

ANOTHER PIECE OF THE ACTION

An Adventure for *Star Trek: The Role Playing Game*

Pete Rogan

INTRODUCTION

This is an adventure for six to eight players for *Star Trek: The Role-Playing Game*. The characters are Star Fleet officers of the *Enterprise* or other suitable vessel, dispatched on a diplomatic mission to that most curious of worlds, Iotia, there to assess the continuing cultural damage, study the way the natives have adapted to at least one inadvertent bit of contamination, and to determine, with the aid of a Federation emissary, whether or not more permanent relations can be initiated. Of course, it won't be that simple.

THE MISSION

Three years have passed since the U.S.S. *Enterprise* visited Iotia and reported the extraordinary cultural contamination there, inadvertently caused by the leaving of a few books by the U.S.S. *Horizon* a century earlier. Galaxy Exploration Command has been appalled at the changes — only slightly less appalled, in fact, by the accidental leaving of a communicator on the planet by the *Enterprise* crew. A communicator contains transtators, the basis of most of the modern circuitry of the 23d Century. What could the Iotians do with access to *that* technology?

No one knows. The *Enterprise* did not stay long enough to do a full cultural analysis. The data preserved are sparse and unextrapolatable, though they are disturbing. Could the Iotians develop a starship capability and go on out into space? Do they even *want* to? Or are they satisfied with emulating "The Book", *Chicago Gangs of the Twenties*, forever and ever amen? The Iotians dumped their original culture — whatever it was; the *Horizon's* records are equally unrevealing — to follow one imperfectly understood from a book. Would they do it again for a communicator?

Star Fleet Command must know. Hence the dispatching of the characters' starship to answer those questions on a very singular mission, partly scientific and partly diplomatic. When the *Enterprise* left Iotia, its Captain spoke of an eventual return; his exact words were more like 'the Feds will come back to collect their piece of the action' — a cut of Iotia's gross planetary product (GPP), whether in taxes or trade wasn't specified. Star Fleet is sending this ship to make the all-important follow-up visit. Ostensibly the purpose is to deliver an envoy: Federation Special Ambassador Robert T. Spencer, whose job it will be to establish, if permitted, a permanent Federation diplomatic office on Iotia. The actual purpose is to do a full cultural analysis of the Iotians, to determine their level of technical sophistication, and to learn whether they intend to become a spacefaring people or no.

This will mean, at the very least, infiltrating Iotian society with disguised contact teams who will visit libraries and factories, schools and universities, to talk with the people, observe their culture, and probe their machinery. Doing so will take time, perhaps many weeks.

The Captain has quite emphatic orders, due to the unique characteristics of Iotian civilization and the demonstrated intelligence and resourcefulness of the natives. These orders come from the Federation High Council, and they must be regarded as paramount, above all other concerns and standing orders including the Prime Directive. These orders, in increasing order of priority, are as follows:

1. Contact the planet Iotia and one Bela Oxmyx in particular, Boss of his world.
2. Determine the level of cultural contamination due to the

influence of the so-called "Book": *Chicago Mobs of the Twenties*, and the communicator left behind by the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, with reference to whether or not any possibility of future contamination is either apparent or possible.

3. On the basis of this evaluation, determine whether or not future contamination would be lessened were the Federation to open a permanent embassy on the planet. This decision must be made with the full knowledge and approval of Federation Special Ambassador Spencer.

4. Any and all inadvertent cultural contamination produced by this mission must be prevented. Any technological innovations above Iotian standards at last contact are to be reported and, if possible, remedied.

5. Under no circumstances are the Iotians to be permitted to retain any Federation technology, including plans, instruments, or documentation.

There is no timetable for completion of this mission. Star Fleet expects the stayover at Iotia to be at least a month in duration and easily longer.

These orders are not to become known to the Iotians at any cost. The Captain will be held directly responsible for keeping them secure and seeing that they are carried out. Good luck.

THE PLANET IOTIA

World Log: IOTIA

System Data

System Name:	Sigma Iotia
Map Coordinates:	6.78S 4.55W
Number Of Class M Present:	1

Planetary Data

Position in System:	IV
Number of Satellites:	1
Planetary Gravity:	1.1G
Planetary Size:	
Diameter:	10,300 km
Equatorial Circumference:	33,000 km
Total Surface Area:	400,000,000 sq km
Percent Land Mass:	60%
Total Land Area:	240,000,000 sq km

Planetary Conditions

Length Of Day:	25 hrs
Atmospheric Density:	Terrestrial
General Climate:	Terrestrial

Mineral Content

Normal Metals:	22%
Radioactives:	08%
Gemstones:	Trace
Industrial Crystals:	Trace
Special Minerals:	Trace

Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form:	Iotian
Technological/	
Sociopolitical Index:	(?)
Planetary Trade Profile:	—

A minor world at the edge of the Galaxy, Iotia was first contacted more than a hundred years ago by the U.S.S. *Horizon*, when the Prime Directive was not yet in force. The *Horizon* found the natives humanoid, intelligent, charming, and eager to please. They were also eager to learn, and the Captain of the *Horizon* was all too happy to loan them what he thought were some insignificant volumes from the ship's library.

From the description of the natives in Federation archives, the Iotians had a fairly advanced industrial culture, ranking about F+ on the Richter scale of cultures if not higher. Its one outstanding characteristic was its utter lack of any outstanding or remarkable characteristics. Nothing about the planet, its people or their culture seemed notable or worth recording. No strong political feelings, no religious conflicts, no clash of dissimilar cultures, nothing. The entire planet seemed to be placid, peaceful, and unremarkable. In fact, it was boring. Everything about Iotia seemed to have already been done elsewhere in the Galaxy, and done better, too. Even the music and the architecture of Iotia were plain and unaffecting.

Captain Stuart Mann of the *Horizon* found the Iotians a very cordial people. Eager to please and highly curious, they always seemed full of questions. And they were imitative. Is your chair comfortable? How are your own chairs fashioned? Shown a picture of a Morris chair, an Iotian carpenter could fashion a duplicate without reference to formal plans. If an Iotian band heard Terran music they would immediately improvise the melody and harmonies to their own instruments — the *Horizon* did not stay long enough to see whether or not they would build Terran-style musical instruments. Captain Mann was flattered and happy to 'loan' them books to draw inspiration from.

In retrospect, Captain Mann should not be blamed for all that followed. The Federation of his time was not that far ahead of the Iotians, and no doubt it was in his mind that in a few years the Iotians would be full trading and diplomatic members of the Federation. He could not have foreseen the strange transformation of the entire planet, any more than he could have foreseen the Romulan War that would halt Federation expansion in Iotia's direction and leave them isolated for a hundred years.

When the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, the next Federation ship to visit Iotia, made contact with the natives, they found nothing of the old culture remaining. The city they beamed down to resembled early 20th-Century Chicago on Terra. On the radio were amplitude-modulated (AM) broadcasts and antique 'big-band' jazz music. In the streets were primitive ground cars with spoked wheels, two-piece windcreens and cloth roofs. But it was the people that made the strongest impression: they too wore garb characteristic of the Gangster Era of the 1920's, and fully half the males wore dark three-piece suits, slouch hats, and openly carried replicas — as it turned out, *working* replicas of the Thompson submachine gun or 'Tommy' gun — the uniform of the gangster.

In contacting the local chieftain, or 'Boss', the *Enterprise* crewmen discovered that the entire culture of the planet was now based on what they called "The Book" — criminal gangs ran the city, and the gang bosses collectively, if unpeaceably, controlled two-thirds of the entire planet. The Iotians were perfectly aware that their culture was artificial, even 'copycat'. This bothered them no more than the knowledge that off their world existed the Federation — a fact they knew from their history. Not only did they know there was a Federation, but they seemed to be expecting a return visit from them someday. Their attitude towards what they called the 'Feds' was as ambiguous as it was disturbing. They seemed to dread a visit from the Feds, and yet they — or at least Bela Oxmyx, Boss of the North Side — were perfectly willing if not actually eager to use the Feds they captured to obtain more sophisticated technology, and weapons in particular, to vanquish the opposing gangs and assume dominance over them.

By means as dramatic as they were unorthodox the Captain of the *Enterprise* extracted himself and his crew from a cycle of kidnapping

and threats and established a rude kind of planetary order, with Bela Oxmyx as the de facto ruler of the planet and his arch rival, one Jojo Krako, as his deputy. He made the Feds the guarantors of this arrangement — which means that this setup has the official blessing of the Federation, and *must* be preserved to keep the Iotians thinking that the Feds intended things to be this way all along. Truthfully, the political scientists of the Federation can't really think of anything better than this for Iotia — at least, not until more information comes in.

Important Note: The quaint and old-20th-Century look of Iotia should not be presumed to reflect their actual technical capability. At time of first contact Iotia was on the verge of developing interplanetary spaceflight, and this was more than a hundred years before. What level they might have attained, in spite of or because of the Book, is also unknown.

PLANETFALL AND GREETINGS

There are no spacecraft anywhere in the Sigma Iotia system when the players' characters' ship arrives. Nor are there any strange or even ordinary subspace radio transmissions. Iotia itself has not a single artificial satellite, and the only transmissions coming up are AM radio, audio only. Anybody choosing to monitor the channels ('play the dial') will hear a selection of jazz music (from the slow and syrupy, like Lazy Ix and the Slowpokes, to the sharp and snazzy sound of Buster and the Bankrobbers), short and pungent news programs ("Eastsiders knock off First National office on the Southside! Where are Krako's protection people?"), and some rather odd short bits known as 'commercials' ("Can't get those powder burns out of his suit, Missus? Try *new* Kleenzol!"). The news, if the characters listen to it, may contain a mention of interest, which is up to the GM. (See "Intercepted Messages" below)

The players can call down to the planet any number of ways. The airport control tower will hear them and respond to any kind of transmission *except* subspace radio, as long as part of it is audio. With a little fumbling, they can connect the players to Bela Oxmyx's office. Oxmyx sounds glad to hear from the Feds again, very cordial, and invites the Captain and whoever else wants to come down to his office to discuss 'the arrangements'.

Ambassador Spencer will, of course, insist on being present at this meeting. He will insist on wearing local garb — a blue serge suit, horn-rim glasses and a worn leather briefcase, like a 20th-Century "mouthpiece", or lawyer. What the rest of the landing party wears is up to them, but Spencer will suggest playing along.

Players can either choose to accept Oxmyx's offer, and his directions to his office, or accept and use the Communications Officer's skill at *Communications Systems Operation* to trace the phone line to determine the beam-down point. Or they could even use a shuttlecraft to land at the airport. The one thing they *can't* do is refuse; Ambassador Spencer won't allow it. His mission is to make diplomatic contact, and that's what he's going to do. Security arrangements are up to Star Fleet, but he, at least, is going to go talk with Oxmyx.

Iotia looks much the same way it did to the last Federation visitors; a city remarkably like early 20th-Century Chicago, save for the submachine gun-toting men in the streets. Even the sounds of traffic and hollering street vendors, mingled with the smells of cooking and uncollected garbage, are strikingly authentic.

Oxmyx will be waiting for them where they beam down. With a couple of tough-looking hoods carrying Tommy-guns. This time, however, there is no attempt to take the Federation people prisoner. Oxmyx understands this is business.

Oxmyx, in fact, is a changed man. He is gruff and forthright as usual, but he is the perfect gangland host. The group needs refreshment? — he snaps his fingers. A gun moll with serving tray appears. Secure transportation? — he snaps his fingers. A black Lincoln rolls up with two hood-loaded escorts, one ahead and one behind, for protec-

tion. You want to see the books? — he snaps his fingers. A frail-looking bookkeeper type appears puffing, with gussets on his arms, a green eyeshade on his balding head, and a sheaf of ledgers half the size of Oxmyx's desk.

Whatever the Feds want, the Feds get. No monkeyshines, no shenanigans. If, perchance, expecting treachery, the players have had Security teams beamed down ahead of them, or spaced around the neighborhood, or elsewhere in Oxmyx's building, even this won't perturb the gang chieftain. He might even laugh about it. Anybody else beaming down will be confronted with Tommy gun-wielding gangsters who will take them prisoner, but as soon as they make a phone call to Oxmyx's office, they'll be let go.

Ambassador Spencer will have no trouble with the man for anything he asks. An office? You got it. Phones and staff? No problem. Access to all the other mob bosses? Oxmyx will introduce him around — say, this Friday night at a swank reception. It's now Tuesday morning locally.

The only thing that disturbs this pleasant exchange is a buzz on the intercom on Oxmyx's desk. The receptionist says there's a very important, I mean *very important* phone call. Irritated, Oxmyx will pick up his phone (the type with a cylinder for an earpiece, that needs two hands to operate) and growl: "Yeah?" His face changes. "Who? . . . What? He *what*? Rilke, if you've been drinkin' again—" Long pause; Oxmyx's expression goes from incredulity to totally blank. "Okay. Go look for 'em. Don't tell anybody. I don't care *who* saw it — don't tell *anybody*!" He hangs up, makes a tight grim little smile, and just says, "Business. You know how it is."

He won't bring it up himself, but if someone should happen to mention the small matter of a forgotten communicator, Oxmyx will say, "I was wonderin' when you'd bring that up." He will then open the large safe that sits behind his desk and hand the communicator back to them. "It's the same one, don't worry. Look it over if you like." There is no way to tell if it has been tampered with. It works perfectly well, but its power cell is low.

In short, Bela Oxmyx will do everything in his power to make sure the Feds are comfortable and happy, including giving them everything they want. He'll even offer to provide escorts for any of the crew who want to come down for a visit.

AFTER THE GREETINGS

Doing a full cultural analysis will mean sending down a lot of parties in local clothing to poke around. They can either do so openly, at the Captain's command, accepting Oxmyx's offer of hospitality, or secretly. Players should be reminded that Iotia is not just an armed society, but a society armed with submachine guns. If anybody wants Ambassador Spencer's opinion, sneaking around behind Oxmyx's back is extremely bad form and could jeopardize the mission. Nobody has to ask him — in which case he will remind the characters, just as a precaution.

The Ambassador will only require a small Security detachment and a few yeomen and clerks to set up housekeeping. There's a small brownstone, five stories tall, on the next block over from Oxmyx's office that he can start moving into. Oxmyx will provide office furniture and supplies, and doesn't mind in the least letting the Feds bring down whatever equipment they require. For his part, Ambassador Spencer can get by with local technology, though he will insist on keeping his diplomatic computer in his office. The diplomatic computer is essentially a standard-issue portable computer with a more elaborate security system. He'd like to bring down voicewriters, "smart desks" and other 23d-Century equipment, but if the Captain says no he won't kick.

The players will then be free to do whatever it takes to find out Iotia's technical competence and cultural attitudes. Or to do anything else they'd like.

Anybody who wants to try and tap Oxmyx's phone can do it from

the ship with a successful roll under *Communications Systems Operation*. However, doing so means that the ship will have to be above the local horizon to intercept any messages; there is only a 25% chance of receiving "Intercepted Messages" (see below). Putting a tap on his phone line in the office or in the building means breaking in and physically placing a transmitter or recorder on his line; it cannot be done while anybody else is on the phone or likely to walk in on the party planting the bug. It takes a technician with a skill level of 20 or higher in *Communications Systems Technology* or *Electronics Technology* 3D10 minutes to install a listening device that won't be easily discovered. The bug still has a 2% chance, per day, of being found. Should the planting party have to leave suddenly to avoid being discovered before the full amount of time is expended, the chance rises by 5%/day for every minute not spent. How these interruptions are arranged is up to the GM.

The characters may either let parties of NPCs wander the planet and collect data (as revealed in "Exploring Iotia" below) or choose to snoop around as *one* such party. (There's no reason they can't split up, one character to a party, but it will take a lot of time to run each character through individually while everybody else waits)

The characters may even help the Ambassador with diplomatic niceties and the job he's doing, namely, evaluating the trade potential of Iotia. See "Helping the Ambassador" below, and everybody who chooses to do this may add one point each to their scores in *Administration* or *Negotiation/Diplomacy*.

The players are also likely to start delving into Bela Oxmyx's 'business' call from some other direction. GMs should consult "GM's Information" (also below) first.

EXPLORING IOTIA

At this point in history, so soon after the second Federation visit to Iotia, the planet has neither a Technological/Sociopolitical Index nor a Planetary Trade Profile compiled for it. Teams of scientists and specialists will have to beam down to the planet, visit hospitals and museums and schools and the like, examine machines, buildings, vehicles and documents, interview teachers, designers, administrators, engineers and people in the street, and return all this raw data to the ship to be evaluated, compared, classified and compiled. It's difficult work, sometimes, and not all of it boring.

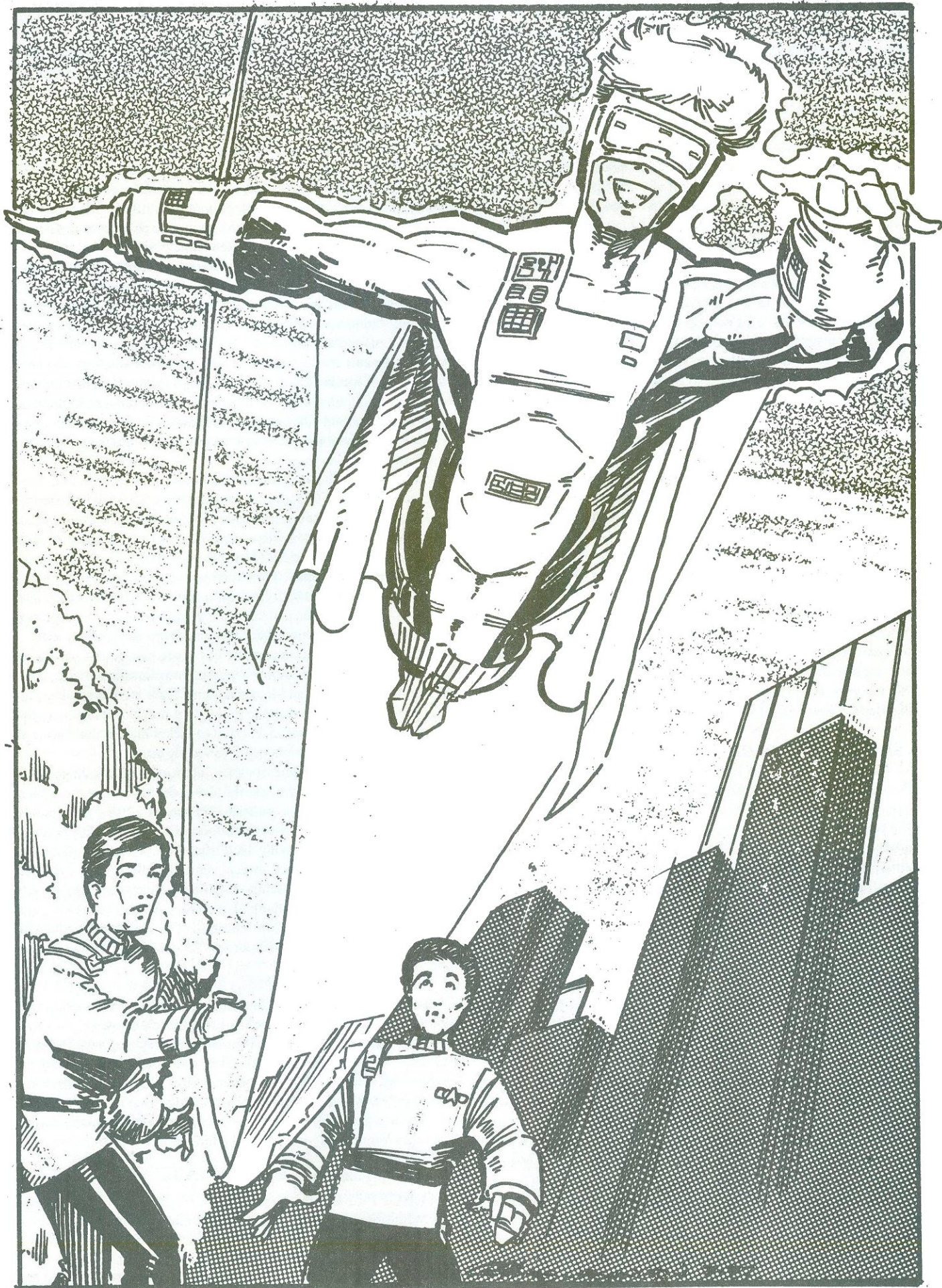
Each of these values *must* be learned before the ship may leave Iotia.

The primary goal of each team is to determine one of the values of the TSI. There are no set standards for finding this information, aside from the threshold guidelines as stated on page 13 of the *Game Operations Manual*. Contact teams are trained to seek out these thresholds by looking for direct or indirect evidence, often in simple, everyday things. A simple thing like an astrology book, for instance, reveals such things about its makers as a Space Sciences Index of at least 2 (Recognition of other planetary bodies), and a Psionics Index of perhaps 1 or 2 (Psi activity recognized, but only rare cases; no understanding).

Each team from the characters' ship has a 20% chance, per week, of discovering one slot on the TSI. For purposes of simplicity, only one throw of percentile dice per slot per week is made. A score of 20 or lower and enough data is gathered to assign a level. A score of 21 or higher means that no meaningful conclusions can yet be drawn; further study — at least a week more — must be made.

In addition, should the Captain wish, a team that has already determined its TSI number may continue to do research in the hopes of turning up other information of value. The players will not know, prior to making their decision to keep studying, whether or not there is anything else to learn. This additional data will be found under "GM's Information".

The player characters may choose to do some of this research themselves, without bothering with a single roll. They may even



choose to do additional research after a prior team has finished with theirs. The GM should feel free to litter their path with whatever obstacles seem handy. Trying to scope out the level of psionic activity on Iotia may get any Vulcans or Deltans in the party in serious local trouble, particularly if they're working without an Oxmyx-approved bodyguard. Getting information on medical care will probably require a trip to the local hospital, with all of its 20th-Century horrors ("They cut and stitch people like *garments!*"). If more specific information is needed, the GM may have inspiration tailor-made from the players.

Besides, being out and about will allow the player-characters to have "A Singular Experience", as detailed below.

HELPING THE AMBASSADOR

While the Star Fleet personnel have the duty of filling in the TSI, the Ambassador and his staff need to determine the Planetary Trade Profile of Iotia. Their task is a good deal simpler because they can actually ask the Iotians what they have to trade. The Iotians, presumably hoping to latch onto some Federation technology, will also be asking what their goods are worth on a Galactic market. Moreover, since they presumably are eager to trade, they won't mind bringing samples, photos, records and the like to the Federation Embassy, cutting down on the need to travel.

At least, the Ambassador's need to travel. But just in case the Iotians have something to conceal, the Ambassador may want the player-characters to do some checking-up on warehouses, factories, farms and the like. As with determining the level for each of the slots on the TSI, each week the Ambassador throws percentiles once for *each* of the yet-undetermined slots on the PTP, including population. Or he may give the characters a go at determining one of them, if the players are interested.

Of course, even if the players aren't interested, it may be necessary for them to use the Embassy as a cover for more surreptitious work, like trying to find out what Oxmyx is *really* planning. Since the Ambassador also has to deal with all the other gang bosses, the players can mingle with them, too, and try to get other information out of them. This likewise gives the characters the chance to have "A Singular Experience" (see below).

A SINGULAR EXPERIENCE

There is no one 'right' time to run this event. A good time would be while the players are investigating something entirely different, and not suspecting a thing.

While the player-characters (or some group of them) are out on one of the research projects (or for any other plausible reason), they will witness, at close range, a bank robbery. A First Financial bank, with tall gray stone columns and ornate entranceway, has a couple of dark cars stop out in front. Six goons with Tommy guns march up the steps and go inside. A crowd gathers outside, knowing what's going on. A scream comes from inside.

A man falls out of the sky. A young man, with blonde hair, dressed in an odd, brightly-colored skintight overall with a heavy belt and a full, flowing cape. He is magnificently muscled, and he doesn't fall so much as swoop, landing no more heavily than if he had fallen only a couple of feet. With easy confidence he goes straight up the steps towards the bank.

Three men in the crowd, on one side, step out of it and level their Tommy guns at the young man. He has time enough only to look at them before they open fire. The young man is hit and flung off his feet. Bullets are flying all over the place; there's a 10% chance that one of them will hit one of the player-characters, striking for damage like a normal rifle bullet. The crowd screams and rushes away in a panic.

The young man, incredibly, stands up. Bullets are visibly striking him and ricocheting in hot yellow sparks, and he leans against them as if against a wind. One of the gunmen stops firing long enough to produce a small metal object and fling it at the caped man before they

all duck. The young man falls on the thrown metal object just before it explodes with a terrific noise. Shrapnel goes whizzing in every direction; there's a 5% chance that one of the player-characters will be struck, doing damage as if it too were a normal rifle bullet. The young man stands back up. The steps on which he was lying are crumbled and cracked. He's not even scratched. His hair is maybe a little mussed.

The three gunmen stare, then resume firing. They run out of ammo. They try to run, and the young man leaps 20 meters after them, knocking two of them unconscious by banging their heads together. The third wheels around, a knife in his hand, and tries to stab the caped figure. There seems to be no effect, and with hardly any effort the young man brushes a fist against the gunman's chin, who rocks back as if struck with a club, and crumples inert.

The young man pauses long enough to bend the Tommy guns into U-shapes before he goes back up the steps to the doors — which are flung open to reveal the six other gunmen, who immediately open fire. Again the young man is bowled over, but he gets back to his feet and faces the gunmen, crouching. One by one, each of the guns stop firing, and the gunman cries out in pain and drops his smoking weapon, slapping their hands against their clothing as if to rub something off them. When four have dropped their guns, all of them break; they run down the steps around the young man for their two cars, and start to get inside. One of them produces a pistol and fires it ineffectually at the lone figure on the steps.

The young man pays no attention, but bounds to the middle of the street and waits, with folded arms. The first car, with a great roaring and clashing of gears, starts up and bears down on the figure in the road. It strikes him with a tremendous crunching, metal-rending sound, and stops, its front end crumpled. The other car grinds its gears and backs up, starting to turn around. The caped young man bounds in front of that car, too, and picks it up from the front end with his bare hands. The gunmen in the car cry out, and then their vehicle is smashed back down on the pavement with enough force to break the wheels and axles.

Before the stunned occupants can react, the young man goes through the cars, collects all the weapons, and piles them in the street. He stands back a ways and looks at them. They start to smoke. The ammunition left in them starts to go off (not much of it left), and the wooden parts of them blacken and start to flicker into flame. The metal turns red-hot, and the barrels begin to visibly droop.

Other cars begin to pull up, their interiors stuffed with gunmen who start firing as soon as they see the man in the street. The young man looks around at the people gathering, crouches a little, and springs upwards into the air. He rises with increasing speed, with perhaps twenty Tommy guns spraying lead after him. What few shots hit bounce off with no visible effects, until he disappears over the buildings. The gunmen left behind stop firing and start looking at each other, at the wrecked cars, the half-melted guns, and start babbling: "He melted the guns!" "He bent 'em in two!" "He flew over that tall building!" "People don't fly, birdbrain." "He wasn't no plane, I know that!"

The player-characters will find it very hard to approach this little scene while it is happening without being shot. They may, of course, join the others in the street once the firing has died down.

The characters (at least the Human ones) may very well know by this time who it was they just saw. They can also tell that the Iotians have no idea at all. They've never seen anything like this in their entire lives. By the angry questions they are throwing around, they would like very much to get their hands on this young man and tear his heart out. Then they would *really* start to make him suffer.

GM'S INFORMATION

INTERCEPTED MESSAGES

While the ship is in orbit, and the Communications Officer spends more than two hours monitoring the local radio broadcasts, a news bulletin will break into regular programming, thusly:

"Flash!! We interrupt this broadcast to bring you a special news bulletin. Bank robbery interrupted by mystery man! Sources close to Leelax Mongo's Loop office report that an ordinary heist being pulled at First Security Bank and Trust at 303 West Madison was cut short when a man burst into the building and confronted the heavily-armed Eastsiders. Though he was completely alone and not carrying any visible gun, he disarmed all of Mongo's men, destroyed their weapons, and threw them bodily out of the building before promptly vanishing. Authorities are investigating further. This has been a special news bulletin from WAXY. We now return you to our program in progress."

Listening a further hour will bring on the regular news, and this small item buried in it:

"A bank robbery was interrupted today at a West Side First Security Bank and Trust by a mystery man. He did not rob or kill the men from Leelax Mongo's Loop gang, but he did cause multiple cuts and abrasions in a terrific no-holds-barred free-for-all that resulted in the destruction of the Loop men's weapons and their physical ejection from the building. Authorities have no clues. Speaking from his office, Leelax Mongo was quoted as saying, 'He's just some cheap punk pulling a dumb stunt. We know what he looks like, and we're going to ice him next time he tries it. You can quote me on that.'

"A reward of \$1000 has been offered for the capture of the elusive mystery man. Citizens are to be on the lookout for any strangers in their midst with unusual clothing.'

This broadcast might be heard later on the ground, but not anywhere near Oxmyx's office.

A tap into Oxmyx's phone line will produce this conversation two hours after the Federation people have left. Remember that the orbiting ship has only a 25% chance of intercepting any conversation without a physical bug or other relay device on the line; even if the players think to monitor, and forgot where they were, if they fail their roll they may not hear this:

Oxmyx: Okay, now we can talk. What's this song-and-dance about a jerk in tights?

Other Voice: It's no song-and-dance, Boss. I *tole* ya—

Oxmyx: You show a little respect, Rilke. I sign your check, remember.

Rilke (subdued): Okay, okay, I'm sorry. But, Boss, you gotta *believe* me! We wuz in Exwhil's Jewelry Emporium, makin' our plea for larger protection funds, when this joker in his *underwear* or sumpin' just strolls on it, big as life, and he sez: "You boys'ud do well to just leave here now and not look back." Well, like, he ain't even packin' any *heat* or anythin', and Bobo, he was standin' by the door, watchin' this clown, and when he sees he ain't bein' watched, well, you know Bobo—

Oxmyx (impatient): Yeah, yeah.

Rilke: He takes out his blackjack, and just lays it into the back of this punk's head like *that*, *Boom!* like you seen him done a thousand times before— *and it just bounces off!* Didn't even muss his hair or nothin'! A-and then, then he just turns around and looks at Bobo, like he wuz a kid with a rubberband slingshot instead of the guy what just slugged him behind the ear with five pounds of lead. And Bobo, he just stares at the punk, stares at the blackjack, and like it was slow-motion he rears back to throw his haymaker punch. This kid, he, he just watches it happen! Doesn't try to duck or nothin'! A-a-and then he just puts out his hand, and just, just *catches* Bobo's fist in his hand, and gives him a shove — I swear, I ain't seen nothin' like it in my life! — Bobo just *flies* back into the wall, knocks down a whole lot of shelves, and falls down, *out - cold!*

Oxmyx: While you jerks were standing around gawkin'.

Rilke (hurt): No, Boss, no! I mean, whoever thought somebody'd take a KO from Bobo and keep standin'? Me and the boys, soon as Bobo hit the wall, we pulled our gats. I wuz just gonna tell him to vamoose, but, uh, somebody pulled the trigger. I mean, we just drilled him — five, six times. And Boss, *the bullets just bounced offa him!!*

Oxmyx: Calm down, calm down. He had a bulletproof vest on.

Rilke (shrill): No he *didn't!* Boss, I hit'im in the *head*, and the *bullets - just - bounced - off!* A-and then he, he just pulled the guns outa our hands, balled'em up like they wuz modelin' clay, and handed'em *back* to us like they wuz party favors or sumpin'. And while we're just, like, *starin'* at them, not believin' like any of this is *happenin'*, he starts sluggin'. Boss, I wantya to know, we fought *back*, but it didn't do any good. He was strong's an *ox*, brother, and I mean it! We all just woke up, piled up in the middle of the sidewalk, with Bobo on top. He di'n't have t'hit us more'n *once*.

Oxmyx (after long pause): Who saw this happen?

Rilke: Jeez, Boss, I dunno. I mean, we wuz stacked like pastrami in the middle of the sidewalk, in the middle of the day. Lotsa people.

Oxmyx: Okay. Don't mention this to anybody. You got that? Not anybody. Not the papers, not the radio, not the other guys, not even your mother. It didn't happen.

Rilke (doubtful): Boss, in the middle of the *street* . . .

Oxmyx: You had an accident. You'll be more careful tomorrow. 'Cause tomorrow you're going back to finish the squeeze on that jeweler. You got that?

Rilke (resigned): I got it.

Oxmyx: Okay.

—Disconnect—

About ten minutes later Oxmyx makes another call. If only orbital monitoring is being done, another roll for access must be made.

Oxmyx: Blackie.

Blackie: Yeah.

Oxmyx: Got a job for you.

Blackie: Yeah?

Oxmyx: A kid in tights. No gat and a smart mouth.

Blackie: Real pushover.

Oxmyx: That's right.

Blackie: Blonde hair, no hat, wears a cape.

Oxmyx: You got him already.

Blackie: I wish. Got some guys on the street lookin' for him. For, oh, two grand, I could get a couple more out.

Oxmyx: Two grand? That's outrageous!

Blackie: Hey, times is tough.

Oxmyx: Are we talkin' the same lingo here? This's just one kid. One punk who's got a family somewhere.

Blackie (in singsong): One kid who *flies*, Oxmyx. One kid who stacked your guys and Mongo's like so much cordwood. Bulletproof and unbeatable. But I could find him for you. Won't be easy. Won't be cheap. We talking business here?

Oxmyx (low and ugly): We talk business. Three grand.

Blackie: Hey—

Oxmyx: I want him watched. I want him followed. I want to know what he does, where he lives, who he lives with. I want to know his gimmick. You got that?

Blackie: We do the hit?

Oxmyx: I owe him.

Blackie: You're the Boss. I want it in cash before I get my guys out.

Oxmyx: I'm sendin' it over now. I want results.

Blackie: We can get 'em.

Oxmyx: I'm counting on you, Blackie. No double-dealing.

Blackie: Where he lives, what he does, who he lives with. And his gimmick if he's got one.

Oxmyx: He's got one. Or he ain't human.

Blackie (confidently): Human or not, we'll tail him. Don't worry.

Oxmyx: Yeah. Just find him.

—Disconnect—

RESULTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

At this stage in its development, Iotia is somewhat behind its early 23rd-Century stats as reported on page 60 of *The Federation Sourcebook*. (Wiseguys looking up the stats there won't find it any help here) Nonetheless, it is still considerably more advanced than its appearance would indicate. The following data gives the name of the TSI slot, its present level on Iotia, the required threshold in parentheses, and the way Iotia fulfills it. Additional information, if any, is given in subsequent paragraphs numbered according to the level of information once that particular number on the TSI has been discovered. First-level data can only be discovered once the number is filled in, second-level data only after the number and first-level data, and so on.

Space Sciences Index: 4 (Relativity; celestial mechanics; stellar evolution) The lack of any artificial satellites is fairly conclusive on this one, though the Iotians do possess knowledge of the Federation, of interstellar travel and other non-Human races. Their astronomy is fairly advanced.

Level 1: Diligent research at out-of-the-way universities or a visit to desert launch sites will demonstrate that in fact the Iotians have rudimentary radio astronomy, radiosonde high-altitude balloons and have been experimenting with rocketry in sub-orbital unmanned flights. They are closer to a 5 than they are to a 4.

Level 2: A small clique of radical scientists would kill to get their hands on more-advanced space propulsion systems technology. Liquid-oxygen/hydrogen (LOH) would enable them to launch satellites and explore their solar system. They have no backing, however, beyond what funds they can expropriate, though if they could find access to the Feds computer system, that would be enough.

Engineering Index: 5 (Heating and cooling systems; heavy machinery) The Iotians understand mechanics better than they do electronics. They've been experimenting with frequency modulation and television systems, but they're large, cumbersome systems, and there's no great commercial interest in developing them further.

Level 1: The knowledge of the transistor, let alone the transtator, doesn't exist here, in any book or engineering source. They don't even have computers or electronic calculators. Without a sophisticated knowledge of electronics the Iotians couldn't begin to figure out McCoy's communicator. It's probably been languishing in Oxmyx's safe these past three years.

Level 2: Some ten years ago a strange series of unusual radio pulses was received, apparently originating from space. One of the scientists contacted about the level of research mentions it as an example of Iotian indifference to progress in radio.

Level 3: A recording of these signals was made, and can be found. Poor recording and storage technology have resulted in the loss of most of the signal, but computer analysis indicates it was a distress signal, probably from a civilian spacecraft.

Lif/medical Sciences Index: 5 (Bacteriology and immunology; hybridization; basic hydroponics) The Iotians indeed have 20th-Century medicine. They've experimented with organ transplants, but not in any serious fashion. Limb replacement is strictly a mechanical-replacement idea; hooks and wooden legs. On the other hand, they have excellent nutrition and a superior knowledge of dentistry. They feel no pressure to improve their health care beyond this.

Physical Sciences Index: 5 (Radio communication; x-ray theory; atomic theory; organic chemistry) Again, the standard here is Terra's 20th Century, and no attempt to go beyond it seems to have been made. Electricity is from coal- or oil-fired plants or hydroelectric dams. No materials more sophisticated than some of the more basic high-strength, high-temperature alloys have been produced.

Level 1: It would appear that the Iotians have actually regressed from their previous level. Old and abandoned fission plants, not all of them converted to other forms of power generation, can still be found in remote places, and library archives locked away for a hundred years speak of plastics and materials suitable for jet aircraft or even space-

craft.

Level 2: The Iotians never developed the A-bomb. It remains a theoretical possibility only; no one's ever tried to build one.

Level 3: Some basic research was organized more than a hundred years ago to develop fusion power plants suitable for spacecraft propulsion; but the *Horizon* brought the promise of easier gains in technology, so the project was abandoned.

Planetary Sciences Index: 5 (Basic earthquake prediction and weather modification) Seeding clouds for rain from propellor-equipped airplanes is an old idea. Weather prediction is very good for a society without satellites, and their knowledge of geology includes tectonic theory; they know where their earthquake belts are.

Level 1: Visits to old engineering schools in the vicinity of an earthquake zone show that the Iotians still have some geothermal wells. **Revised Planetary Sciences Index: 6.**

Level 2: Interviews with older people and a good deal of prying into deeply-buried books and manuals reveals that the Iotians were actually practicing more sophisticated weather control with surprisingly unsophisticated equipment and vehicles before the Book. They let that knowledge slip in favor of putting more of their time and energy into duplicating Gangland Chicago.

Psionics Index: 2 (Psi activity recognized, but only rare cases; no understanding) The Iotians, as any Vulcan can readily detect, are a non-psionic race, with limited or no contact with peoples with psionic talents. The basic literature suggests that only the usual odd case of mindreading, hardly distinguishable from magic, has been recorded, and no theory of psionics at all.

Level 1: Here and there in obscure medical texts, and in the professional knowledge of certain psychiatrists, is a coherent but largely undeveloped science of psionics, all stemming from a minor pamphlet on the Vulcans left behind by the *Horizon* and forgotten by nearly everyone.

Level 2: The pamphlet still exists, and is buried in the collection of one Dr. Slyx, widely regarded as a master medical theoretician.

Level 3: Dr. Slyx not only has the pamphlet, but has been sitting atop an already-written 6-volume masterwork on the theory of psionics. Some of his insights are new even to Federation psionic specialists. **Revised Psionic Index: 4.**

RESEARCH INTO TRADE: THE AMBASSADOR

The Ambassador, checking out the trade possibilities, hears a lot of rumors and collects a lot of hearsay. He and his staff do very little outside investigation, so after making all the rolls for discovering the PTP scores he makes no additional rolls for more information *unless the player-characters request it*. New information is uncovered only if the requesting character first rolls under the *lowest* of their *Administration, Carousing, Streetwise* or *Trade and Commerce* skill levels. Only one roll per character may be permitted, but more than one character may request more information.

The values to be discovered form the code: CBDEECC/C(C). New information is acquired in the following order:

Level 1: New, more-advanced technology on Iotia is in only moderate demand. New books and movies would be far more popular, at least at first.

Level 2: Foodstuffs are relatively cheap here, since a large proportion of the planet is agricultural and a greater proportion of the surface is arable land.

Level 3: Nothing.

Level 4: Although the Iotians don't do much medical research themselves, they like the medical goods the Federation has to offer. They'll happily trade food for them.

Level 5: An itinerant food broker mentions in passing a meteor he saw and heard fall way off in the back-country some ten years ago. People went looking for it, but it was never found. Probably blew up before it hit.