

The Mechanism

The Involuntary Transportation System in Unfiltered

The most alarming thing about the system used to distribute involuntary transportees to the colony worlds is how *smooth* and *civilized* it is at this point. People in its grips will find themselves removed from their homes and societies with every consideration given to their desires, as long as it's not about where they're going, or whether they want to go in the first place. What happens on the colony worlds is a different topic, mind you. One outside the control of the Great Powers. And, sometimes, the Survey/Colonization Initiative.

The Great Powers

A Great Power's role in the transportation process focuses on finding the transportees, and delivering them to S/CI.

The first part isn't particularly difficult. Involuntary transportation has not replaced the criminal justice system in any Great Power, but it now makes up perhaps the largest portion of it. Earth considers aggressive criminals, habitual drug users, and the violently insane to be a mental health problem. Every Great Power provides treatment for such disorders as a public service; the treatment programs are effective, long-lasting, and absolutely involuntary. The Great Powers also maintain a rehabilitation-heavy prison system for one-time crimes of passion or greed, or negligent actions that result in death or serious injury, or simply nuisances like public intoxication (note that addiction to alcohol is a mental health problem). Everything else these days gets you a ticket to a colony world.

But these aren't the bad old days, all right? You do *not* disappear in the night. There's going to be a fair hearing. Edge cases usually get away with a warning, the first time. If the judgment goes against you, you are given a real opportunity to get your affairs in order. The government will step in to help you straighten out tricky legal or financial situations. You *will* be able to remain in contact with your loved ones throughout the situation. If you have a problematic medical condition, you won't even be going in the first place¹.

Note: sufficiently violent behavior while resisting the transportation process will be treated as a mental health problem. Depending on the circumstances, it might be considered a *contagious* mental health problem.

The Survey/Colonization Initiative

S/CI has oversight over transportees, once delivered. Its oversight is officially perpetual, but in practice each colony world is different.

S/CI has an entire Amalgamation-designed infrastructure (including a fleet of indestructible ships) for use in transporting people to the colony worlds. The consensus among researchers is that the Amalgamation would be intimately involved in the entire (small-p) process, treating the colony worlds as a long-term educational facility. Humans would carefully learn how to handle living under alien stars, before being given fresh new worlds to settle in and make their own. It all sounded rather nice, in fact.

But something showed up one day and murdered the Amalgamation, so Earth and The Process now have to make do with what's left. The ships were retrofitted with cold-sleep pods to maximize transport capacity (each ship can and does take one hundred thousand transportees

¹ Unless you choose to. Why would anyone choose to? ...Well, if they're going to cure you of your illness, they're also going to treat whatever attitude caused you to get you transported like it was a mental health condition, and cure you of *that*, too.

at a time). The colony worlds are now deemed permanent homes for humanity, assuming that the Amalgamation doesn't come back later. Humans must now find their own fresh, new worlds. And hope they stay that way.

S/CI is a firm believer in 'hurry up, and wait.' Once a transportee is delivered to them, he or she will be in cold sleep within an hour, and ready to be shipped out in three. Then it's just a matter of sending them on the right ship to the right colony world. That can admittedly take some time, but each colony world gets at least one shipment per fiscal quarter². Attempts to interfere with transportees in cold sleep is *strongly discouraged*.

What happens when the transportee gets to a colony world? It depends:

- **Jefferson** is an *independent world*, thank you very much. The S/CI acts in an advisory capacity only, and provides the fewest amount of services to the new colonists of all the colony worlds. The planetary government actively discriminates against people who spend too much time 'using the S/CI as a crutch.'
- On **Zheng He**, S/CI runs the main continent of Nova Lisboa. S/CI feeds you, clothes you, shelters you, employs you, and pays you. If you don't mind, it's not that bad. If you *do* mind, they don't care. If you *really* do mind, there's always the islands. S/CI considers the islands to be somebody else's problem. Whose? Doesn't matter. Somebody else's.
- The S/CI on **Bolivar** is more cult than NGO. The megacorps effectively running the colony world have a fraught relationship at best with Earth's NGOs, and S/CI has made some truly unfortunate staffing choices for Bolivar. Its current on-planet organization is fanatically anti-corporate, dominated by odd and discredited pre-Contact ideologies, and decidedly inclined to violence. If Cyrk could ban S/CI outright, it absolutely would. Since it can't, it settles for rattling S/CI's cage whenever it can. S/CI rattles right back.
- It's said that a S/CI agent's influence on **Abubakri** is directly proportional to the size of her gun. This is absurd. S/CI is perfectly capable of setting up mercenary proxies, of whatever size it needs to run capers on that colony world. And there are many, many capers to be run. The planet is weighted down with ruins which are absolutely *stuffed* with highly valuable (and probably not instantly fatal) alien relics. All a smart S/CI operative needs is pluck, luck, and an endlessly-replenishing pool of field workers with dubious pasts.

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² In the old days, the operational tempo was considerably faster. There is an undercurrent of worry about this.