

# Privateer: The Series

Version 1.1: April 13, 1995

## Foreword

- ☐ Something nasty and fatal occurred to this version of the bible two days ago; loading it into any of the word-processors I have caused the system to hard crash. This lost me some of the work I'd completed for this draft. I've reconstructed as much as I could, and will re-include more of the lost material (as I find or reconstruct it) in future drafts.  
To prevent a recurrence of the problem, I have simplified the document (temporarily), and did so by pulling out all the nifty Table of Contents codes... so this edition does not have a pregenerated Table of Contents. Sorry about the inconvenience.
- ☐ Items marked with the notation "\*\*\*\*" have been added or substantially revised since version 1. When presenting portions of this document to persons outside the **Privateer** design team, it would be a good idea to search and replace to eliminate this designation.
- ☐ One of the new sections, "Society," addresses many questions about human culture in the 27th century. Most of what you'll find in this section amounts to speculation on my part, and I am wedded to none of it; let me know what doesn't work for you and I'll excise it by the next revision.
- ☐ Many of the new and old planets and organizations described below utilize the new data format I mentioned at our last meeting. Not all of them have been upgraded yet to this format. Please let me know if the format suits your needs and I'll make sure that all subsequent planets and organizations utilize this structure.

Alan Allston  
8/31/02



## Introduction

### Executive Summary

A dashing, can-do soldier returns home from the Galactic War to discover that making a living -- even staying alive -- in the latter half of the 27th century will take every ounce of his energy, ingenuity, and charm.

Based on the award-winning and worldwide bestselling computer game by Chris Roberts, *Privateer: The Series* is an hour-long science fiction series that transplants the excitement, adventure and danger of the American Wild West to the frontiers of outer space.

### About Privateer: The Series

*Privateer: The Series* follows the adventures of one man through the dangers and opportunities of the space frontier in the 27th century.

The Terran/Kilrathi War, a savage decades-long struggle fought between human colonies of the planet Terra (Earth) and the empire of the feline Kilrathi, is over. The governments of the Confederation of Terran Worlds now turn their attention toward trade and expansion.

Countless soldiers and pilots trained for war are leaving the service and looking for ways to utilize their skills in the private sector. Some are finding legitimate ways; some are turning pirate and privateer. Spaceways once racked by war are now peaceful, and regions formerly calm are now overrun by high-tech bandits.

Series protagonist Joe Turner is one of these men. Formerly a pilot of the space navy, at war's end he resigned his commission and returned to private life. He now makes his living as best he can in the territory where he was born, the Border Worlds, a frontier region where law enforcement officers of the Confederation can't keep up with the sudden jump in the number, training, and sophistication of bandits.

### Theme of the Series

The series is about one man making his way in a universe filled with danger and opportunity.

The protagonist, Joe Turner, will encounter many situations that initially look very profitable. But he finds that if he goes for the big kill, the maximum profit, someone will be hurt or deprived. If he goes for a lesser gain for himself, with benefit for everyone involved, his sense of fairness is satisfied... but he is forced to continue his hard-working, hand-to-mouth existence. Joe tends to make the right choice, but, being human, sometimes fails to and has to deal with the consequences.

In contrast, the villains of the series always choose the "total victory" approach, and Joe Turner will frequently come across the consequences of those choices.

As the season progresses, Joe will realize that certain clues he has been assembling



point to a prize he can attain, a prize that makes every prior goal in his life look inconsequential. It appears that there are no strings attached... but after so many recent bouts with his own ethics, Joe has to consider the possibility that he just can't see the strings. Too, his adversaries are after the same goal, and can use it to make themselves incredibly powerful at the expense of everything and everyone Joe holds dear; whether or not he decides to attain the prize, Joe must keep it out of the hands of his enemies.

### Approach to the Series

Every episode of *Privateer: The Series* is a stand-alone episode. Barring the occasional two-parter, episodes do not have to be viewed in correct broadcast sequence to be enjoyable or comprehensible.

However, a strong thread of continuity runs through the episodes. A clue Joe picks up in one episode will be profiled and explained in a later story. As the season continues, Joe realizes that he has been following a trail of clues toward a definite goal, and that the enemies he's picked up along the way follow similar trails. The season finale brings all the continuity elements together and resolves the mysteries that have puzzled Joe.

In tone, some of the episodes are adventuresome, some are serious, and some are comic. All three approaches are in keeping with the personality of Joe Turner. As a rogue and former pilot, he is often thrust into dangerous situations; as an ethical man, he must often struggle with serious issues; as a charmer who gets by on his wits and manner more often than by on his fighting skills, he frequently lands in situations that are comical, often at his expense.

### Privateer: The Series and Privateer: The Game

Simultaneous with the broadcast of the pilot episode of *Privateer: The Series* will be the release of **Privateer II**, second game of the **Privateer** series.

In **Privateer II**, hero Marc Lassiter, a contemporary of Joe Turner, also sells his skills in the Border Worlds setting. He visits many of the worlds presented in the TV series and encounters many of the characters from the series, including Joe Turner. In the course of the game, Marc finds himself on the same mystery trail as Joe, though neither knows the other is on it.

In **Privateer III**, released to coincide with the TV series season finale, Marc Lassiter follows the trail of clues to its end... and there finds Joe Turner on the same mission. Together, the two heroes will confront the enemies they have acquired during their respective adventures and resolve the problem posed by the prize they have sought.

**Privateer II** and **III** will use the same special visual effects as the TV series, and include live action footage of characters. Characters from the TV series will make cameo appearances in the game, and Marc Lassiter and other characters from the game will make cameo appearances on the series. At season's end and in **Privateer III**'s concluding episodes, the heroes of both series and game share equal billing as they deal with the menace they have uncovered.



### About Chris Roberts' Games

After a history of designing successful computer games in Europe, Chris Roberts designed the breakthrough game **Wing Commander** for Origin Systems, Inc. The game's great strength was that it took science fiction flight simulator technology and wedded it with a strong story and an interesting setting. The game introduced hundreds of thousands of players to the Terran Confederation and their enemies, the Kilrathi, catlike humanoids with a taste for war and conquest.

The sequel, **Wing Commander II: Vengeance of the Kilrathi** (1991), improved the game's technology and broadened the player's understanding of the setting. **Privateer** (1993), set in the same universe, looked away from the Terran/Kilrathi War to look at traders and pirates in border territories.

It was the 1994 release of **Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger** that set the stage for *Privateer: The Series*. **Wing Commander III** followed the adventures of characters introduced in the previous **Wing Commander** games, but abandoned the technique of computer-animated characters, substituting live action instead. Characters long familiar to fans of the series were no longer graphic animations; instead, they were portrayed by such actors as Mark Hamill, John Rhys-Davies, and Malcolm McDowell. The result was a quantum leap in the players' appreciation for the game story. In addition, long-running storylines from the game setting were resolved, and new ones introduced, adding to the depth and texture of the game universe.

Chris Roberts and Origin Systems, Inc. remain committed to the **Wing Commander/Privateer** series of games; in development now are **Privateer II**, **Privateer III**, and **Wing Commander IV**, games which will continue to redefine the potential of computer games.

## Characters

### Executive Summary

Regular characters in the series include *Joe Turner*, a dashing, Han Solo-like rogue; *Marc Lassiter*, a grimmer pilot and adventurer who is the principal hero of the **Privateer** game; *Aria Ellison*, executive officer for the local military presence and Joe's love interest; *Kyle Stone*, a profiteer and strongarm man who is Joe's enemy; and *Phillip Rickman*, a criminal mastermind on the trail of the biggest score of all time.

### Primary Characters

#### Joe Turner, Series Protagonist

Joe is a handsome, charming man with a self-deprecating sense of humor. He prefers to avoid conflict, particularly physical conflict, whenever possible; instead, he relies on negotiating skill and a talent for getting out of trouble that nearly rivals his talent for getting into it. When conflict can't be avoided, however, he has all the skill and training of an experienced military pilot.

A decorated Terran Confederation Marines pilot during the Terran/Kilrathi War, Joe chose to resign his commission at war's end. At the series start, Joe returns to his home territory, the Border Worlds, to make his fortune. Between savings, military pay, and credit, he has managed to purchase a small armed trade ship affectionately named *Kludge*. That name also applies to its onboard computer, which serves as his foil when humans aren't around... and which Joe has programmed to speak with the voice of Aria Ellison (see below).

Events that come to light during the series make it clear that Joe resigned his commission due to conflicts with superior officers over the way battles were to be waged and victory gained.

#### Marc Lassiter, Game Protagonist

The hero of the computer games is an intense, serious trader who knows that a keen competitive spirit is the key to success in the Border Worlds.

Like Joe Turner, Marc Lassiter was a pilot in the Terran Confederation Navy. Unlike Joe, Marc was a deadly duellist, well-known for his combat skills, but had less ability for negotiation or strategic planning... meaning that he had less future in a peacetime navy. When force reduction efforts began, Marc took the most promising severance package he could and left the service. Today, he takes assignments throughout the Border Worlds, often on escort and combat missions.

Marc, though not gloomy, dresses dark and looks dangerous; it's an approach that enhances his reputation and makes him more memorable to patrons.

#### Aria Ellison, Joe's Romantic Interest



During the Terran/Kilrathi War, Aria was executive officer of the naval carrier on which Joe served. It was her duty to keep the independent-minded pilot in line, a situation neither of them enjoyed. They were in frequent conflict, but romantic sparks still flew; however, neither had time or occasion to do anything about them.

At war's end, Aria stayed in the military to pursue a promising career. She has recently been assigned to the staff of Admiral David Terrell, military commander of the Border Worlds. This promises to bring her into continued contact with Joe Turner. It also means trouble for her, as she is obviously being groomed to be Terrell's replacement, which has earned her the admiral's resentment.

Aria is a Terran Confederation Navy captain.

### **Kyle Stone, Strongarm Villain**

Stone is often described as muscle for some criminal leader or another. After all, he's a thick-looking strongarm man who does special assignments for anyone who will pay, including the crime syndicates, and has no compunctions about the way he earns his pay. However, he's actually a very clever man who uses beefy looks and a dumb expression to conceal a very sharp mind.

One of the primary villains of the series, Stone is like Joe in many ways -- but lacking totally in conscience or human empathy. A specialist in covert operations during the recent war, he resigned his commission under allegations of war crimes (his unit contributed a lot of medical information about the limits of Kilrathi physical and mental endurance). More recently, he has put his many security skills to bad use in the private sector. He shadows both Joe and Marc throughout the series, and ultimately ends up working for Rickman (see immediately below).

### **Phillip Rickman, Master Villain**

Rickman is an amoral genius allied with the Border Worlds' loose affiliation of crime syndicates. A criminal Patton, he is a master tactician who imagines that he has lived previous lives in eras and cultures he finds interesting.

Rickman believes himself to be the author of his own destiny... and everyone else's. If he defines someone he meets as his next romantic conquest, he will bend heaven and earth to make that person meet his definition. If he defines someone as a grunt soldier, he will never believe that person capable of anything but the most limited thought.

An avid student of ancient history and culture, Rickman has recently uncovered fascinating links between ancient technological devices unearthed at various sites across the galaxy and the mythologies of both the worlds of Terra and Kilrah. Suspecting ancient links between the worlds, Rickman has realized that both his race and the Kilrathi race owe their origins to a third race, the Stelteks, often called the Immortals, and has decided to learn everything he can about their power... so he can make it his.

During the season, Rickman is hot on the track of an ancient Steltek device of power; the search for this relic is the underlying story of the entire season.



## Secondary Characters

**Jerome Adams:** This captain of a cargo vessel aids Joe Turner in a bold mission into Kilrathi space. A corvette captain during the early phases of the Terran/Kilrathi War, his attention is devoted to merchant concerns now, but he retains many of his military skills.

**Colonel Christopher Blair:** This hero of the **Wing Commander III** game was played by actor Mark Hamill. A deadly fighter pilot with a long history of success against the Kilrathi, Blair spent ten years under suspicion of treason after the destruction of the carrier *Tiger's Claw* but cleared his name toward the end of the war. Blair will appear in the "Price of Freedom" episodes, which chronicle a movement toward civil war between the Union of Border Worlds and the Confederation.

**Rhonda Davies:** Rhonda is a middle-aged archaeologist working on the world of Challenger. Her discovery of a Stelte artifact precipitates Joe Turner's involvement with Phillip Rickman. She is a motivated, self-possessed, somewhat abrasive scientist.

**Louis Dupre:** He is a corrupt representative of the Merchants' Guild on the world of Perry. Dupre's duty is an important one: He helps Admiral Tolwyn's subordinates transport munitions stolen from Perry Naval Base to secret caches belonging to the Strategic Readiness Agency.

**Dr. Edward Gauderic:** He is an Oxford physicist whose work in gravitic sensors threatens to expose the movements of Stelte ships. Middle-aged, irascible, and continually frustrated by the inexplicable failure of his experiments, he is still someone Joe feels the need to help.

**Miranda Halverson:** She is a teenaged girl kept by Phillip Rickman, who destroyed the rest of her family in laboratory experiments. Though conditioned never to betray Rickman and left mute by this conditioning, she demonstrates great courage in fleeing him, finding Joe Turner, and somehow communicating her story to him.

**Governor Halas Hodge:** Hodge is the elected governor of the loose government known as the Union of Border Worlds; he is also the government's representative to the Confederation of Terran Worlds. He is terrible at both jobs. A vain, self-centered man, he views the Border Worlds as his personal kingdom. An expert manipulator of people, he reassures the local Border Worlds governments that he is communicating their desires back to the Assembly of Man on Terra, but his primary interest is in self-gratification and profiteering. He and the local criminal syndicates have their hands in one another's pockets.

**Joshua:** He is a passionate agent of the terrorist Retros who involves Joe and Kludge in a plan to destroy Perry Naval Base. Though a young man, he's been at his job nearly ten years, just long enough to begin to question the rightness of what he is doing.

**Marduk:** This enigmatic figure is a member, perhaps the leader of the Steltes -- the ancient race also known as the Immortals. Forbidden to directly act against mortal beings, he utilizes advanced technology and skills of persuasion to guide mortals to achieve his ends. His true aims are unknown, but it appears that he opposes the aims of mortals who wish to learn more about the Steltes and opposes rogue Steltes who want the war between races to continue.



**Lord Potemkin:** His true name is unknown. This dapper, intelligent, extremely cruel man is a master of illusion and bait-and-switch. He is the Minister of Disinformation for the world of Medici, responsible for making Confederation representatives see whatever the crime syndicate Legion, Inc. wants them to see. Every Minister of Disinformation on Medici bears the title Lord Potemkin.

**Admiral David Terrell:** Onetime commander of a fighting fleet, Admiral Terrell fouled up an offensive against the Kilrathi and was subsequently posted to the backwater Border Worlds quadrant. He had to serve here as commander of the Confederation military presence for the last years of the Terran/Kilrathi war while watching glory-hounds like Admiral Tolwyn (see below) blazing a glory trail against the Kilrathi. Terrell is a good man, but has been frustrated and become temperamental by enforced inactivity. He is nearing retirement age, and two recent events -- the end of the war, with consequential reduction in military strength, and the recent assignment of fast-rising officer Aria Ellison to his staff -- bode ill for his career.

**Admiral Geoffrey Tolwyn:** The most famous military leader at the conclusion of the Terran/Kilrathi War, Tolwyn was played in the **Wing Commander III** game by actor Malcolm McDowell. Tolwyn is an ambitious, uncompromising military leader who will not be satisfied until the Kilrathi are destroyed... despite the fact that the Kilrathi and Terrans are no longer at war. An ardent enemy of recent military reductions, he will do whatever it takes to ensure that his beloved navy remains the most powerful force in known space.

**Veronica:** This woman is a beautiful apparition who appears to Joe Turner and Marc Lassiter at the behest of Marduk; she sometimes steers the heroes in directions that will benefit them and the Immortal she serves. She's enchanting and mysterious, but it's unclear whether she's a human woman, a holographic projection, an Immortal, or something else entirely.

**Captain Dane Walden:** An officer of the Strategic Readiness Agency, he is devoted to Admiral Tolwyn and that officer's aims. At heart he is a decent man, but he is willing to lose whatever needs to be sacrificed in order to get the job done.

**Lady Lucia Wall:** She is Chief Executive Officer of Legion, Inc., the thinly-disguised crime syndicate that runs Capra Sector in the Border Worlds region. She is warm and agreeable in person, but absolutely ruthless in considering anyone who does not belong to her immediate organization to be an expendable resource.

### Series/Game Interaction

*Privateer: The Series* and the **Privateer II** and **Privateer III** games stand alone; viewers do not have to play the games to enjoy the series, nor do game-players have to watch the series to win the games. However, there is still a high level of crossover between the two Privateers.

Joe Turner and other characters from the TV series will make occasional appearances in the games, and Marc Lassiter and others from the games will have guest shots on the series.