by a grim sense of déjà vu with the only differences being the fact that the victim is male and that the artwork is not the same. Otherwise the victim's pose is identical and the only color apparent in the dim lighting of the locker is the red of the victim's blood, rapidly darkening due to oxidation.

Examining the body with an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Medical Expertise / Forensics* or a HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception / Investigation* will discover that the victim must have fought back as there are traces of skin under the victim's finger nails. As this is a major breakthrough, the body has got to be taken to *Galactica* for a formal autopsy

immediately. Since the fact that a serial killer has already leaked, moving the body is just a formality. As the crew of the *Cloud Nine* bring in a suitable cart to transport the victim, the marines have a few minutes to look around at the scene. A HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception* or an AVERAGE (7) *Alertness + Knowledge / Art* will notice that the artwork is rendered much better than the first one, almost as if the murderer was more focused on getting to the painting than the murder and, in turn, became sloppy with cleaning up the crime scene.

Rushing the body back to their ship is without incident, aside from onlookers, unless the PCs failed to placate the reporters earlier. The PCs have one more chance to mollify the media using the same skills as before, either an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Influence / Conversation* or a . HARD (11) *Willpower + Performance / Acting* roll, but with a one step penalty to their skills due to the media being hostile. If the PCs fail again, they will be pilloried in the press and will suffer a one step penalty to all Social skills for the rest of the adventure.

Once back on *Galactica*, if there is a PC capable of performing the autopsy, this is a HARD (55) Complex Action of *Intelligence + Medical Expertise / Forensics* with each roll taking fifteen minutes. If not, Dr. Cottle will complete the autopsy in an hour and a half. When the threshold is reached, the DNA recovered from under the victim's nails traces back to a David Dineen, a crewman on the *Cassiopeia*. If the PCs think to

check on Dineen's movements, it takes an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Computer Operation or Hacking roll* to discover that Dineen, recently traveled between *Cassiopeia* and *Cloud Nine* as part of his duties as the freighter's assistant purser.

It would be a good idea to give Lieutenant Burrell an update on this breakthrough, which the GM can have the PCs remember with an EASY (3) Recall roll (*Intelligence + Willpower*), before rushing over to the *Cassiopeia*. If the PCs call ahead, they are met by Captain Gellen, who becomes furious when told that Dineen is a suspect as he has known him for six years and knows Dineen well enough that he is not a murderer and doesn't know anything about art. If the marines just arrive unannounced, but the time they finish docking, Gellen is there and he is already livid by the breach of protocol, but repeats the same information as above. Either way, Gellen takes the PCs directly to where Dineen is doubling as part of a work crew in engineering. As soon as Dineen sees the marines, he flees forcing the PCs into a pursuit. The PCs must make an Opposed Roll of *Agility + Athletics / Running* skill against Dineen. If one or more PCs win the Opposed Rolls, they may get hold of him by making an *Agility + Unarmed Combat / Appropriate Specialty* roll. Dineen tries to block these unarmed attacks. Once the PCs have a hold, Dineen must succeed at an *Agility + Strength* action against the PCs in order to break free. The PCs, however, may assist one another directly, rolling as

usual and combining their totals. It is a full-turn action to restrain Dineen.

However, as soon as he realizes he is about to be captured, Dineen reaches out and electrocutes himself by grabbing the exposed circuit breaker he was working on.

If the PCs lose the Opposed Rolls or if, contrary to expectations, Dineen breaks free after having been subdued, he tries to run away and more opposed *Agility + Athletics / Running* skill rolls are made. Every failed roll means that the distance between Dineen and the PCs grows. For every turn after the first, Dineen is at +1 Skill step. He loses a PC if his roll is Extraordinarily Successful (i.e., if his result is seven or more points higher than the PC's). Dineen will not escape until he has lost all the PCs.

The chase through the poorly lit maintenance corridors of the *Cassiopeia* is a mad steeplechase. Dodging wildly in pursuit, each one of the marines has to content with close calls with either nearly cracking their skull on a low hanging pipe or barely leaping over some conduit to avoid being spilled end over end. Dineen knows the ship far better than they do, but the marines are in better physical condition and eventually, the fleeing man comes to the end of the line. In his panic he makes a wrong turn and is trapped. Dineen wheels about brandishing a heavy pipe wrench. Their quarry growls like

some sort of animal and attacks savagely with the wrench.

If the PCs shoot Dineen he falls back and is electrocuted by a power line. This is a plot point in the adventure that the suspect be critically injured, thus regardless of PC action, Dineen will either die or be in a coma due to PC or self inflicted injury.

If Dineen is still alive, the PCs will be ordered to evacuate him to the *Galactica* for immediate treatment. If he is dead, they are ordered to return to the Bucket immediately. As soon as their shuttle undocks from the *Cassiopeia*, go to the next scene.

The GM should award up to four Plot Points, less any for penalties assessed and modified by good or bad role playing.

ACT 2

SCENE 1: DOWN IN THE WEEDS

Based on events from the previous scene, the PCs either have a corpse or a coma victim on their hands. An autopsy or a full evidence check will find the same thing. In addition to whatever wounds that were sustained in subduing him, Dineen will have a set of scratches on his left arm that are consistent with the male victim's nails.

Returning to the *Cassiopeia* the PCs can either finish the interviews of the passengers and crew or to talk specifically to the captain. Use the previous rules for interviewing the rest of the freighter's inhabitants. Talking to the captain turns

into an interrogation as he clams up and refuses to speak. It that's a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Discipline / Interrogation* to get him to reveal that he knew that Dineen was skimming ship's stores, but the captain still insists that his purser is not a murderer and knows jack about art. Searching Dineen's quarters finds a few valuables and with a HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception* roll will find a second set of books that show his skimming but not to whom the goods were delivered; the entries only consist of coded entries like "Q", "Dagget", "Rock" and Etc.

Tracking Dineen's movements does verify that he was on both ships at the right times, but an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Perception / Investigation* roll will fail to find anyone that saw Dineen with either victim.

Rechecking the two crime scenes in a HARD (11) *Alertness + Covert / Appropriate Specialty* at the first scene and an AVERAGE (7) task at the second, realizes that, even with a drugged victim, Dineen couldn't have acted alone. An AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Perception / Deduction* will deduce that the rapid acting Rohynos would have left the victims unconscious far too quickly for the diminutive Dineen to have moved the bodies into where they were discovered on his own.

At this point, the smart thing to do would be to report their findings to Lieutenant Burrell that based off of the circumstantial evidence gathered, their prime suspect is looking like he either isn't the killer or had help. Burrell is not happy that the marines

have cast a shadow on his open and shut case causing him to grumble that it's time to talk to "the Boss". If the PCs can make an AVERAGE (7) Recall roll (*Intelligence + Willpower*) they will remember what the *Cassiopeia's* captain said about Dineen not knowing anything about art with the evidence they have to this point in time to stay Burrell's hand as he reaches for the hand set to call the bridge. There is one more piece of evidence they haven't really looked at closely and need to do so before they make that call: the art. If no one makes the Recall roll, then Burrell calls Commander Adama and is told to "Check out the art." Having to rely on Adama for this clue will cost the PCs one Plot Point at the end of the Act.

Taking a shuttle over to either the *Cassiopeia* or the *Cloud Nine*, the PCs return to the crime scene to take a closer look at the macabre rendering of a renowned Colonial masterpiece. There is no difference in the plot of this adventure based on which of the crime scenes the marines go to first. The first scene on the *Cassiopeia* is no longer as vivid as it was when it was first found due to the natural process of oxidation turning the blood brown, but the image is still just as clear and still just as striking as when the PCs first saw the painting.

A close examination of the re-creation of the Firefalls of Canceron will require either a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Art*, a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Artistry / Painting*, or a FORMIDABLE (15) *Alertness + Perception / Deduction* roll to reveal that the work was done with a minimum

of wavering, meaning the work was painted so smoothly that it is unlikely that a photo of the original was used. Instead, the killer, it seems, would have had to have painted from memory to achieve the crispness of the brush strokes used. This implies two things about the killer, one, they have an intimate grasp of the mechanics of painting and this is obviously not their first attempt at painting, and two, the killer has got to have some form of eidetic memory to be able to recreate such fine detail without hesitation.

Examining the Apollo Triumphant rendering uses the same AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Art*, AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Artistry / Painting*, or HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception / Deduction* skill tests, but due to the blood being fresher the difficulty of the task is one step easier and a successful roll shows the same precision and information as with the first piece. A second roll of HARD (11) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Art*, a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Artistry / Painting*, or a FORMIDABLE (15) *Alertness + Perception / Deduction* roll however, will reveal an important clue.

GM's note: As it is unlikely the PCs have an art expert in their ranks, an alternate to none of the PCs being able to make the admittedly high task difficulty rolls is to allow the PCs to use Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Computer Use or Hacking and reducing all associated difficulties by one step. Having to resort to this back up plan will cost the PCs two

Plot Points from those awarded at the end of Act Two.

The original Apollo Triumphant was created on Mantos' home world of Picon and was held on that world in the capitol's Contemporary Art Museum for more than two hundred years before a deranged man attacked the painting with acid causing severe damage some thirty-five years ago. The painting was moved to Gemenon for an emergency restoration at the Museum of Fine Art there. Most of the painting was saved, but a portion of the lower left corner could not be restored. Rather than have such a critical work be locked away, the Picon museum traded the painting to the museum on Gemenon and displayed there until the Cylon Attack. The re-creation clearly shows the lost portion of the painting in the same detail as the rest of the painting. While photos of the undamaged work are available, the meticulous fine detail of the re-creation is executed with the same precision as the rest of the original and is unlikely to have been done from a photo. The implication from this detail is that the killer is old enough to have seen the undamaged original work making the killer a person at least in their forties. It is a trivial matter not requiring a skill test to make a quick check of Dineen's record by contacting the *Cassiopeia* to find that he is only twenty-eight all but certainly exonerating their prime suspect. Frustrated in the extreme, the demoralized marines are desperate for any sort of lead to prevent their

investigation from coming to a standstill. Out of leads, the case has seemingly run its course. How the PCs will proceed from this impasse will depend on whether they managed to placate the media or not. If they did manage to mollify the reporters, the PCs will get an anonymous message to meet at the crime scene on the *Cassiopeia* in two hours. If they didn't make peace with the media, the PCs are called in to face a furious Lieutenant Burrell, who in turn vents his own recent dressing down received directly from Colonel Tigh. After an epic butt chewing, Burrell orders the marines to report to the crime scene on the *Cassiopeia* immediately and report to a 'concerned citizen that has some information concerning the case.' Having to be spoon fed this lead results in a penalty of two Plot Points from those awarded at the end of Act Two. As soon as they board the shuttle for the freighter, go to the next scene.

ACT 2

SCENE 2: LOST IN THE WOODS

Arriving on the *Cassiopeia* the PCs are either responding to a lead they developed and are in good spirits or a lead that was handed to them and they are probably feeling fairly down on themselves at the moment. Regardless of their situation, when they reach the still quarantined crime scene they find a thin young man in his mid-20s, sporting a goatee and an intensity that is almost unsettling, leaning against the bulkhead and writing in a small notebook.

How the man greets the marines is again based on whether they pacified the media or not. If the PCs did placate the press, the man nods as they approach, puts away his notebook, straightens up, and speaks in a clipped professional manner. Read aloud:

“I’m Norris Bion, Fleet News Service. You’d think with having our collective butts handed to us by the toasters, humanity would be too preoccupied to have time for a serial murderer. I think I’ve got a lead that can help you, but in exchange for what I’ve got, I need an exclusive from you. Have we got a deal?”

If the PCs did not placate the media, then Bion’s demeanor is substantially more hostile:

“Norris Bion, Fleet News Service. Looks like you grunts aren’t as slick as you think you are. Here’s the deal, I’ve got a lead and the price for my help is an exclusive. So do we have a deal or do I walk?”

Not having any options at this point, the PCs should probably agree to either path that Bion offers them. Bion then explains that the first part of his exclusive means he gets to see the first crime scene and take pictures. He pauses in awe at the Firefalls of Canceron despite it having lost much of its original impact now that the blood has turned brown to oxidation. Bion takes some notes and a single still photo

of the lurid artwork before turning to speak to the marines. Read aloud:

“Okay, here’s what I have. I used to cover the Metro beat back on Caprica and I’m very familiar with the art scene, artists, and the works Fellis Mantos in particular. I believe the killer has to be part of the recent Mantos revival that was big on Caprica before the attack. I did a story on the Mantos movement and that is a short list of suspects. I was able to call in a favor and got a look at the list of survivors on the *Cassiopeia*. There is a survivor that was a real mover and shaker in the movement aboard. You let me in on the arrest and I’ll give you his name.”

The PCs are again without leverage at this point and will probably agree, but if they get their back up and start trying to quote Colonial regulations, Bion will merely smirk in amusement until the PCs are through. Quoting relevant regulations is an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Fleet Regulations* roll, but Bion smugly replies that he is a civilian and an EASY (3) roll of the same skills knows that the marines do not have legal grounds to interrogate him.

Bion’s attitude is infuriating and any PC with Anger Issues will have to make an AVERAGE (7) *Willpower + Discipline* roll not to lunge at him. If other PCs choose to stop this attack, they can do so with an Opposed Roll of *Agility + Unarmed Combat* roll. Otherwise, Bion attempts to

defend himself and is actually not a bad fighter, but he is obviously not a match for a fully trained marine.

The result of an attack on Bion is a scathing commentary on the military in his report that causes the marines to suffer a one step penalty in all Social skills for the rest of the adventure and the several weeks of extra duty that Lieutenant Burrell piles on the marine that attacks Bion. And worst of all, Burrell forces the marine to have to apologize to Bion before they are allowed to proceed with the investigation.

Once the PCs have agreed to Bion's insistence on an exclusive, he reveals the Nouveau Mantos artist is one Cullin Aetos. Hustling down to the makeshift cabin listed as his quarters finds the man in his late thirties during his off shift from the *Cassiopeia's* galley and sketching in a large notebook. Aetos is a surprisingly robust, for an artist with a shock of red hair. He looks up in surprise at the marines and offers no resistance to any orders. The PCs can interrogate Aetos on the freighter or aboard the *Galactica*. Either way, the interrogation is an *Opposed Roll of Intelligence + Discipline / Interrogation or Intelligence + Influence / Interrogation versus Aetos' Willpower + Discipline / Mental Resistance*. Aetos is adamant of his innocence and repeatedly demands an advocate as is his right under Colonial law. Assuming the PCs allow Aetos to have an advocate, he immediately refuses to make any further statements and the advocate demands a proper trial or tribunal.

As the PCs question Aetos, Bion is making his first report to the Fleet News Service uplink and immediately claims credit for most of the work in bringing this suspect into custody and, if anyone attacked him, spewing a venomous assault on the competency of the marines and how they nearly botched the investigation. Part of Bion's report mentions the deviant nature of the killer and how the attacks are an insult to humanity who must now put aside any animosity in order to recover from the devastating setback of the Cylon attack. (If he was attacked, Bion adds the comment: "Another of the military's failings, allowing themselves to be caught by surprise and not defending the Colonies as they swore to do in the first place.

The PCs should report back to Lieutenant Burrell of the apprehension of a suspect that has asked for an advocate, who, in turn, has asked for a trial. As this is outside of the marine's control, the PCs have a chance to return to their barracks and get a proper meal for a change. Getting the tribunal set up will take a couple days as the civilian side of the Fleet has to locate and convene qualified members for the tribunal.

During the run up to the trial, Bion continues to deliver stinging commentary regarding the nature of the crime, the incompetence of the military, and the lack of progress by the civilians in getting the trial started.

The marines are assigned to search Cullin Aetos' quarters for evidence. Like all survivors, Aetos has a bare minimum of

personal belongings. A HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception / Search* will find a loose access panel. Inside they locate a set of paint brushes, obviously tinged with blood that matches the DNA of both victims, stills of both of the Mantos masterpieces depicted in at the two scenes, and stains on Aetos' clothes (hydraulic fluid from the first scene and cleaning solvent from the second). The scene ends with the convening of the tribunal. The GM should now award 4-6 plot points less any lost due their actions or poor role playing.

ACT 3

SCENE 1: ON THE TRAIL

The marines start the scene in a waiting room as they are on stand by as witnesses for the prosecution. As they wait, an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Perception / Deduction* roll will come to the conclusion that there is something wrong. The immaculate crime scenes do not jive with the evidence found. True, the items match the scenes, but they are too obvious. One thing that was clearest about the killer was that he or she was meticulous in purging the crime scenes of evidence. For Aetos to be so foolish to leave such solid evidence in his own cabin and so easy to find, just doesn't fit the profile of the painstaking care displayed at the crime scenes. As the PCs follow their train of thought, they are stunned to realize that they have been played for fools, Aetos has almost certainly been framed and the PCs are accessories in the frame up!

The marines have two options to try and delay the tribunal. First, if they try to formally delay the proceedings, they can request a continuance. This is a HARD (11) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Law* or a FORMIDABLE (15) *Willpower + Influence / Negotiations* roll to gain a delay of forty-eight hours. Second, if the PCs do not wish to disrupt the tribunal formally, they can take turns slipping out of the waiting room with an AVERAGE (7) *Agility + Covert / Stealth* roll in order to conduct clandestine investigations.

Talking their way aboard a shuttle to go to the *Cloud Nine* or the *Cassiopeia* is a HARD (11) *Willpower + Influence / Persuasion* roll. If they choose the freighter, the PC(s) is only working off of a hunch. In order to come up with a viable plan, the PC(s) will have to succeed in an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Perception / Deduction* roll to think of looking at the passenger and crew list of the ship. A HARD (11) *Intelligence + Technical Engineering / Computer Operations* or *Hacking* roll will run the estimated age of the killer against the manifest yields sixty names. Rolling an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Perception* will spot Harold Philon on the list, which for some reason sticks in the PC(s) memory. Cross checking the *Cassiopeia's* manifest with the *Galactica's* database reveals that Philon is a wealthy businessman renowned throughout the Twelve Colonies for being a patron of the arts.

If the PC(s) go to the *Cloud Nine*, is a more complicated process to find any

information. Since the liner is a focal point meeting place for the Fleet, gaining information is a HARD (11) *Intelligence / Influence / Streetwise* roll to make contact with the ex-patriot art community. An AVERAGE (7) *Willpower + Influence / Persuasion* roll will locate a member of that world that is willing to talk. Finally, it requires a successful AVERAGE (7) *Willpower + Discipline / Interrogation or Intimidation* roll will discover that Harold Philon, was a wealthy businessman and renowned throughout the art community of the Twelve Colonies for being a patron of the arts, is a survivor on board the *Cassiopeia* and more importantly, he was also known for being outraged by the Neo-Mantos movement. Whether Philon is involved or not is unknown, but he certainly warrants questioning by the marines to see if he has any alibis during the time of the two murders.

Now that they have a likely suspect, the PCs have to make an EASY (3) *Intelligence + Knowledge* roll to realize that they have to contact Lieutenant Burrell with what they have found especially if they are operating on their own. If they are, Burrell is beyond furious at them for casting doubt on a second suspect. He rails at them and orders them back to the *Galactica*. The only way to calm the lieutenant is with quoting the correct regulation, which is an AVERAGE (7) *Intelligence + Knowledge / Law* roll. This checks Burrell's rampage and forces him to respond with a curt "Stand by." A few minutes later, a livid Burrell says the

trial is on hold in order to bring Philon in for questioning.

As soon as the marines have permission, they either board a shuttle to take them to the *Cassiopeia* if they tracked down Philon via the *Cloud Nine* art community, or they will simply head for to where he is billeted if they tracked him down by going to the freighter.

On arrival on the freighter or as soon as they move to head to detain Philon, the PCs are confronted by Captain Jacob Gellen. He is furious beyond words that a second person on his ship has been accused by the marines and he demands proof before he will allow the PCs to proceed. Gellen is so mad that he is backed by a number of security officers equal to the marines and will not back down. Getting the enraged freighter captain to stand down is a HARD (11) roll of *Willpower + Influence or Discipline*. If the roll succeeds, Gellen's eyes glitter with anger as he growls.

"You damned military are always trying to lord over us civilians and you're the sorry frakkers that allowed the Cylons to almost wipe us out. Now you act like we owe you something, this is the last time you will storm onto my ship and demand to take either a member of my crew or even one of those gods damned passengers. Stokes, lead them to where they want to go!"

Stokes is the freighter's navigator and he leads the marines to Philon's assigned quarters.

If the roll fails, Gellen snarls:

"You damned military are always trying to lord over us civilians and I'm not going to take it any more. You frakkers are the ones that frakked up and allowed the Cylons to almost wipe us out and now you think we owe you something. Well, it stops here!"

Gellen may be out of control, but his security officers will not use deadly force on the marines unless they are attacked with them first. The fight will last until either half of the security officers or if Gellen is subdued. This last option, if by some chance the PCs are somehow managing to lose the fight, becoming obvious with an AVERAGE (7) *Alertness* + *Perception* roll that reveals that the security officers are not being aggressive in the fight and are clearly following Gellen's lead halfheartedly at best. The PCs are welcome to press charges on the crew of the *Cassiopeia* if they want, but for now, the priority is getting to Harold Philon. Once the PCs are on their way, go to the final scene.

ACT 3

SCENE 2: RESOLUTION

The PCs will either have the *Cassiopeia*'s navigator as a guide or are on their own based on the events of the last scene. Regardless, the trip through the

converted freight turns out to be a surprisingly long one to reach Philon's assigned quarters. Read aloud:

While clearly not a bottom of the barrel ship, the marines note as they make their way through the many corridors that the *Cassiopeia* has obviously suffered from her hasty conversion and the effect of having far more passengers embarked than she was ever meant to carry. They frequently spot open access panels and encounter numerous maintenance crews at work. If they have an escort, they follow Stokes' convoluted path through several noticeably altered sections of the ship that the navigator tersely explains as 'modifications for the bloody 'fugees'. If they are on their own, the trip results in the marines having to stop a couple times to backtrack when they reach dead ends caused by the modifications.

Whether the trip was easy or difficult, the PCs reach the common area that leads to the makeshift claustrophobically small cubical that Philon is listed as being assigned. As the marines enter the improvised 'lounge', a stocky, gray haired man leaps to his feet and grabs a fellow passenger as soon he sees the PCs. Before the marines can react, Philon savagely slashes the male hostage's neck causing an arterial spray of blood to fountain across the compartment, pushes

the gasping man towards the PCs, and bolts out of the room.

The marines, despite their training, are dumbfounded by the wanton violence and have to succeed in an AVERAGE (7) *Willpower + Discipline* in order to be able to react on the next round. A failure shocks the PC enough that they can not move for 1d2+1 Combat Turns, while a Botch stuns the character so badly that they are rooted in place until they can succeed in a HARD (11) *Willpower + Discipline* check. In addition, the wounded passenger is in critical need of first aid or they will die from rapid blood loss. The GM should play up the confusion of the other screaming passengers, the desperate look of wounded man, unable to speak due to his injuries, nonetheless imploring the marines to help him with his eyes. In order to save the wounded man, at least one PC will have to stay with him and roll a HARD (55) Complex Action of *Intelligence + Medical Expertise* with each roll taking one Combat Turn. The PC has 30 seconds (ten Combat Turns) to stop the bleeding or the passenger dies from massive blood loss.

The PCs that choose to follow Philon, catch a glimpse of him as he darts down a long corridor. As they pursue, he reaches a T-intersection, a HARD (11) *Alertness + Perception* roll spots him as he pivots and throws something onto the deck. If the object was spotted, then the PC can react by rolling *Agility + Alertness* against an AVERAGE (7) difficulty to avoid the object. The device turns out to be the equivalent of a home made flash bomb

that does 2d6S damage and floods the corridor with dense black smoke for five Combat Turns. If a PC made the reaction roll, they managed to dodge away at the last instant, only taking 1d6S. However, the thick smoke obscures which direction Philon fled.

If the PCs immediately pursue, blindly into the smoke they have a fifty-fifty chance of choosing the left corridor and only lose 1d2+1 Combat Turns plus as many as they hesitated before entering the smoke. If they go to the right, they will lose an additional 1d4+1 Combat Turns before they realize they made the wrong choice and retraces their steps to return to the pursuit.

Philon's tricks have gained him enough time to cross an airtight door and jam the wheel with the first object that he could find, which happened to be a piece of conduit. Fortunately for the marines, the conduit is not very strong, but it will take an AVERAGE (35) Complex Action using *Strength + Athletics* to shake the obstruction loose, but only one PC can operate the mechanism at a time with each roll taking a Combat Turn. If the PCs take more than four Combat Turns to get the door open, they will just barely spot Philon as he enters a cross corridor that appears to be a dead end. If they take five or more turns, they find an empty corridor, but note that there is only one other hatch and that is a dead end. Regardless of whether they saw Philon enter the side passage or not, the PCs smile to each other with confidence now that they have their quarry trapped, an

EASY (3) *Alertness + Perception* roll spots the warning above the hatch that states that the passage leads to a bank of escape pods. The escape pod access way is not locked, but before PCs can figure which pod Philon is in, an alarm sounds that the entire bank of six pods has been activated! The PCs are forced to take cover or be severely burned by the launch. Each PC must make an AVERAGE (7) *Agility + Athletics / Dodge* roll to successfully clear the access way. Failing the roll means the character was caught by the fringe of the launch and suffers 3d6B damage. A Botch is much more deadly with the PC suffering 5d6W damage. If another PC is selfless enough to try, a HARD (11) *Strength + Athletics / Lifting* roll will reduce the damage to the PC that Botched to 2d6W, but the rescuer will sustain the same amount of damage, but will earn five Plot Points for such heroism.

Any uninjured PCs can board Raptors and assist with the EVA to recover the pods with an AVERAGE (7) *Agility + Survival / Zero-G* roll for each of the six pods. When the last of the escape pods are pulled back aboard the *Cassiopeia*, or taken aboard the *Galactica*, the PCs are shocked to find that Philon is not on any of them! An exhaustive search of the freighter fails to find any trace of the suspected murderer. Aetos is released from the brig of the *Galactica* when the tribunal rules that all charges are dropped. The Fleet waits for several days for word on Philon, but the ever pressing threat of the Cylons and the push to cover the upcoming

election soon drives word of the "Artful Dodger" from the Fleet News Service coverage.

The PCs are free to continue their investigation on their own time, but despite their frustration, they are called before Lieutenant Burrell expecting the worst. However, aside from any marine that attacked Bion, the PCs are commended for their actions in stopping Philon. Even a PC that was disciplined for assaulting the arrogant reporter gets to take some solace when Bion is censured by the Fleet News Service for his part in the false accusation brought against Aetos.

The PCs have earned 4-6 Plot Points and 2-4 Advancement Points for their service to the Fleet.

Cut to: A bedraggled man slides along a narrow shaft to a very small compartment, as the view shifts, the tiny space is stocked with Fleet emergency rations and other extremely meager possessions. As the view reveals a haggard and scarred Philon, he is mumbling to himself, his mind obviously gone. Read aloud: "Never find me here will they? They forgot about this compartment during the conversion and now, finally, peace at last." The shattered, once wealthy man then takes out a notebook and begins sketching...

THE END

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Lieutenant Burrell (Veteran)

Agi d8, **Str** d6, **Vit** d8, **Ale** d8, **Int** d8, **Wil** d10;

LP 18, **Init** d8+d8

Traits Cool Under Fire d4, Formidable Presence d4, Prejudice: Civilians d4, Straitlaced d4, Toes the Line d4, Tough d4

Skills Athletics d6, Covert d6, Discipline d6 / Leadership d8, Guns d6 / Rifles d8, Heavy Weapons d4, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Knowledge d4, Melee Weapon Combat d6, Perception d6, Survival d6, Unarmed Combat d6

Description A no nonsense officer that hates being a nursemaid for what he sees as a bunch of spoiled children more lucky than deserving of the precious second chance they've been given. However, duty is duty and he will stop at nothing to perform his duty, nor allow anyone under his command, to not do their duty.

Captain Jacob Gellen (Recruit)

Agi d6, **Str** d6, **Vit** d6, **Ale** d8, **Int** d8, **Wil** d8,

LP 14, **Init** d6+d8

Traits Contrarian d4, Mechanically Inclined d4

Skills Athletics d4, Discipline d4, Guns d4, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8 / Administration d8, Knowledge d4, Mechanical Engineering d6 / Mechanical Repairs d8, Perception d6, Pilot d6 / Astrogation d8, Survival d4, Technical Engineering d6, Unarmed Combat d4

Description A man at his wits end. A decent freighter captain, first seeing his beloved ship butchered into some sort of monstrosity, then being stuck with hundreds of noisy, complaining, undisciplined passengers that he never wanted has caused him to bitterly resent the job foisted upon him. He has begun to sincerely dislike the military for foisting it on him in particular.

Cassiopeia Security Officer (Recruit)

Agi d8, **Str** d6, **Vit** d8, **Ale** d8, **Int** d6 **Wil** d6,

LP 14, **Init** d8+d8

Traits Overconfident d4, Brawler d4

Skills Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Stealth d8, Discipline d6 / Intimidation d8 / Interrogation d8, Guns d6 / Pistols d8, Influence d6, Perception d6, Survival d6 / Zero-G d8, Unarmed Combat d6 / Brawling d10

Description Also overwhelmed by the task of keeping several hundred passengers in line, the security officers of the *Cassiopeia* just try to take it one day at a time.

David Dineen (Recruit)

Agi d6, **Str** d6, **Vit** d6, **Ale** d8, **Int** d8, **Wil** d8,

LP 14, **Init** d6+d8

Trait Friends in Strange Places: Black Market d4, Liar d4

Skills Athletics d6, Covert d6 / Disable Devices d8 / Open Locks d8 / Stealth d8, Discipline d4, Guns d6, Influence d6 / Barter d8 / Persuasion d10, Perception d6, Survival d6, Unarmed Combat d4

Description As purser on the *Cassiopeia*, he found the lure of easy access to certain luxuries that have become extremely scarce in the Fleet, Dineen decided that since the Cylon attack had created an opportunity for a small time operator like him to make a decent life for himself. It didn't take long before fudging on a few supply reports to degrade to outright theft.

Norris Bion (Recruit)

Agi d6, **Str** d6, **Vit** d6, **Ale** d8, **Int** d8, **Wil** d8

LP 14, **Init** d6+d8

Traits Brawler d6, Contrarian d6, Friends in Strange Places: Art Community d4, Glory Hound d4

Skills Artistry d6 / Writing d10, Athletics d6 / Dodge d8, Covert d6 / Open Locks d8 / Stealth d8, Discipline d6, Guns d4, Influence d6 / Persuasion d8, Perception d6, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed Combat d6

Description: An insufferable egotist, Bion is disliked by superiors and subordinates alike. The only reason he was able to keep a job was the undeniable fact that he always managed to not only get the story, but to almost always get it first.

Cullin Aetos (Recruit)

Agi D6, **Str** D6, **Vit** D6, **Ale** D8, **Int** D10, **Wil** D6

LP 12, **Init** D6+D8

Traits Coward D4, Talented: Painting and Sculpting D4

Skills Artistry D6 / Painting D12 / Sculpture D10, Athletics D4, Discipline D6 / Concentration D10, Influence D6 / Persuasion D8, Knowledge D6 / Art D10, Perception D6, Technical Engineering D6 / Computer Operation D8

Description One of the most famous of the tiny art community to survive the Cylon attack. He is an affable man completely dumbfounded to be accused of murder and is no more than a pawn in the real killer's plan to recreate the lost great works of art of the Twelve Colonies.

Harold Philon (Veteran)

Agi d8, **Str** d6, **Vit** d6, **Ale** d8, **Int** d10, **Wil** d10

LP 16, **Init** d8+d8

Traits Anger Issues d4, Hideout d6, Lady Luck d4, Photographic Memory d2, Sadistic d4, Unstable d4

Skills Artistry d6, Athletics d4, Covert d6 / Open Locks d8 / Stealth d8, Discipline d4, Influence d6, Knowledge d6 / Art d12, Melee Weapon Combat d6 / Knives d8, Perception d6, Survival d4, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed Combat d4

Description Harold Philon was a well known, wealthy businessman on Caprica renowned as a devoted patron of the arts. He was away on a business trip when the attack occurred and he lost his entire family, his business, his wealth, and his beloved art. The shock was too much and the otherwise tough, but fair CEO snapped. While enough of his sanity remains that he knows he can not do anything to recreate his lost family and wealth, he can recreate the lost works of art that he so dearly cherished. The elitist ex-millionaire figures that none of the rabble that survived the attack are worthy of the gift of life, they can however, provide on last service to humanity by supplying the medium for the recreation of the finest works of the Twelve Colonies.