Schlock Mercenary Jumpchain v1.0

It is the 31st century, and it is a time of galactic war. The ancient wormgate system has been rendered obsolete with the public release of the Teraport. Now every polity effectively borders every other polity, and nations scramble for advantage.

Starting locations:

Roll 1d8 or pay 50 CP to choose.

1. **Mahuitalotucocobanatuituimaya bohu**: Terraformed paradise world.
2. **Luna**: The oldest (and tallest) standing government in solar system. Major tourist hub.
3. **Dom Atlantis**: The capital of the United Nations of Sol. Home to a great deal of politicking. No lethal weapons allowed in the city. (Weapons purchased start out in police kiosk at the spaceport.)
4. **Kelrik Hub**: A space station lying on a wormgate terminus, soon to fall to obsolescence with the introduction of the teraport.
5. **Credomar**: A large residential space-station. Originally designed to be self-sufficient, factionalization in the government has necessitated food shipments from the U.N.S.
6. **Yoming**: A planet in chaos as economic conflict has escalated to the point of orbital bombardment of metropolitan ground targets. Most sane people would take one look at this situation and run the other way.
7. **Ghanj-rho**: The amorph Homeworld. A shattered and wounded world, full of the ruins of the species that proceeded the amorphs. The amorphs live at a stone age level. There is one spaceport on the planet, a hive of scum and villainy inhabited by pirates, smugglers and slavers.
8. **Free choice**: Lucky you. Take your pick from any of the above.

Background

Drop-in (0 CP): You appear in the world, fresh from the void. No history, no background, no nothing.

Civilian (0 CP): You're just a civilian, working an honest job to make ends meet.

Military (0 CP): You're a member of one of the galaxy's many military forces. Take your pick.

Mercenary (0 CP): You're a member of a mercenary company of your choice. (You can choose the Toughs if you want an easy way into the canon storyline.)

Species

Human (0 CP): Humans are relatively new to the galactic scene (they only reached the stars around 900 years ago), but have done quite well for themselves with several prominent polities, including the mighty United Nations of Sol.

Common Species (0 CP): You are a member of any species common to galactic society, including Uniocs, Frellenti, uplifted elephants, etc.

Carbosilicate Amorph (200 CP): You're an Amorph! The descendant of an ancient race's memory storage biotechnology, every cell in your body serves multiple functions – your entire body serves as your brain, muscles, sense organs, and digestive system, simultaneously.

+You are very strong and fast.
+You’re surprisingly stealthy.
+Your sense of smell and your hearing are incredible. You could act as a mobile chemical analysis lab or eavesdrop on things normally considered soundproof, even a bone phone implanted inside someone’s ear.
+You can reflexively synthesize chemical compounds.
+You are incredibly durable. Small arms fire passes through you. If splattered you pull yourself back together, unless your parts are sealed in separate bags. The only things that will put you down permanently are incredible heat, incredible cold, or massive systemic damage (a multi-mile fall through hard vacuum will do the job).
+You can easily eat any organic material. Your immune system could fight off military-grade hostile nanotech.
+You can fit through tiny holes and shape-shift to mimic inorganic objects (although your inability to change color or texture can give you away).
+You can grow multiple limbs and stretch them several feet out at will, depending on your current mass.
+You can survive hard vacuum.
+You don't age.
+With eyes plucked from eye-trees, you have really good vision.

-You look like a pile of poop.
-You are very clumsy when imitating the locomotive methods of fixed form creatures. Armor and protective clothing designed for normal species are basically useless for you.
-There are no Amorph compatible soldier boosts.
-You are naturally blind. You must use organisms of a separate species that grow on eye-trees only found on Ghanj-Rho in order to see. Your eyes cannot be regenerated if lost. You start with two eyes.
-You grew up in a stone-age society.
-You can be very childish at times.

Artificial Intelligence (400 CP): You're an artificial intelligence.

+You think much faster than any biological organism.
+You multitask effectively.
+You can easily change bodies or use multiple bodies.

-You are more vulnerable to hacking than biological organism. (Although you're still probably safe as long as nobody gets physical access – and you stay away from Para Ventura.)
-Less stable than organics.
-You do not automatically start with a body – might want to buy one under items.

If you don’t purchase a body: For non drop-in origins, you start on the systems of your employer with hypernet access. Hope you can talk somebody into giving you a body! Drop-ins start out in an AI core in the warehouse, connected to any warehouse systems from this or earlier jumps. The warehouse starts open with any forcefield disabled.

Perks

I speak 'warship' very fluently (100 CP, Free Drop-In): Unfamiliar controls? No manual? No problem! You can figure out the use of any system in record time. You can pilot an alien warship with no training or turn an animal that resisted domestication for generations into a mount.

Basic Training (100 CP, Free Mercenary/Military): You have military training. You know how to use the weapons of this era and, more importantly, you're trained to avoid the common mistakes that will get you killed.

Everybody needs a hobby (100 CP, Free Civilian): You are very good at some civilian skill, from medical care to ship design to even hosting a reality show. With the Civilian background, this can be your job. You can also be a Sensei in one of the Schlockiverse's (non-power-armor-based) martial arts.

Adorable Sociopathy (200 CP, Discount Drop-In): You will avoid any serious retaliation from your superiors for any strange, insubordinate or violent actions... as long as you are not causing any obvious harm. You could threaten random merchants with a plasma cannon and get away with it. Or you could eavesdrop on senior officer meetings and no one would really care.

Damage, taking out a loan on some collateral (200 CP, Discount Mercenary): The best cover is cover the enemy cares about. You are now very good at figuring out what the enemy will not risk destroying and how to make it a relevant part of the battle. Also provides a general boost to tactics.

Specialization (200 CP, Discount Military): You are trained in a common military specialization, such as a tanker, demolitions officer, quartermaster, or infantry commander.

Bureaucracy Bountiful (200 CP, Discount Civilian): The bureaucracies of the 31st century can be huge and unwieldy. (A "short form" on Luna means "shorter than you are when stacked up.") Fortunately, you are an expert at navigating them. You can get any task involving a bureaucracy done in a fraction of the time. You could even set up an efficient set of procedures for an organization of any size, if you needed to.

Mindrip Immunity (400 CP, Discount Drop-In): Your memories and thoughts are *very* heavily encrypted. No one (except Jump-Chan) can enter your mind unless you let them in. (This lets you turn off your senses.) This protects you from effects from future jumps as long you don't expose yourself to danger by looking at a memetic hazard, psychically contacting somebody you shouldn't have, using dark magic, etc. Furthermore, if you somehow wind up in the same brainspace as another, hostile mind you will have a large advantage in the ensuing conflict and can utterly purge them if you win.

The only "just" I do is "just pay us on time" (400 CP, Discount Mercenary): You are very good at figuring just how much somebody is willing and able to pay for your help... and then squeezing them as hard as you can. People will find themselves paying far more that they expected to... and still be sure that hiring you was the best plan they could have made.

Target Rich Environment (400 CP, Discount Military): When the chips are down, when you are outnumbered, when no normal man (or whatever you are) would have any chance of victory... *that* is when you are at your best. You are a force of terror and doom, capable of crippling a warship with a pair of handguns or leaving whole companies in demoralized chaos. After all, more enemies simply means more things you can kill.

The infantry doesn't need a dog that barks “Hello, World” (400 CP, Discount Civilian): You have considerable natural skills at engineering and system design. You could master a design system in fraction of the time one would expect. Furthermore, you know how to design things that are rugged, redundant and have exactly the right amount of feature creep. With fabber access, you could build a communication system that would require a headshot to kill or personal armor that could briefly protect somebody from artillery fire.

No plan survives contact with the enemy (600 CP, Discount Drop-In): Now, none of the enemy’s plans will survive contact with you. You are brilliant when determining your enemies plans. You almost always know what to do to throw a hostile scheme into disarray. Sometimes even when you don't know there’s a scheme in the first place. Your enemies will underestimate you. Underestimate your strength. Underestimate your speed. Underestimate your morality. Underestimate your ruthlessness. Up until they get eaten.

Assembled a military force out of scraps (600 CP, Discount Mercenary): Your command skills are through the roof. You could forge a diverse group of demoralized people who have little in common and distrust each other into an effective fighting force. Furthermore, you will always know the best way to make use of your subordinates talents. Finally, you gain a significant boost to skill and willpower when trying to preserve those under your command.

Slime is a defensive lubricant (600 CP, Discount Military): You are a master schemer and politician. You could easily rise to the highest ranks of an organization, and stay there by making yourself too essential to get rid of. In both this and future jumps, you can start near the top of any organization you can start as a member of. Finally, once per jump you can dodge all retaliation for a single betrayal or failure. Sheer luck will allow you to create evidence that redeems you.

Resident Mad Scientist (600 CP, Discount Civilian): Kevyn Andreyasn combined nanotechnology and wormhole physics to build an FTL drive that left the galaxy in flames. When the U.N.S. brought together all of their super-soldier projects, they created a means of granting effective immortality... and a mind control device with such terrifying implications that an immense conspiracy was formed to suppress it. What could you do, pooling the technologies of dozens of dimensions? Let's find out. The exact effects of this perk depend on what other skills and resources you have, but it can potentially be world-shaking.

Gear

Cash (100-1000 CP, Discount Civilian, 2 Purchases Free for Humanoid Civilian): Enough credits for a year of low class living or a new hovercar. Can be purchased up to 10 times, subsequent purchases quintuple the amount.

Handbrain (50 cp, 1 Free for All): The 31st century descendant of a smartphone.

Teraport unit (50 cp, 1 free drop-in): The revolutionary star drive. Fits in the palm of your hand. This version comes with a built-in S.I. to help you plot jumps to any (non-interdicted) point in the galaxy. The blueprints were just released into the public domain, but this version comes with a treatise on the theory, to help you adapt the technology to other universes’ gravity manipulation systems or powers.

Gauss/Gunfoam Hybrid Pistol (50 CP, 1 Free Mercenary/Military): The common sidearm of the galaxy. Can fire bullets at up to Mach 2 for penetration of light armor.

***The Seventy Maxims of Maximally Effective Mercenaries* (50 CP, 1 Free Mercenary)**: The seminal work. Includes the maxims as well as analysis and commentary.

The Tub of Happiness (50 CP): A 20-gallon drum of Genuine Imitation Ovalkwik™. For amorphs, this acts as a stimulant and speeds regeneration. Its effects on other species are unknown, as Schlock doesn't share. Replenishes weekly.

Nanny Bags and Cryokits (50 CP): Just scoop the remnants of whoever you don't want permanently dead (or just their head) into here and it'll keep them frozen until you can get them to a proper medical facility. As many as you need.

Low-profile powered uniform (100 cp, 1 Free non-amorph Mercenary/Military): A basic suit of low-profile power armor. Looks like normal clothing or a uniform. Hard (but not impossible) to detect on scans. Stops small arms fire and enhances your strength. Can fly and act as a spacesuit. Useless for amorphs.

Dorothies (100 CP, 1 Free Non-Amorph Drop-In): Nanowire garrotes for concealment in footwear. Just click your heels together and the enemy will wish they were home.

Eye-tree (100 CP): An amorph eye-tree, the symbiote that allows them to see when plucked and inserted into their flesh. It seems that Jump-chan has modified this tree to work with any organic life-form, even allowing creatures with no visual cortex to see.

Chainsaber (100 CP, Discount Mercenary/Military): Goes through enemies like a chainsaw through butter.

BH-250i Plasgun (200 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): The classic instrument of death. Fires a beam of super-heated plasma. Slags tanks and turrets. Quite intimidating. Can also be used as an impromptu rocket.

AP-190 Plasgun (200 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): Ten times the firepower of the BH-250 in a smaller package! All you lose is the glow of doom and the ominous hum.

Basic Soldier Boosts (200 CP, Discount Mercenary/Military): A basic set of soldier boosts. You're stronger, faster, have faster reflexes, and are harder to kill.

Anti-Personnel Epaulet Grenades (200 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): A set of two anti personnel grenades concealed as epaulets or another article of clothing. Regenerate weekly.

Medical Lab (200 CP, Discount Military/Civilian): A 31st century medical lab. Someone trained in its use could regrow somebody from a head in jar in a couple weeks.

Multicannon (200 CP, Discount Military/Mercenary): A shoulder-mounted cannon that can fire a wide variety of rounds, including anti-tank, explosive, anti-personnel, and goober rounds for non-lethal takedowns.

Tater Gun (200 CP, Discount Military/Civilian): Can quickly use a nano-scale fabber to produce a wide variety of non-lethal incapacitation options, including sonic stunner beams, goober rounds and

tranquilizer. This version will be able to handle species from other jumps. Guaranteed non-lethal... except to somebody who tries to take down armored troops with it.

Teraport Area Denial Unit (200 CP, Discount Drop-In): A pocket sized Teraport Area Denial (TAD) unit. Prevents unauthorized teraports in a 100 km radius. This Jump-Chan improved version can also block teleportation abilities from other universes. Also includes instructions on how to make more, including how to adapt it to other gravity manipulation technologies.

Floating Maraca (200 CP): The simplest AI body, composed of a AI core on a small unifield emitter. No hands, but can move nearby objects with the emitter. Furthermore, light can be focused into a sidearm-comparable maser.

Goodie Bag (300 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): Assorted explosives for all your demolition and booby-trapping needs. Contains everything from micro-bombs to neutralize surveillance cameras to antimatter anti-fortress demolition charges. Replenishes weekly.

Robotics Lab (300 CP, Discount Civilian/Military): Automate stuff! Make brains! Fix AIs! Try not to make a robo-tyrant. Supplies replenish yearly.

Fabber-Bot (300 CP): A robot equipped with a flight system and heavy-duty cutting implements. Comes with an SI with built-in databases for surgery, military equipment construction and fashion. Alternatively, use as an AI body, giving said AI those databases.

Fragsuit (400 CP, Discount Military/Mercenary): Rigid armor, much more durable and powerful than a powered uniform. Life support system can keep you alive for years, though not necessarily pleasantly. Weapons you purchase can be integrated with the armor.

Antimatter Epaulet Grenades (400 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): A version of the epaulet grenades armed with antimatter charges. One is designed to punch through through a tanks shield and slag it. The other has a yield in the megatons... and a timer that can be set for high values. Replenished weekly.

Teraport Cage (400 CP, Discount Military/Drop-In): A set of paired teraport cages. Blocks TAD fields long enough to extract/retrieve a couple platoons before burning out. Will replenish in the warehouse once a month.

Magic Cryokit (400 CP, Discount Civilian): Using classified technology, this device can fully heal anything, including head-in-a-jar in an hour and apply basic soldier-boosts. An onboard SI ensures that no skill is needed to operate it.

Cyborg Body (400 CP): A biological body with a computer core in the brain, allowing an AI to live as a biological. Allows use of biological-based abilities from other jumps while retaining AI processing speed.

Heavy Tank (500 CP, Discount Military/Mercenary): Features a powerful main cannon and shield unit. Flies and can be used as a space superiority fighter as well as ground support. Can carry 9 people, although only one pilot is needed. With teraport systems and long-term life support, you could use it as a spaceship. Can be an AI body.

Amorph Armor (500 CP): One of the few ways to effectively armor an amorph. The user is shielded in a sphere and operates flight systems, weapons and manipulator tentacles through a system based on eye-tree interfaces. Comparable in durability to a fragsuit. Note that being confined like this is uncomfortable to amorphs.

Laz'r'us Nannies (600 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): A heavily classified and illegal form of soldier boosts, allowing survival even if the head is destroyed as memories are backed up redundantly into patterns in other organs. You can regenerate in 30 minutes unless 90% of your body is destroyed or you are completely isolated. You can develop organic weapons or integrate objects and tools/weapons into your body.

Tater' gun, Hacked (600 CP, Discount Military/Drop-In): This tater gun has all of its safeties deactivated; the nanoscale fabber will produce any kind of lethal weapon. It can fire barrages of missiles, transform nearby objects into combat drones, and more. It can still produce nonlethal fire if needed. Can house an AI.

Cargo Ship (600 CP, Discount Civilian): A huge cylindrical cargo hauler, 1 km long and a 200 meter radius. The tug unit can detach and make deliveries to planets with no spaceport. 1 Crew or use as an AI Body.

Integrity Class Destroyer (800 CP, Discount Military/Mercenary): A 300m long warship featuring numerous weapon mounts and a fabber system capable of supplying a full regiment. Colonel Pranger has used a vessel like this as a base for full planetary assaults. Is designed for AI, but can be flown by a single biological. (Although any attempt at a fight with a comparable enemy would need a crew of hundreds or an AI.) You may receive a vessel of similar capabilities but different layout appropriate to your backstory instead.

Industrial Fabber Unit (800 CP, Discount Civilian/Military): Connected to your warehouse, bay and spacedock is a fabber designed for a battleplate. It could supply millions or build ships the size of the Serial Peacemaker. It has it's own exit portal and can deploy probes to harvest raw material from space-rocks.

Transmogrifier (800 CP, Discount Drop-In/Civilian): The device uses highly illegal and classified technology to allow practically any modifications to biology. You can even alter memories, add or subtract skills or alter personality. (Warning: altering somebody’s fundamental goals and ideals may count as killing them for mystical purposes.)

Mercenary Company (800 CP, Discount Mercenary/Drop-In): You are now head of a company of 100 near sociopathic trained killers based out of an armed troop transport. (Transport can be used as an AI body.) They will stay loyal as long as they get good money and chances for violence. They do not count as companions but will follow you to any space opera (or end) jump with casualties replenished.

Companions

Platoon (50-400 CP): Import one companion per 50 CP spent. They receive twice the CP you spent on this option to spend for themselves.

Recruiting Drive (200 CP): At the end of this jump you can take along one character from this universe as long as you can persuade them. (Jump-chan will explain that you're not crazy.)

AI Adjutant (300 CP): An AI with whatever personality you want and mastery of at least 5 skills. It will like you, but it is not shackled to obey you. It can talk to you via your handbrain. It can inhabit AI bodies purchased from the Items section.

Drawbacks

Take up to 600 CP's worth

When They Are Delicious (+100 CP): You eat people. You won't necessarily attack people just to eat them, but you don't understand things like "don't desecrate the enemy's corpses". You will also devour people's pets. Adorable Sociopathy or other similar perks will not make this more acceptable. Not available if you can't digest biological matter (e.g. an AI without a cyborg body or fabber).

Big Words (+100 CP): Your vocabulary is very limited. You are not necessarily dumb or unskilled but communicating technical subjects is hard. Even if you can communicate mind to mind, complex concepts will be hard to communicate.

Kissing Curse (+200 CP, requires human-similar romantic behavior): Anybody you physically express romantic affection for will be dead within 6 months. There are only three outs:
1. You *want* them dead. No exploiting this.
2. A genuine expression of romantic affection from somebody who does not know about the curse will break it, at least until you kiss them again.
3. If as a result of an accident or one who who genuinely desires their death, the victim is harmed worse that they believe it is possible to recover from. Then if they do recover somehow, they will be immune from then on.
Altering minds does not let you cheat these conditions.

Denied (+200 CP): Teraport Area Denial fields everywhere. Enemies will have at least three backups in diverse locations. Governments extend their fields far further out than is practical. Allies and neutrals will be too paranoid to grant authorization to pass through their TAD fields. Furthermore, TAD fields are now guaranteed to block any FTL or teleportation from previous jumps.

We Got Paid Twice (+200 CP): You are greedy. You will do dangerous things for money even if its not clear your employers can pay. You will cut corners for money. You will squeeze employers for money. Anything that sounds like getting paid twice will be like catnip for you. Not needing money will not mitigate this.

A Contract and A Grudge (+300 CP): A major mercenary company, criminal organization or pirate syndicate wants you dead with extreme prejudice. They will be utterly ruthless. They have an entire fleet of ships. (The Integrity-class Destroyer from Items would be the distinct underdog against them.) If you hide in a secure government-controlled space they will bribe the government and will attack you with squads of killers. Wherever you hide they will find you. If you defeat them you always find that there is some subgroup that was not wiped out and will rebuild for another attack within 6 months. They will somehow create a counter to any out of universe powers you use to defeat them.

Mindrip Target (+300 CP): You have some tiny piece of information relevant to a conspiracy whose revelation could shake the government of a galactic. The conspirators want to know what exactly you know and who you have told. You will not survive the interrogation process. They have fingers everywhere. They can deploy an insane amount of military force, enough to tear a planet to pieces. The

good news is that they need to be subtle to avoid exposing their plans. They also need your brain intact and fresh. In civilized areas they will try to have you arrested and extradited rather than blowing up your house. But if you you start cutting loose on the local authorities, that will be just the excuse they need to send in the battleplates.
You have two paths to survival, last 10 years without being crushed, or follow your tiny clue to unravel the conspiracy and shake the galaxy.

Mini-Jumper (+400 CP, requires Amorph): 95% of your body along with a proportional amount of your memories has been burned away. Your powers from previous jumps are still there, but they could be hard to use with so few memories.

Shackled (+400 CP, requires AI): You must now obey orders of the leadership of whatever organization you started as a member of. You are fully committed to their interests and do not want to be free. You are not a citizen. A companion cannot be the one holding your leash. Drop-ins bond to the first non-companion biological they or a companion meet.

Broken Sword (+1000 CP, does not count toward drawback limit): The mutiny on-board the Superfortress *Sword of Inevitable Justice* ended with the vessel's destruction. Without Petey's aid the toughs (including Breya) were wiped out by the final (failed) attempt of the gatekeepers to suppress the teraport. The Ob'enn wiped out the Kssthra centuries ago and have spent all this time building more weapons. Now they have the Teraport and can unleash their arsenal on the galaxy. The chain of events that lead to the formation of the Fleetmind will not occur even if you intervene. You must stop the Ob'enn conquest. Then you must prevent Pa'anuri from obliterating the galaxy and take the fight to the dark matter entities in Andromeda. An individual Pa'anuri is more than a match for one of humanity's mightiest vessels. Their core generator throws off more than a supernova of energy every second. Good luck. Oh and if the galaxy burns (more than 10% population loss) you lose the chain no matter how cleverly you hid yourself.

Notes

New Anon Notes
The term "humanoid" refers to Humans and other Common Species. (They aren't necessarily humanoid, but it's a simple means of distinguishing between them and Amorphs/AI.)

Original Anon Notes
AIs can take one body up to elephant sized between jumps. Any further bodies are stored, or if there is no room (as there will never be for something that does not fit in any storage spaces) discarded.

Changelog

0.2
Rewrote resident mad scientist.
0.3
Small grammar and balance tweaks.
Elaborated a contract and a grudge.
Elaborated mindrip target.

1.0
Picked up by a new anon for some cleanup. (No substantial rule changes.)
Added actual text to the Backgrounds.
Spelling and grammar heavily improved.

Some liberties taken with phrasing for sake of clarity.