

dable task roll of either Mechanics or Electronics will allow the character to realize that there is no way for the device to actually work. Yet there is no sign of trickery—no hidden wires or mirrors.

The secret to Mendoza's weird inventions is that he is a powerful psionic and doesn't know it. His psionic powers are completely untrained and uncontrolled. They do not function like normal psionic skills. Instead, Dr. Mendoza's inventions simply work or don't, depending on his powers. He cannot do anything deliberately.

If Mendoza believes that a device does not work, then his psionic abilities will not function. But once he has had a chance to "adjust" the machine, his powers will kick in. It is a matter of belief.

This was the reason for the scandal which drove him from the university—Mendoza was unconsciously making his experiments produce the data he wanted, even when the apparatus should not have worked at all.

The referee should not try to fit Mendoza's abilities into the stan-

dard framework of psionic skills. Things just *happen* around him. Most of his devices can be powered by Psychokinesis, but a few require Teleportation, Clairvoyance or other abilities.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

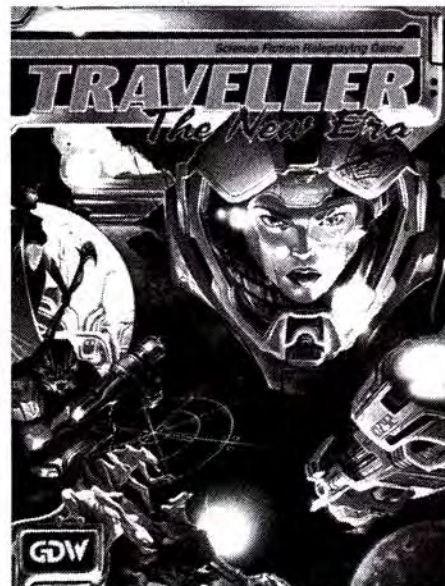
Though Dr. Mendoza can conceivably operate his research ship himself, he could always hire trained spacers to work as pilots or crew aboard *Giordano Bruno*. Or else his ship might be the only transport available on a remote planet, forcing the player characters to buy passage with Mendoza.

Though Mendoza's devices never function when he is not present, his excellent scientific background and strong personality have convinced some that he is a misunderstood genius. Various parties might try to steal his inventions, and the PCs could be hired either to protect the professor or to help rob him.

Dr. Mendoza has had to sell some of his inventions in the past, to raise needed funds. Needless to say, the gadgets quit working as soon as he left. A disgruntled customer might

want revenge, and the adventurers could be hired as bounty hunters. If Mendoza learns that a buyer is out to get him, he might hire the player characters as bodyguards.

Finally, the greed and hunger for power of a group of player characters should not be overlooked. If they hear that an eccentric scientist has invented a reactionless drive, they may try to buy or steal it themselves. Ω



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