THIS ADVENTURE OUTLINE allows the player characters to take a part in "behind-the-scenes" events alluded to in *Shadows of the Empire*. Gamemasters should run this adventure after reading the novel, but players should not have yet read the *Shadows* story. While the outline describes each episode's basic action, the gamemaster must draw maps, determine game statistics and plan out encounters to prepare for play. *Assignment: Decoy* works equally well for Rebel characters or independent smugglers. However, they must have a starship.

EPISODE ONE

The characters are to deliver a small, legal cargo of agricultural machinery to the Bothan home world of Bothawui. Their mission is a decoy—following closely behind their ship is a bulk freighter with a cargo of importance to the "Bothan spies" on the planet's surface. Should Imperial customs vessels be in the system, the characters are to get their own ship boarded and searched so that the bulk freighter may proceed to Bothawui uninterrupted.

Upon arriving in orbit around Bothawui, an Imperial customs Corvette immediately approaches and orders them to prepare for customs inspection; the Imperial agents mention they are searching every ship coming into the system. The

A *Shadows of the Empire*-themed Adventure Outline for the *Star Wars* Roleplaying Game

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bulk freighter is due to arrive very shortly, so the characters must move quickly.

The characters may veer off course, triggering a chase and perhaps hiding in the small asteroid field nearby, but this is a good way to make sure they never get to Bothawui to get paid. They may also wait until the inspection crew is aboard and then fake a major system failure—a power generator overload, for example. That will keep the customs crew busy, and if there seems to be the risk of a dangerous explosion, the bulk freighter will be ordered ahead to land so it can clear the "blaze zone." A space rescue crew will stream aboard to try to avert a disaster, although the characters may be ordered to head to their escape pods (and let the ship explode) if they push their ruse too far. If the players come up with a good diversion and roleplay it well, the bulk freighter is waved on without interruption by the customs ship.

Imperial Customs Corvette. Starfighter scale, *space transports 5D, starship gunnery 5D+2, starship shields 5D+1.* Maneuverability 2D, space 8, hull 5D+1, shields 3D. 6 double turbolaser cannons (fire control 2D, damage 4D).

Customs Troops. All stats are 2D except: *blaster 4D, dodge 3D+2, intimidation 3D+2.* Blaster pistol (4D).

The customs commander, Lieutenant Norrick (his stats are identical except for *intimidation 4D+1, Perception 3D and search 4D+2*), carries a subspace comm. He's a pushy redhead who tries to be intimidating. However, as soon as things start to go wrong, he shows himself to be easily unsettled.

The characters' rendezvous point is a small agricultural factory in a remote mountainous region. The bulk freighter is already there. The cargo is a dozen immense containers filled with grain; as each is emptied, one Y-wing fighter (encased in protective wrapping) becomes visible. Their Bothan contact greets them and gives them the agreed-upon sum of 7,000 credits.

As the characters are dealing with the Bothan, a subspace message comes in over the comm nets. The message is played over a holo-viewer; the sender is a Quarren.

"My Bothan friends. You've long known Vossuk the Quarren as an honest information broker. Now, I have something of great value—to you, to the Rebellion, even to the Empire. I'm looking for a buyer. Meet me on Gall... my time is valuable."

The Bothans confirm Vossuk has been a reliable source of information in the past... although he, like most information brokers, isn't entirely trustworthy. No doubt, the characters see the potential to aid their cause (if they're Rebels) or profit (because they can sell this info). The Bothans hire the characters if they're reluctant to go.

EPISODE TWO

Gall's starport is swarming with bounty hunters, mercenaries and other rough types. Eavesdropping characters will hear that a big reward is being offered for the capture of a prominent Rebel leader named Sky... something-or-other. Of course, the hunters mention that *any* Rebel is worth something these days.

The characters may have several encounters on the street, including:

▲ A tense standoff with off-duty Imperial Navy soldiers. Maybe they cut line, stumble into a character or are just looking to cause trouble... and the characters make a convenient target.

▲ A pickpocket robs a character and flees into the crowds, leading to a wild chase through alleys and open-air bazaars. Perhaps the pickpocket is part of a larger group which is ready to protect her.

▲ One character runs into an old friend from his or her youth. The chum is now a spacer on a freighter ship. (That person may attempt to tag along or may show up at the best—or worst—time to complicate an encounter.)
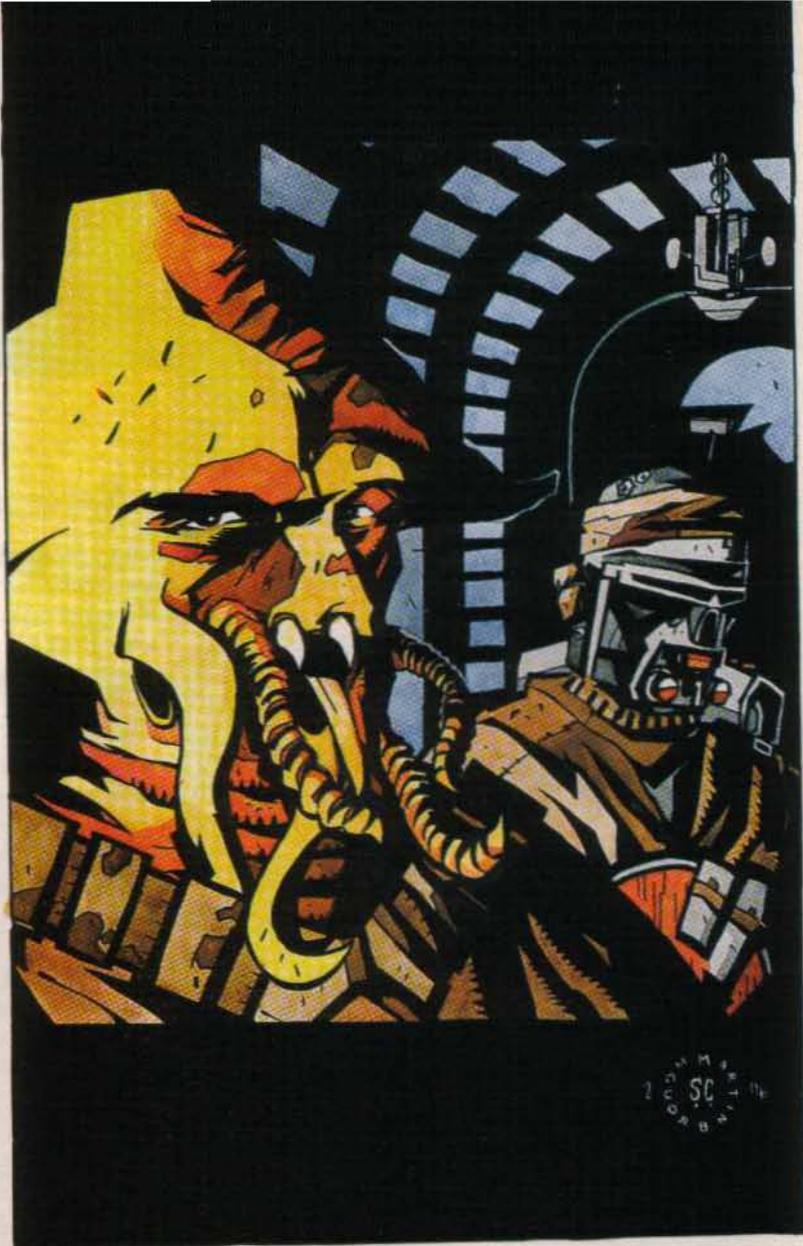
The characters venture to Vossuk's place of business—a starship navigation chart shop—to find it empty and ransacked. Blaster burns are all over the walls and merchandise. Shelves are on their sides and the windows are smashed. If they check the computer, link up their datapad and make a Moderate *computer programming/repair* roll, they retrieve the receipts from the past few days: They get a list of recent customers and an incomplete transaction keyed to a ship in Docking Bay 596-East.

Upon leaving the shop, the characters are trailed by bounty hunters. (Vossuk has a bounty of 5,000 credits on his head, posted by Perit, a famous Mon Calamari information broker and business person; these hunters are trying to claim the bounty.)

Gamemasters should run the investigation only as long as the players are interested. The characters should be given a reasonable chance to notice their tails... but it is up to them to lose the hunters.

6 Bounty Hunters. All stats are 2D except: *blaster 5D, dodge 5D+2, streetwise 4D+1, search 3D.* **Bounty hunter armor (+1D physical, +2 energy), blaster rifle (5D), 2 grenades (5D).**

Eventually, the characters track down Vossuk: By asking around, they can learn where Vossuk was recently spotted and discover his past dealings. They'll find out that some of his receipts were covers for information deals, not navigation chart sales. When they find Vossuk, he offers to give his information for free, if only the characters will safely escort him to a safehouse on the far side of the Gall.

Vossuk. All stats are 2D except: *pickpocket 3D, languages 3D+1, streetwise 4D, value: information 5D, astrogation 3D, bargain 4D, con 4D+2, forgery 3D+2, persuasion 2D+2.* **Comlink, various datacards (containing astrogation charts), hold-out blaster (3D+1).**

Vossuk's information is that the infamous hunter Boba Fett has come to Gall to repair the main hyperdrive on his ship, *Slave I*. Aboard, Fett has the legendary smuggler Han Solo encased in carbonite, and wants to deliver him to Jabba the Hutt on Tatooine. If Solo could somehow be rescued, the Rebels (or Jabba or even the Empire)

would pay a magnificent fee. The Rebellion would pay handsomely just for information leading to Solo's rescue.

In any event, Vossuk knows some of the techs who are working in docking bays near *Slave I*. The techs are off-duty, but they have access to most sections of the starport. *Slave I* is almost repaired, after which Fett will be gone. The characters must act quickly to claim the bounty of a lifetime. They would earn a great debt of gratitude (and a large reward if the characters are independent smugglers).

EPISODE THREE

The most likely way for the characters to get to *Slave I* is to pose as techs. If the characters meet the techs when they're off-duty, Vossuk can help get uniforms and pass-code badges. The characters will probably also want lock-picking gear, sound-suppressors and other tools to help them break into *Slave I* without setting off its elaborate alarm systems.

As the characters get to within a few hundred meters of *Slave I's* docking bay, they find a group of thugs and bounty hunters watching out. The hunters immediately move to stop them and won't accept the tech IDs no matter what story is told. (The characters don't know this, but the hunters are *supposed* to be watching 4-LOM's back while he tries to steal Solo from *Slave I*... but that's another story.)

12 Bounty Hunters. All stats are 2D except: *blaster 6D, dodge 6D, streetwise 3D+2, search 3D.* **Bounty hunter armor (+1D physical, +2 energy), blaster rifle (5D), 2 grenades (5D). The lead bounty hunter has 1 Force Point and 10 Character Points, as well as a stun grenade (6D stun damage, 10 meter blast radius) hidden in the corridor. It can be remotely activated.**

The tension ultimately escalates into a blaster battle (one of the hunters probably recognizes Vossuk). After a few moments of shooting (and at the most dramatic point), there is a huge series of explosions. Boba Fett comes racing through the area, dropping stun gas grenades and firing at anyone with the audacity to show their faces. And before anyone can react, Fett reaches *Slave I* and blasts off.

The characters emerge from the battle just in time to witness *Slave I's* departure, while the *Millennium Falcon* approaches Gall in the distance. Now the characters have to arrange a hasty escape; they *have* promised to get Vossuk to safety.

The Shadows of the Empire
SOURCEBOOK

The official reference companion to the *Shadows* novel will be published by West End Games in June. From Prince Xizor's Black Sun to the many new starships, droids and characters, this fully illustrated sourcebook tells "the story behind the story." It's written by Peter Schweighofer, Editor of *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal* and author of *Platt's Starport Guide* and the *Raiders of the Lost Ark Sourcebook*. The 144-page *Shadows Sourcebook* will be available at fine book, game and comics stores everywhere, for a recommended retail price of $22.

WHAT'S ROLEPLAYING?

A roleplaying game is "let's pretend, with rules." Each person plays his/her own *STAR WARS* hero (a character): a Rebel pilot, a smuggler, a bounty hunter or even a Jedi apprentice. One player is the gamemaster. Instead of playing a character, the gamemaster is the storyteller. He comes up with the adventure idea, describes the scenes of the story to the players and then they decide what their characters are going to do. The players imagine what is going on around them and have their characters react to situations, but there's no script. The players simply try whatever they can imagine. For details, read the *STAR WARS* roleplaying game sourcebooks from West End Games.

Upon delivering Vossuk to the safehouse on the far side of the starport, Vossuk thanks the characters and gives them 2,000 credits for their time. He offers to help them in the future if they need him. All they have to do is find him.

The characters, beaten but with something to show for their efforts, are free to proceed with their normal business.

EPILOGUE

It had been a long few days. Vossuk sat silently in the unpadded chair. The room was dark, but Vossuk preferred the shadows. They were comforting.

Someone entered the room—a human with yellow hair. He was rather short and plump. He silently dropped a small sack and a datadisk on the table. As he turned to leave, he grunted, "My boss told me to give this to you."

Vossuk softly hummed as he opened the sack and counted the markers. Eight, nine ... 10,000 credits. He then slotted the datadisk into his holographic projector/reader. The hologram showed Boba Fett's armored helmet. A mechanical voice rang through the reader's speaker grill.

"You did the job well. The diversion worked. I will overlook the bounty on you for one year. Get your affairs in order... Perit is a dangerous enemy." ☺