



Image courtesy of NASA

# RETURN TO THE O.B.E.L.I.S.C.

## Premise

The **Outer Belt Elite Level Intelligence and Security Centre** (O.B.E.L.I.S.C.) was abandoned almost a century ago at the end of **The Insurrection** - a relic of unhappier times better forgotten. It's still there, spinning lazily on it's tether at the L1 between Kuiper Belt Object 136199 Eris and its primary moon Dysnomia. Who knows what secrets lie hidden in the cold and dark some 59.9 AU from Sol?

## Character Creation

Characters are built using 10 dice, with all options available. Characters are Mavericks - the Bottom Feeders in the Spacer Community - outcasts and pariahs who've gotten blacklisted by "**Central**" for whatever reason and but can't stand the idea of becoming a "Groundhog". They now exist on the fringes as private operators. Everyone has a past.

Space Archeology or "Tomb Raiding" is hazardous but occasionally very lucrative, especially since the advent of Warp Sphere technology has allowed FTL travel to distant sites.

## Basic Structure

Choose/randomise the options, add your own TNs, season with atmospheric details and serve. Feeds a small group, or just one with the [Mythic GME](#).

### Act I

The PCs are charged with retrieving the macguffin\* from the OBELISC. It's a milk run, if a little out of the way. What could possibly go wrong?

The PCs warp in at a "safe" distance - "flat" manifold - and dock with the OBELISC. Inside, the OBELISC is apparently howling - it's an eerie and inhuman noise that gets progressively louder as they rise through the levels of the OBELISC. While they are searching the OBELISC, unbeknownst to them, an antagonist sabotages their ship (in a way that is repairable?).

### Act II

At the top of the OBELISC they find the macguffin\* - huzzah! Also, it turns out the howling is due to the aging tether. Surely it shouldn't be making that noise? Indeed not. \*snap\*. Everyone goes into free fall. How much of a problem is that? (the lifts stop working...)

Someone realises/calculates that the new trajectory will intersect with the atmosphere of Eris, causing the orbit to decay and the OBELISC to disintegrate and burn up. No more time for searching - they'd better get going. They make an "interesting" zero-g journey back through the OBELISC to discover the sabotage.

### Act III

A new howling begins. It's soft at first, but will rise slowly in pitch and volume as the OBELISC encounters the atmosphere of Eris.

The Characters repair the damage, serve suitable vengeance on the antagonist (who was caught off-guard by the snapping tether - it wasn't on their agenda either and ruined their clean get away), and escape. To add emotional complexity, have the antagonist offer indispensable repair skills or deliver the trajectory news if the PCs haven't realised it yet.

### Epilogue

If this was a one-shot, then the Characters return the macguffin\* to its rightful owner, who thanks them and pays them. Roll credits and theme tune. If this is a series then here are d6 other segue possibilities:

- The macguffin\* belongs to someone else or the characters want to keep it.
- The macguffin\* has some content that must be made public, but "**Central**" wants it buried.
- The owner has lied about its value and seriously short changes or simply steals the macguffin\*.
- The owner has mysteriously vanished and the PCs investigate or they are likely to be next.
- The macguffin\* is an essential component in a doomsday device. Oops.
- The macguffin\* is a clue to the next step in the larger plot arc (National Treasure/Indiana Jones).

### \*The Macguffin (d4)

- A computer memory element containing (d8):
  - Memoirs/letters of a lost relative
  - Confessions of someone (important?)
  - A list of forgotten war criminals
  - Evidence of forgotten war crimes

- Financial data about a frozen bank account
- The next clue to a greater treasure
- An Artificial Intelligence
- The next big step in Warp Sphere Tech

- An alien artifact that (d6):

- is a limitless power source
- is a doomsday weapon
- is the trigger for a doomsday weapon
- can distort space and/or time
- is actually an egg
- bestows immortality

- A deadly virus
- A person in suspended animation

### The Call to Action (d6)

- A Charlie (a mysterious stranger they never see)
- A "**Central**" official offering a clean slate for all
- An Organised Crime Boss
- A representative of a Huge Industrial Complex
- An eccentric billionaire (who accompanies you?)
- A person who wants to clear a (/their?) name

### The Antagonist (d6)

- The OBELISC A.I. (6)
- A hireling of a rival to The Call to Action (5)
- An under resourced rival to The Call to Action (4)
- A mis-guided rival to The Call to Action (4)
- The Call to Action (5)
- The person being searched for (4)

### The O.B.E.L.I.S.C.

In common with all real spaceships, the OBELISC is more like an office block than an ocean going ship. It's 599m "high" and 80m across at the base tapering to 40m at the top, it has a mass of around  $2 \times 10^8$  kg. It is tethered to a small ice body by a carbon nano ribbon that is 2.7km to the centre of mass and spins once every 110 seconds. Originally the spin plane was turned to be tangential to the orbit, but tidal

forces and the lack of correction burns have twisted the plane of spin exaggerating the tidal forces further, causing the tether to flex and make that awful noise.

The docking manoeuvre is a tricky brachistochrone approach (Pilot TN16). A failed roll may require a landing on Dysnomia to pick up more reaction mass. The fusion reaction thrusters are folded back from the base of the OBELISC to expose the dock (worried?).

Inside there is a stale but breathable atmosphere, but it's very cold and dark. The artificial gravity produced by the spin is a slightly oppressive 1.1g (it's a more pleasant 0.9g at the top). No power means no lifts (do the characters really want to walk up 133 floors?). The OBELISC can be "woken" with a TN10 Hacking roll or a TN14 engineering roll.

### Internal Structure - a schematic map (kind of)

Floors	Content
136-138	Tether gubbins
134-135	Data & Communications
133	Command & Control
122-136	Offices
109-121	Staff Accommodation
106-108	Retail
100-105	Parks and Leisure. Large bodies of water and big objects like vehicles are "interesting" in zero-g.
91-99	Prisoner accommodation
11-90	Reaction Mass
1-10	Dock, Drives, Reactors and Engineering

Note: Eris & Dysnomia actually exist and were originally designated UB313 "Xena" and "Gabrielle" (after Xena's side kick). In mythology Dysnomia was Eris' daughter and the Goddess of Lawlessness, a nod to the fact that the actress who played Xena was Lucy Lawless.