



Terror's Lair

CREDITS

AUTHOR
Colin Dunn

EDITOR
Matthew Sprange

LAYOUT
Will Chapman

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS
Nuno Nobre

PLAYTESTERS
Andrew James Alan Welty, Rob Eaglestone, Don McKinney

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Sample file

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Terror's Lair

Terror's Lair is a solo adventure. This means it does not require a referee to run it. Instead, you are the adventurer, and the text performs the referee's task – with a little help from you. To play this adventure, you take on the persona of American Marshal Obadiah Thomas, a narcotics agent.

American Marshal Obadiah Thomas

Obadiah Thomas was born on Earth, in America - Jacksonville, Illinois, to be exact - in the year 2266, making him 34 years old at the present. A small but athletic man, Thomas served one term stint in the army, then became involved in police work immediately upon re-entering civilian life. He soon became a narcotics agent, his present occupation. After 12 years of police work, Thomas has now attained the rank of marshal.

Name	Str	Dex	End	Int	Edu	Soc
Obadiah	8	9	7	10	11	9

Home Gravity	Normal	Body Type	Normal
Core/Frontier	Core	—	—
Augmentations	Subdermataalk with Link, subdermataalk chip		
Age	34		
Careers	Army 1 term, Agent (law enforcement) 3 terms		
Skills	Gun Combat (rifle)/1, Gun Combat (pistol)/2, Psychology/1, Stealth/1, Streetwise/2, Drive (ground)/2, Admin/0, Computer/1		
Equipment	Suit, Casual Hancock 9-23 with safety rounds (24 rounds total), biocontacts, armoured vest, Link phone, badge, locksmith kit, 100kg Stik Kit,		
—	—	—	—
Traits:	Acute Sense (Hearing), Sense of Duty (Major), Ally		

Personality

Marshal Thomas is an honest, dedicated, experienced officer of the law. Beyond this, you can imagine his character to be as you like. He could be clever and over-energetic, dependable but disillusioned about human nature, no-nonsense spit and polish, or anything else you can think of. The important thing is to develop a personality that you can relate to before beginning play. This will help to provide you with direction in making decisions for Thomas during the adventure.



YOUR MISSION

Just under two years ago, American narcotics agents were closing in on a major AmeriCo drug smuggler named Felix Berthold. One of Berthold's underlings had begun leaking information to Federal agents, and with his help they set a trap to arrest Berthold when he took possession of a new shipment of narcotics on its way toward Earth.

The Federals wanted Berthold badly. Until he came along, they had been able to limit Earth's drug traffic to the planet. But Berthold had somehow found a way to get narcotics through Earth's Orbital Quarantine Command, allowing him to obtain his drugs from other worlds. When limited to Earth, drug traffic could be attacked at both production and distribution ends; with the production end moved to other planets, drug traffic was much harder to control. Also, Berthold's success indicated a flaw in the makeup of Orbital Quarantine Command – a flaw that frightened officials who wanted to keep Earth clean from extraterrestrial contamination.

So a trap had been set. But somehow, Berthold found out about it early, killed the Federals' mole, moved his financial holdings to King, and escaped to that world himself. On the way there, he underwent the DNAM (DNA Modification) treatment necessary for him to live in King's three Gs and settled into the Australian colony of New Huntsland. The Federal agents did not want to pursue him to the planet's surface themselves (King's ultraheavy gravity and sulphur-laden atmosphere being a deterrent), and New Huntsland's colonial government, being very protective of its autonomy, was unwilling to extradite him (nor would the American colony of New Columbia help). A deadlock had been reached, and the American narcotics agency turned its eyes to other fish.

After nearly two years, however, Berthold decided that he could not stand King any longer. The heavy gravity and the sulphurous air had taken their toll on him, and realising that King's inhabitants live half as long as other colonists, due to the heavy stress on their bodies, Berthold decided to leave. He quietly bought a mansion among the British holdings on Tirane (at Alpha Centauri) and left the planet; no one knows for sure just how.

Narcotics officials received notice of the mansion purchase and the transfer of funds to Tirane, and identified Berthold as the one behind them. From the government of New Huntsland. Which had been watching Berthold closely looking for an opportunity to prosecute him under their own laws, the American officials learned the date of his departure. They determined that he must

have taken passage on the *Ann Arbor*, a luxury liner headed for Earth. But they had no way of knowing for sure which of the 150 passengers that boarded at King was their quarry.

You, American Marshal Obadiah Thomas, have been assigned to capture Felix Berthold. When the *Ann Arbor* arrived at Earth's orbital station, all passengers going on to Tirane transferred to the *New Orleans*, another passenger liner. You have joined them undercover as a nanoelectronics parts salesman. The *New Orleans* will be in Earth orbit for only another six hours, finishing the discharge of its stutterwarp drives. You have been tasked with determining which of the passengers is your target and arresting him – without endangering the safety of other passengers before the ship leaves Earth and takes him to sanctuary at Tirane. Berthold certainly does not have any such qualms, which makes your task more difficult.

In your favour, however, is the fact that all inhabitants of King are short than average, though very heavily built as a result of the DNAM treatments. Also, as King's atmospheric density is 2.7 atm at sea level, the planet's colonists are unable to breathe a normal-density atmosphere without the aid of rebreather masks that fit over their mouths and noses. Citizens of King should stand out easily among the rest of the passengers—just look for stocky people with rebreather masks

HOW TO BEGIN

On the next pages, you will find numbered paragraphs, each representing a specific unit of the adventure – a scene, a critical task, or whatever. Read paragraph number one. At the end of that paragraph, you will be offered several choices of actions, each followed by a number in parentheses representing other paragraphs. When you choose your action, turn to the paragraph indicated and follow the process of read/choose/turn until you have reached a conclusion.

Do not just read through the paragraphs from beginning to end. The paragraphs are mixed around so that reading in this manner will make little sense, especially as several alternate story lines are possible. Once you have reached the end, you can play back through again, making different choices, and even playing a different character if you wish.

One last thing. Each paragraph begins with a time value in parentheses. Keep a running total of the time listed in the paragraphs. Each time you reach paragraph 15, check to see if you have reached a total of four or six hours. If so, follow the instructions in that paragraph.

1. (15 minutes) Sitting at a table in the New Orleans' park, you sip a cup of coffee and watch the stars wheel by with the vessel's rotation. About once a minute, Earth rises into view of the panoramic windows – it fills them all at this distance – and swings out of sight overhead.

Several seconds later, the windows darken automatically as the sun swings past, only to lighten once again immediately afterward Earth rises, sun rises. Earth rises, sun rises – it's as if time were accelerated and a day were passing every minute. Behind you, at the park's centre, a crowd of passengers watch a small circus troupe performing. A trio of acrobats hold their attention, performing amazing flips, leaps, and twirls. Go to paragraph 64.

2. (2 minutes) Inventing all sorts of excuses why you cannot wait to talk to Freidmansen, you finally convince the manservant to help you.

He says that his employer is at the Blue Lily Casino, playing poker. You give him Lv90 for his assistance. If you wish to go to the Blue Lily to speak with Freidmansen, go to paragraph 5. Otherwise return to paragraph 15 and choose again.

3. (No added time) Go to paragraph 23.

4. (No added time) Warfol's answers are convincing, and so are the family photos on his bunk. Squinting so that your biocontacts will magnify them, you can see that his oldest child, who is obviously a native of King, must be about eight or nine years old. She looks a lot like her father. Warfol is obviously not the man you are looking for. You thank him for his time, apologising for the inconvenience, and return to the park to review your other options. Go to paragraph 15 and choose again.

5. (30 minutes) Leaving the suite, you make your way through the crowded main corridors to the Blue Lily, a high priced casino. Go to 40.

6. (No added time) Go to paragraph 46

7. (15 minutes) Willy Freidmansen has a suite in the luxury section of the deck, number B11. Working your way among the other passengers in the corridors, past restaurants, shops, and entertainment galleries, you finally find the passage in which Suite B11 is located. When you knock upon the door, a manservant opens it. Upon asking to speak with Mr. Freidmansen, you receive the reply that, "Mr. Freidmansen is out at the moment. May I tell him who called?"

Do you show the manservant your badge (go to paragraph 13), or do you claim to have a business interest and show your nanoelectronics company ID (go to paragraph 18)?

8. (2 minutes) Within just a few moments, the door slides open and you find yourself facing a stout little man wearing a bath

robe and a rebreather mask. He looks a little pale, no doubt nervous at having an American Marshal call on him.

"Come on in, Marshal," he says, "Excuse the mess, I was just unpacking." The mask's resonators give his voice a strange, metallic sound.

Do you go in (go to paragraph 9), or do you insist on interviewing him in the doorway (go to paragraph 29)?

9. (Add the time rolled for the Skill check included here) His cabin is small, the bed is covered by the scattered contents of two suitcases. Surreptitiously examining them for clues, you ask Warfol a few pointed questions. To interrogate Warfol, make a Skill check, as listed below;

Skill Check: To interrogate Warfol, Routine, Psychology or Investigate, Int , 1-6 minutes

Your Psychology Skill (for the questions) and Int modifier (to spot clues on the bed) add up to 3, making it easier to pass this Routine (+2) Check. Your total DM is +5. If you roll successfully, go to paragraph 4, if you fail your roll with an Effects roll of 2-5, go to paragraph 30, if your Effects roll is 6, go to paragraph 17.

10. (2 minutes, plus time spent in combat – each round equals 6 seconds) Conduct ranged combat between yourself and Felix Berthold. He is an Experienced Combatant NPC (King DNAM, Traits: Slow, Tough, STR 13, DEX 8). He will remain behind the cover of the corner (which gives a -1 DM on attempts to shoot him), firing away at you with his Mueller-Rivera P-3 until one of you is dead, or he runs out of power. After that, he will try to run back down the corridor and lose himself in the crowd. If you chase him, to catch him you must succeed at a competition task roll as follows

Characteristic Check: To outrun an opponent, Routine. Dex minus opponent's Dex. +1 DM per Level of Fast, +1 per level of Slow of Opponent

If you succeed once at the above Check, you have caught up with Berthold, but you will still have to perform melee combat with him to capture him. If you fail, with an Effect roll of 5-6, you fall while dodging around these twisting corridors and he gets away. In any case, if you do not catch up to him within seven rounds, he finds a crowd of people and vanishes into it.

For fire combat, besides the six rounds in your pistol, you also have four extra speed-loaders of ammunition with you. During the rounds in which, you reload, Felix will continue firing (his laser holds energy for 35 pulses), but you may consider yourself in complete cover.

If you defeat Berthold, go to paragraph 37, if he defeats you, go to paragraph 57, and if he gets away, go to paragraph 68.

11. (No added time) Go to paragraph 13.

12. (15 minutes) Martin Warfol's cabin is listed as number C17, meaning it is mid-way around the ring, in the standard accommodation area. Leaving the park, you work your way along the ship's corridors, passing many chattering passengers. After passing through the expensive hallways of B section, you arrive at the bulkhead of C section. The door hisses open at a touch. The hallway beyond is narrower and more austere than those in section B -the smaller, cheaper cabins are in this section.

Working your way down the corridor, you eventually find the door to Cabin C17. You tap on it, and the sound echoes hollowly in the hall. A deep but metallic voice, slightly muffled by the door, calls out from inside, "Who is it?"

Do you identify yourself as an American Marshal (go to paragraph 8), or do you maintain your cover as a nanoelectronics salesman (go to paragraph 19)?

13. (1 minute) The manservant coolly informs you that he will tell Mr. Freidmansen you called. He then closes the door with a "Good day, sir " Go to paragraph 63.

14. (45 minutes) You are unable to hear enough of the men's conversation to make any sense-without giving yourself away. And the casino doesn't look like a good place to question Freidmansen directly. You decide to go back to your cabin for now and make other plans.

Go to paragraph 15 and choose again.

15. (5 minutes) Who do you want to approach: Martin Warfol, listed as a 31 -year-old male pharmacist (go to paragraph 12). Willy Freidmansen, listed as a 45-year-old banker (go to paragraph 7), or Marlana Andrews, listed as a 25-year-old mining specialist (go to paragraph 22).

If four hours have passed since you boarded the ship, go to paragraph 67; if six hours have passed, go to paragraph 52.

16. (No added time) Warfol shouts through the doorway. "Go away, I haven't got time to talk to any nanoelectronics salesman!" His deep voice is slightly muffled by the door, but there is a metallic tone to it as well. If you go away, return to paragraph 15 to choose again; if you continue to knock at the door, insisting that he talk with you, go to paragraph 3.

17. (3 minutes) Warfol grows angry with your questions and refuses to answer any more Unwilling to compromise your position by using violence to convince him, you decide to leave for now and watch his cabin for a while. Go to paragraph 58.

18. (Add the time you roll for the Skill check, below) The manservant explains that Mr. Freidmansen is taking this trip for pleasure, not business, and is very unlikely to be willing to talk

to you until after the ship reaches Tirane. To convince him to let you know where you can find Freidmansen, make a roll for the Skill check below.

Skill Check: To determine Freidmansen's whereabouts Difficult, Investigate or Psychology, Int, 10-60 seconds

If you roll successfully, go to paragraph 2. If you fail your roll with an Effects roll of 2-5, go to paragraph 11, if your effects roll is 6, go to paragraph 21.

19. (Add the time rolled for the Skill check, below, rounding to the nearest minute). You decide that it would be better not to reveal your true identity to Warfol. Telling him that you are a nanoelectronics salesman, you ask if he will speak with you. To convince him to open the door, you must roll for the following Skill check;

Skill Check: To convince Warfol to talk with you, Routine, Int, 10-60 seconds.

Your Int adds a modifier of 2 to your roll for this Routine (DM +2) Check, for a total of +4. If you roll successfully, turn to paragraph 31: if you fail your roll, with an Effects roll of 2-5, turn to paragraph 16, if you fail with an effects roll of 6 or higher, turn to paragraph 23.

20. (10 minutes) Once inside, you carefully search the cabin, looking for clues. Among a stack of files on the bedside table, you discover a partially filled out insurance form. With it are the birth certificates for Warfol's three children, born in King's orbital birthing facility (the planet's crushing gravity is too much for young children to bear). The ages prove to you that Warfol has lived on King for at least the past nine years, so he cannot be your quarry. You rearrange the things you have moved, to cover signs of your search, and wishing Warfol and his family well, you leave.

Return to paragraph 15 to try another option.

21. (4 minutes) A ship's steward wanders by The manservant calls him over and says that you are being an annoyance. While the steward asks you what the trouble is, the manservant closes the cabin door. You may now either reveal your badge to the steward, in which case he will have the manservant open the door again (go to paragraph 13), or you may excuse yourself and return to paragraph 15 to choose again.

22. (15 minutes) Checking your copy of the ship's roster, you see that Marlana Andrews is in Cabin C45. You proceed through the crowds of fellow passengers strolling the corridors until you reach an elevator Six other passengers get on with you, making for close accommodations.

You ride up to the second deck, where two of them get off and a stocky, young woman in a bathing suit and a rebreather mask gets on. This has to be the woman you are looking for.

"Pardon me, are you Marlana Andrews?" you ask her

"Why yes, I am," she answers in a husky voice, made somewhat tinny by the resonators in the rebreather. "Do I know you?"

"Well, no," you answer. "I'm a representative of a nanoelectronics firm, and I'd like to talk to you sometime about applications in mining on King."

She suggests that you come to lunch with her to discuss it if you accept, go to paragraph 62. If you decide that since she is obviously not your quarry and it is not worth your time, you can make an excuse not to accept-go to paragraph 48.

23. (3 minutes) Warfol refuses to answer your requests to speak with him. Instead, unknown to you, he calls security and complains that you are annoying him. Within a few short moments, two ship's stewards approach and ask to see your identification. If you show them your badge, go to paragraph 24, if instead you show them your nanoelectronics company ID, go to paragraph 28.

24. (2 minutes) You can either return to 15 to choose again, or you can now reveal to Warfol that you are an American Marshal (go to paragraph 8). In either case, the stewards apologize to you and leave.

25. (30 minutes) The effect of the Foraline is that because of the great fear it causes, you must subtract 1 from every normal Skill check, and 2 from any Skill check that exposes you to danger of any kind. Because of the high concentration you receive, it will last until you reach a paragraph that instructs you otherwise. If it were not for your training, your iron will, and the fact that you understand what is causing the panic, the effects would be much worse.

You return to your cabin to decide on what you should do next. Along the way, you jump at every noise, but Berthold does not attack you yet. Go to paragraph 15 and choose again.

26. (1 hour) Listening in on the men's conversation, you soon learn that two of them are Freidmansen's brothers. From their talk, he has been on King for 15 years, meaning he cannot be the man you are looking for. Return the cook's coat and tie, thank the doorman, and go to paragraph 15 and choose again.

27. (No added time) Deep in reverie, you almost miss the sound of footsteps in the corridor behind you, but your exceptional hearing saves you. You make a sudden step forward, and a small spot on the corridor wall next to your head suddenly flares, spraying droplets of molten metal onto you. The pain brings you fully alert. Someone is firing a laser at you! There is no cover nearby, so you drop to the floor, making yourself a smaller target (give your opponent a -3 DM on his to hit roll) and you pull out your pistol. Your eyes search the corridor behind you for your opponent, and you see him – it's one of the dwarves from the circus! Suddenly you realise that a rebreather mask could be

hidden within that false beard, and the stocky form fits what would be expected from a citizen of King.

This must be Felix Berthold, and he is just around the last corner you turned, about 20 meters away. Luckily these corridors wind enough to prevent him from firing at you from a distance, or your pistol would be less accurate than his laser, giving him an advantage. Go to paragraph 10.

28. (45 minutes) The stewards escort you back to your own cabin, telling you that if you continue to annoy Warfol, they will have to confine you to your cabin. You may now go back to paragraph 15 and choose again.

29. (Add the time rolled for the Skill check, below) Warfol might have set up a trap of some sort in his cabin, so you decide not to enter. Instead you question him in the doorway. To interrogate Warfol, make a Skill check, as listed below:

Skill Check: To interrogate Warfol, Routine, Psychology or Investigate, Int, 1-6 minutes

Your Psychology Skill adds a modifier of 1 to your roll for this Routine (2) Check, and your Int adds another 2, for a total DM of 5. If you roll successfully, go to paragraph 4, if you fail your roll and the Effect Roll is 2-5, go to paragraph 30, if the Effect is 6 or higher, go to paragraph 17.

30. (No extra time) You can't tell for certain if Warfol is your man or not. You decide to leave for now and watch his room for a while.

Go to paragraph 58.

31. (1 minute) The cabin door slides open. Standing just inside is a stout little man wearing a bathrobe and a rebreather mask. He looks to be a little impatient, as if he were busy doing something you interrupted. He does, however, invite you inside. Do you enter the cabin (go to paragraph 9), or do you decline, claiming to be in a hurry (go to paragraph 29)?

32. (15 minutes, plus the time rolled for the Skill check, below, rounded to the nearest minute) The doorman is very willing to help an officer of the law. Calling a friend from the kitchen, a cook about your size, he explains that you need to borrow a jacket and tie for a few minutes.

The cook takes you to the employee's locker room behind the kitchen and lends you something from his locker.

A few moments later, you are wandering among the casino's tables. At a table in the back of the main room, five extravagantly dressed gentlemen are playing cards. One of them is very stocky and wears a rebreather. As you listen to their conversation, make a roll for the Skill check below.