

THE TROUBLE WITH TIME



Time Travel for the Judge Dredd RPG.

SECURITY RECORDS
COMPUTER ON LINE
ENTER YOUR NAME
:JUDGE TURLOW
VOICEPRINT ID CONFIRMED —
GOOD AFTERNOON, JUDGE
TURLOW YOU HAVE BEEN
CLEARED FOR ACCESS TO
SECURITY FILES AT PRIORITY
AA1. ANTI-SURVEILLANCE
SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN
ACTIVATED.
WHICH FILE DO YOU
REQUIRE?
:SPECIAL BRIEFING T1
ENTER AUTHORISATION CODE
:BV7-231; ON AUTHORITY OF
CHIEF JUDGE CONFIRM.
ACCESSING BRIEFING T1

Good afternoon, Judge Turlow. You have requested permission to use the Proteus Time Displacement Module in your current investigation. Accordingly, you must be briefed on some of the problems that are likely to arise in any use of this technology. Please note that all information related to Proteus is secret; citizens must *not* be informed of its existence and implications.

The Justice Department first learned that time travel was possible several years ago, when a criminal from the future murdered several Judges. Judge Dredd identified him as a perp who was, and is, frozen in The Vaults. Dredd arranged to have a bomb implanted in the criminal's abdomen. The murderer attacked Dredd, but Dredd detonated the bomb and executed the criminal. Unfortunately the time travel harness used in the attacks was destroyed by the explosion. This incident showed that time travel would be feasible in the near future, and also demonstrated a simple paradox: Dredd arranged to have the bomb implanted while the criminal was still frozen, before he had even begun to plan his crime.

In 2103 Judge Feyy's final prediction warned of a terrible disaster that would occur in 2120. This incident led to the Kryslar case, which is best known as the Judge Child case. Please look at the chart of this case on your monitor screen.

The Kryslar case is a frightening example of a time paradox. Feyy warned of disaster in 2120, and said that Owen Kryslar would rule the city in its hour of need. Judge Dredd followed Kryslar's trail across space to Xanadu, confronted him, and decided that he was innately evil, unworthy to serve as Chief Judge.

Without the prediction, what would have happened to Kryslar? Dredd first

encountered him in Memphis, Filmore Faro's stronghold. If Dredd had not intervened, Kryslar would have been retained as Faro's slave and prophet, until Faro was eventually assassinated or died of old age. Judge Dredd wouldn't have killed Faro, so the series of events stemming from his death wouldn't have occurred as they did. Kryslar would probably have never met the Angel Gang, reached Xanadu, or formed his hatred of Judge Dredd and Mega-City One. Every event between Feyy's death and Dredd's rejection of Kryslar was shaped by precognition, first by Feyy's initial vision, later by Kryslar's talents and the use of Oracle Spice.

Although Dredd rejected Kryslar, the paradox continued. Kryslar used his powers to attack Mega-City One, but was killed by Dredd. Grunwalder attempted to clone Kryslar, but created a hideous mutant with unimaginably strong psychic powers. In 2120 this creature would have attacked Mega-City One and assumed absolute power, thus bringing about the disaster predicted in 2103.

By an apparent stroke of luck, the Justice Department perfected the Proteus time travel module in 2106, and Chief Judge McGruder sent Judge Dredd and Psi-Judge Anderson to investigate events in 2120. Through a computer record of the disaster, and a confrontation with The Mutant, Dredd learned enough to forestall Kryslar's triumph; the Judges travelled back to 2106, then to Xanadu, and killed The Mutant a few moments after it was born. This death seems to have ended the threat of disaster in 2120.

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At first sight it would appear that use of the Proteus module had saved Mega-City One; however, the case involved so many apparent coincidences that Tek-Div theoreticians became suspicious. Recent work has proved that the entire incident was a self-cancelling time loop, affecting the years 2106 to 2120; the prediction was caused by the attack of The Mutant, which in turn was caused by the prediction. The Proteus module warped time sufficiently to allow such a complex paradox to form. When Dredd killed The Mutant in 2106 this section of looped time ceased to exist; in a sense Dredd destroyed the universe by his actions, substituting a new timeline.

This was not entirely unprecedented; there have been many incidents of precognition actually causing the incidents that were predicted. For example, citizens sometimes panic and commit crimes when Judges arrive to check out a precog vision. Fortunately most prediction takes place over a relatively short time period, and the paradoxes which occur are minor.

Department psychologists suspect that the information bought back by Dredd and Anderson has caused additional problems. For example, Anderson learned that she would apparently be head of Psi-Div by 2120. Soon afterwards she was partially responsible for the return of the Dark Judges; it seems likely that knowledge of her future may have been one cause of her carelessness. The reprimand she earned is likely to prevent her promotion. Similarly, Judge Dredd's report mentioned that McGruder was still Chief Judge when The Mutant appeared; it's possible that this influenced her judgement in the case that led to the death of Judge Omar and her resignation. Dredd learned that he would apparently be alive, and serving as a Judge, in 2120; as yet there has been no noticeable change in his behaviour, apart from a continued tendency to take suicidal risks.

The Proteus expedition may have created rifts in time. Soon afterwards Mega-City One was attacked by a squadron of World War Two German aircraft which mistook the city for Stalingrad. Fortunately few citizens were killed. More rifts may occur in the future.

At present attempts to use time travel to obtain knowledge of the future are banned, to prevent further paradoxes. Travel into the past is also forbidden, since there is too much risk of upsetting the balance of history. For example, one bullet could prevent the Apocalypse War, but the technology which created Proteus was in part derived from advances made as a result of the war.

Hopefully further research will suggest ways of preventing these paradoxes, and thus permit the personal time machines that are ultimately expected to appear.

For these reasons your request is refused. You may appeal, if you feel that the urgency of your investigation is sufficient to risk upsetting the space-time continuum.

GM's Notes

The Judge Dredd universe includes time travel and precognition. Both have been important plot elements in several adventures; the Kryslar case is the most complex, but there have been other

ACKNOWLEDGED. SPECIAL BRIEFING T1 IS OVER. SECURE CONDITIONS WILL END IN FIVE SECONDS— FOUR— THREE— TWO— ONE— NOW. DO YOU WISH TO LODGE AN APPEAL?
:NO.

examples. Fortunately these adventures have been remarkably consistent.

Precog visions are notoriously inaccurate; one possible rationale is the assumption that precogs select between a number of possible futures, and sometimes tune in to unrealised time lines. When a precog vision comes true it is often a self-fulfilling prophecy; for example, Judge Anderson's confused precog vision in the ABC murders case was in part responsible for the strain which led to Judge Monk's breakdown.

Precog visions which lead to Judges preventing a crime are inherently paradoxical. Fortunately accuracy seems to be limited over long time periods; for example, a precog might be able to send Judges to an approximate area ten minutes before a crime was committed, but would only be able to describe the criminal a few seconds before the crime. Owen Kryslar once said "I can predict all futures but my own"; this seems to be true of all precogs, and is a useful limitation on their powers. Some interesting plot ideas could derive from this limitation; for example, all the precogs in a sector house might suddenly say that they can't see the future, because someone had planted a nerve gas cartridge in the sector house air conditioning system!

Although precog visions imply a degree of paradox, the problems they cause are relatively short-lived. Time travel is likely to lead to major paradoxes. The Kryslar case is the definitive example, and seems to establish most of the rules;

1. The future isn't fixed. Time travel takes you into a potential future, a possible timeline which may or may not come to fruition.
2. Time travel into the past can alter the past and your own present. A new timeline forms at the moment you first arrive in the past. It may be superficially identical to the original timeline, but there will still be subtle changes. Information taken into the past can change the present.
3. There seems to be an 'observer' effect, possibly a manifestation of the uncertainty principle. Any knowledge bought back from the future is likely to change it.
4. Although there's no definite connection with the Proteus system,

something does seem to have damaged the space-time continuum in the vicinity of Mega-City One. The idea that time travel is responsible seems reasonable.

If these problems can be solved, it seems odd that more time travellers haven't arrived from the future. The most likely answer is that time travel is so inherently dangerous that it will never be de-restricted. The Judge murders described above remain a problem; the most plausible explanation is that the attacks, and subsequent events, changed the future so much that time technology will never be released to the public. An alternative but remarkably cold-blooded explanation is that Judges in the future might preserve the time line by allowing the killer to steal a time travel harness, possibly even brainwashing him to ensure that the murders will occur exactly as they were supposed to. Both explanations lead to many additional complications.

Nothing said so far prevents the use of time technology to observe the past. For example, there's nothing to stop the Justice Department using Proteus, or a more advanced machine, to send small spy robots back to observe crimes as they were committed. A spy in the sky camera is already small enough to pass unnoticed; with the miniaturisation techniques available by 2110 or 2120, equivalent machines could be as small as flies. Some would probably be used to study important historical figures (is it a coincidence that Fergee, the saviour of Mega-City One, was continually pestered by flies?), others would be used to track suspected criminals and their victims. What would happen if the Justice Department learned that apparently innocent citizens were under such surveillance?

Time travel offers so many easy solutions to problems that it's essential to keep it under firm control. Although players may have read about the Kryslar case, there's no reason to assume that all the facts have ever been revealed, even within the Justice Department. Proteus could still be a closely-guarded secret, known only to a handful of senior Judges and Tek-Div personnel. Player characters wouldn't necessarily know anything about the machine; those who did would still have to make a very good case before they were allowed to use it, and risk memory erasure or exile to Titan if they discuss it publicly.

If you do feel obliged to run time travelling adventures, try to avoid really gross situations; it might be nice for the team to prevent the Apocalypse War, but doing so would certainly take your campaign away from the main-stream of adventures published for the game, and would leave the GM all the work of designing background events. It's more fun to embroil the team in an adventure in which they must try to maintain the status quo, even if it means allowing some form of disaster to occur.

Unless you are prepared to deal with all the paradoxes that can be caused by time travelling player characters, it's better to limit your campaign to the secondary aspects of this technology; cases in which there is evidence of

tampering from the future, suppression of civilian time experiments, and the problems of precognition. Even these limitations can still lead to some interesting and peculiar adventures.

The Kryslar Case

a time paradox in action

Restricted Access;
Priority AA1:
By permission of Chief Judge or Council of Five ONLY

Main Time Line

2103: Judge Feyy predicts disaster in 2120 and says that Owen Kryslar will rule Mega-City One.

Judge Dredd searches for Kryslar — the Judge Child Expedition

Dredd finds Kryslar but decides that he is unfit to rule. Kryslar is left on Xanadu.

Kryslar seeks revenge. Dredd kills Kryslar.

2106: Dredd & Anderson use Proteus time travel module to visit 2120

Grunwalder attempts to clone Kryslar, creates The Mutant accidentally.

Dredd kills The Mutant and destroys Grunwalder.

Anderson's error allows the Dark Judges to attack.

McGruder's errors lead to widespread destruction and death of Judge Omar; she takes the Long Walk

Potential Time Line

2106 — 2120: The Mutant survives. As it matures it gains immense psi power.

The Mutant conquers Mega-City One,

2120: Dredd & Anderson study a computer record of the disaster, and learn that McGruder was still Chief Judge, Anderson was head of Psi-Div.

Dredd learns that The Mutant was responsible for the disaster, and is a clone of Kryslar created by Grunwalder.

Dredd meets himself, and learns that he survived until 2120.

Dredd & Anderson return to 2106.