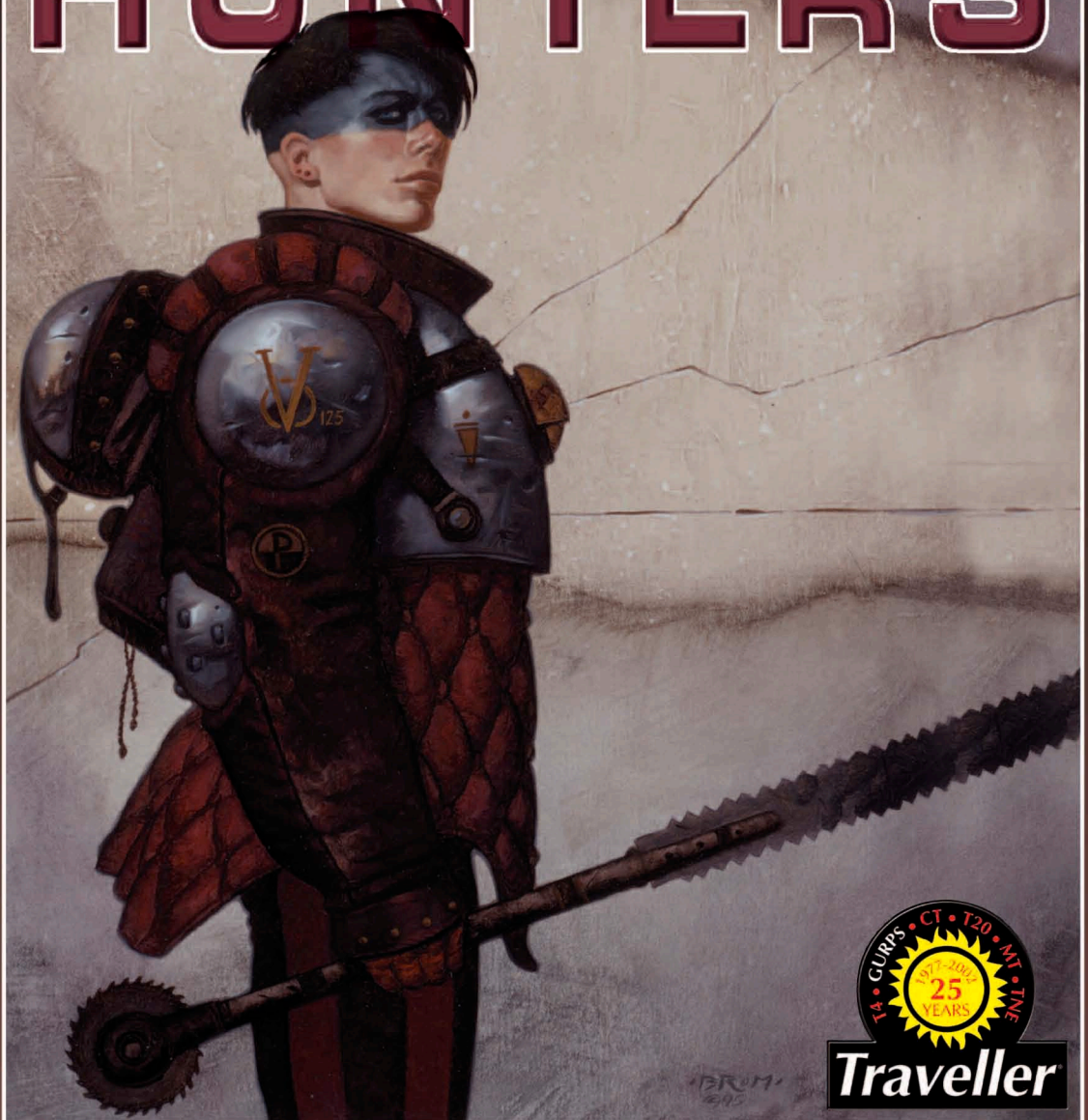


GURPS® *Traveller*® HEROES 1

BOUNTY HUNTERS™



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

WANTED! REWARD!

Millions of people are on the run. Some have defaulted on loans. Some have skipped bail. Some have stolen from their employers . . . or their lovers. And some simply know things that they were never meant to learn. All of them are trying to lose themselves in the Imperium – and it's your job to find them before they do.

GURPS Traveller: Heroes 1 – Bounty Hunters is the first in a series of books expanding on the character templates found in the ***GURPS Traveller*** rules. Contained within, you will find:

- A full discussion of bounty hunting in the Imperium – including what to do when the local authorities won't cooperate.
- New templates for corporate bounty hunters, repo men, skip tracers, and lots more!
- GM advice on running a bounty hunting campaign.
- And plenty of NPCs to use as allies, rivals, or targets!

Packed with useful information for players and GMs, ***Bounty Hunters*** is an invaluable addition to any ***Traveller*** game – and look for more books in the ***Heroes*** series coming soon!



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com



The ***GURPS Basic Set***, ***Compendium I***, and ***GURPS Traveller*** are required for full use of this book in a ***GURPS*** campaign. The background presented here will be of value in any ***Traveller*** campaign, and will also serve as a source of inspiration for other SF games.

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Introduction

“Certainly there is no hunting like the hunting of man. And those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it, never really care for anything else thereafter.”

– Ernest Hemingway

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for a SASE. Or check out our website (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, e-mail majordomo@io.com with “subscribe GURPSnet-L” in the body, or point your web browser to gurpsnet.sjgames.com.

The *GURPS Traveller: Heroes 1 – Bounty Hunters* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/heroes1/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are E for *GURPS Espionage*, GT for *GURPS Traveller, Second Edition*, HT for *GURPS High-Tech*, SO for *GURPS Special Ops*, T:AIH for *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 3*, UT for *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and UTT for *GURPS Ultra-Tech 2*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

GURPS Traveller: Heroes 1 – Bounty Hunters gives GMs and players a new resource for bounty hunting in the *Traveller* universe. Rather than give details on specific laws for every situation, *Bounty Hunters* provides a broad overview of the trade, including information on the profession in general, suggestions on character creation, and a number of fully detailed NPCs on both sides of the hunt.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian J. Underhill has been playing *GURPS* for a dozen years, and *Traveller* for nearly twice as long. *Bounty Hunters* is his latest work in a writing career stretching back to 1987. He is a native of the Pacific Northwest and an accomplished musician who often works out writer's block playing Springsteen on the guitar or Yankovic – Frank, not Al – on the accordion. Unlike most *GURPS* authors, and much to his dismay, Brian currently owns no significant pets.

As far as we know, there are no outstanding wants or warrants for his arrest at this time.

The Profession

In simplest terms, a bounty hunter tracks down and detains a person to collect a fee, or “bounty.” Bounties may be placed by law enforcement agencies, corporations, individuals, or military units. They vary from simple commissions to find people to contracts for assassination.

THE BOUNTY HUNTER

Bounty hunters come in a variety of races, genders, and personalities. Megacorporations employ repo men, passenger liners hire anti-hijacking teams, and freelancers stalk the Imperium in search of fugitives.

FREELANCERS

Freelance bounty hunting offers substantial freedom, allowing characters to pick targets to suit their style. Locating a suitable bounty can be done by means of a good Reputation (where the hunter’s services are directly requested), Contacts (bondsmen, law officers, registry clerks, etc.), special organizations (e.g., *Rim-Core Retrieval*, or *The Regina Free Rangers*, p. 31), or a high Research skill (searching shipping registries, court dockets, public notices, and other databases).

Freelance hunters operating within the Imperium may obtain an Imperial Bounty Hunting License (p. 11).

COMPANY MEN

Large corporations often retain bounty hunters to track down delinquent clients or to hunt criminals preying on the company’s assets. Such hunters may be called “internal security agents” or “collections officers,” but the fact remains that they track and capture someone for a fee.

Small corporations usually cannot afford a large staff, and so rely on freelance bounty hunters as needed. Larger corporations find it more efficient to maintain a diversified security force including in-house bounty hunters.

Bounties may be placed by a corporation for such things as violation of confidentiality, theft of

proprietary information, theft of company property, and so forth. Some of these infractions (such as theft) may violate penal codes as well.

A hunter’s duty, in most corporate bounties, is the safe return of the target. What the corporation does with him once he’s in their custody is usually none of the hunter’s business, though should the corporation violate the rights of the target (such as through torture or unlawful detention), the bounty hunter may find himself the target of a criminal investigation.

Especially powerful corporations may have enough influence to allow their employees some leeway in working outside local laws when necessary. For example, a corporation might give the hunter a means to contact certain friendly authorities to help him out. Ultimately, it is up to the GM to decide if any given corporation has such power, and just how far it extends. Corporations providing this sort of aid would qualify as a Patron (see p. 16).

Corporate bounty hunters are paid a salary (Cr35,000-60,000 a year) and sometimes a fee or commission for the capture of criminals or the repossession of property (see *Repo Men*, p. 4). Most are given an expense account to cover incidental costs such as food, lodging, and basic transportation, but abuse of the account or unusual expenditures will be frowned upon.

THE MORAL DILEMMA

At times, a bounty hunter may apprehend a target who claims innocence. A hardened hunter is likely to ignore such pleas, but one with a conscience may find himself facing a moral dilemma. Is it up to the bounty hunter to decide the guilt or innocence of his quarry? What steps should he take if he believes his captive is truly innocent?

These moral questions can be a good source of roleplaying ideas and adventures, as well as fodder for internal struggles. Even a hard-core mercenary may be affected by the pleadings of an innocent victim, or plagued by a nagging conscience if it turns out his target was telling the truth.

The Hunter

Bounty hunters in *GURPS Traveller* are 100- to 150-point heroes. They may be created from scratch, or they may come from other backgrounds – adventurers that choose the life of a bounty hunter during the course of the campaign.

CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

There are a number of reasons a person may choose to track down bounties. Some retire or look for a new line of work; the excitement of the chase lures others; even the need for revenge may start some down the path.



Administrative

Though it seems unlikely at first glance, bureaucrats and administrators often make top-notch bounty hunters, due to their ability to wade through information databases in search of clues. Players who choose this background will find their style of play much different from the typical bounty hunter, and GMs should provide plenty of opportunity for the “paper chaser” to stay involved in an adventure.

This type of bounty hunter works best in conjunction with a team, including hunters willing to make the takedown. Throwing the noncombatant into a firefight now and then is sure to keep him on his toes!

Criminals

A criminal who has gone straight makes an interesting hero. Perhaps he learned his lesson in prison, or maybe he was innocent to begin with. Some criminals may be implanted with a high-tech cortex bomb or a virus, and ordered to track down a bounty to stay alive!

Note that individuals with a criminal record are not eligible for an Imperial bounty hunting license.

Law Enforcement

Professional training and legal Contacts make former law enforcement personnel ideally suited to bounty hunting. Such a career change means the character can no longer enforce the law, though some bounty hunters behave as though they were still cops. Many law enforcement agencies and personnel look down on bounty hunters, viewing them as a hindrance to proper legal procedures. Characters with a law enforcement background may have Contacts or a Reputation (good or bad) within that community.

Military

Retired soldiers often put their skills to use in the private sector as bodyguards, security officers, and bounty hunters. Military training equips them for some of the tougher bounty hunting assignments, such as tracking down fugitives or bringing back escaped military prisoners.

Contacts in their previous branch of employment (marines, army, scouts, etc.) may make it easier to procure black-market military hardware.

Vengeance

At times a *Traveller* character finds himself seeking revenge. Perhaps he was the victim of a crime, or his loved ones died at the hands of a criminal. Whatever the reason, hunting a foe across charted space for personal reasons may be the start of a long career.

Even if he never deals with the target of his vengeance, other bounties may crop up along the way, providing the hero with clues to his adversary . . . or just some pocket money. Other times,

Adventures and Campaigns

Some GMs may wish to add bounty hunting to an existing campaign. Others may start a campaign that revolves around bounty hunters exclusively, starting the group out from scratch.

Bounty Hunters campaigns take on many forms. A more realistic campaign focuses on the chase – finding the quarry and capturing him with a minimum of violence and fuss. Realistic bounty hunters make certain to cope with local laws and cause minimum collateral damage. Cinematic campaigns focus more on the confrontation. The PCs use any means, fair or foul, to get to the quarry. Such adventures culminate in a firefight with the quarry or with planetary security (or both!)

REALISTIC BOUNTY HUNTING

The truth about bounty hunting is that it entails hours of paperwork, computer work, long-distance communications, interviews, and other tedium, followed by a few brief moments of excitement during the capture. To provide better game play, GMs wishing to run a realistic campaign should provide lots of interplay between PCs and NPCs (friends, relatives, henchmen, law enforcement personnel) prior to attempted captures.

In the *Traveller* universe, economics prevent interstellar bounty hunting from being a profitable venture unless the hunters are tracking very expensive (and therefore dangerous) targets. GMs shouldn't overload the players with nickel-and-dime bail skips and repos. Instead, a *Traveller* bounty hunting campaign should focus on the exciting, shadowy, dangerous world of high-stakes bounties.

CINEMATIC CAMPAIGNS

Cinematic bounty hunting emphasizes tracking down dangerous criminals and fugitives from justice, since traditional law enforcement is spread too thin to deal with every lawbreaker and escapee. Private bounty hunters take up the slack, tracking not only skips and repossessed ships, but also fugitives from justice and high-profile criminals.

The Lone Wolf

A staple of sci-fi films is the lone hero who faces and overcomes overwhelming odds. GMs may find that a cinematic bounty hunting campaign is ideally suited to solo adventures, allowing the hunter to face down hardened criminals on distant planets and emerge battered, but triumphant. A lone wolf may start the adventure with a sidekick (or even an Ally Group), but it's likely such companions will be among the casualties during the course of the adventure.

GMs may allow the hero to start at a higher point value or encourage the use of advantages such as *Hard to Kill* to give him a better chance of survival.

SCUM AND VILLAINY

Some players will prefer the gritty, violent world of the “super” bounty hunters. Characters will face the most dangerous criminals and the deadliest of worlds; death is a daily reality and PCs are not immune.

Targets in this campaign will be high-value criminals . . . escapees from maximum-security prisons, killers, and assassins. Heroes should be armed to the teeth and fortified with the best equipment, since their enemies may be toting PGMPs and wearing powered combat armor!

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Some *Traveller* campaigns find adventurers on the shady side of the law, in the form of smugglers, pirates, or other, often good-hearted criminals. GMs may wish to use *Bounty Hunters* as a sourcebook in such a campaign, keeping the party on their toes as the bounty on them slowly grows and the caliber of hunter that tracks them increases.

GMs who wish to use bounty hunters against criminal PCs should keep the bounty quiet, and spring a hunter or two on the players without warning. Figuring out who's trying to capture or kill them, and why, can be an exciting adventure unto itself.

Free Rangers are forbidden to engage in illegal activities. Anyone caught doing so will be expelled from the organization and, when feasible, turned over to appropriate authorities.

ANTARES RECOVERY O POINTS

Antares Recovery specializes in repossessing past-due or stolen ships, and maintains a highly skilled staff of researchers and field specialists. A fleet of fast (Jump-4) 100-ton transports delivers field agents almost anywhere, making repossession quick and efficient.

Those who work for AR can use the Repo Man template (pp. 19-20) to create a suitable character. Field agents specialize in combat and ship operations, since tracking the ship is done by AR researchers. At times, however, field agents' intelligence is faulty and they have to do some leg-work themselves. Employees are salaried (Cr50,000 a year) and given a per-contract bonus (Cr5,000 to Cr25,000, depending on the value of the vessel and the difficulty of the operation). Basic expenses (food, lodging, medical, travel) are covered by an expense account.

AR field agents work in teams of three or more.



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