

MARS COLONY

# 39 DARK

By Tim C Koppang

“Don’t let anyone tell you that the government is forcing you to fight against it. That’s cowardice, and announces to everyone that the government is still in charge. Do this because you want to, because you know it’s right.”

– 39 Dark founder, ECKHARDT POULSON

MARS COLONY  
39 DARK

A roleplaying game for two players about  
protest, responsibility, and sacrifice.

TIM C KOPPANG



TCK • Roleplaying  
Westmont, Illinois

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Interior illustrations by Tazio Bettin ([taziobettin.deviantart.com](http://taziobettin.deviantart.com)).

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<http://tckroleplaying.com/>

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“The President, Congress, and the Courts have forgotten that the costs of bad policy are always borne by ordinary citizens, and it is our job to remind them that there are limits to what we will pay.”

—EDWARD SNOWDEN

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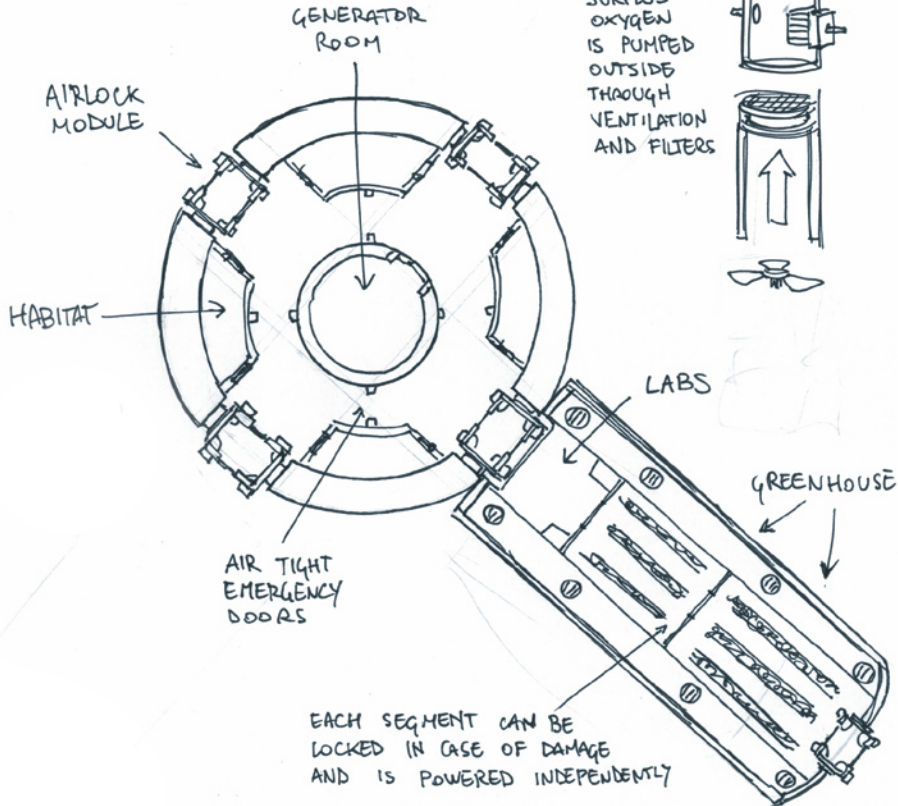
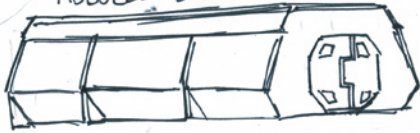
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EACH GREENHOUSE  
IS COMPOSED OF DETACHABLE  
MODULES LINKED TO THE HABITAT



## INTRODUCTION

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A solar day on Mars is 39 minutes and 35 seconds longer than on Earth. It sometimes takes weeks for a person's circadian rhythms to adjust to the time differential. Can you imagine? Jet-lagged for three, four weeks? Intolerable. But the colonists still pour in from Earth. The Earth Coalition promises them a playground in space, and they flock to the spaceports, ready to build a new life for themselves on Mars before Mars is ready to accept them. Mars Colony was built under a great dome, divided into five districts, each with representatives sitting on the Colony Council. The Colony was meant to be a perfect restart for humanity. It was the promise of life among the stars, the beginning of a new era of exploration and colonization. Even the new Earth Coalition and local Martian government were supposed to usher in an age of harmony. But it's all the same. The government believes that it can take more power for itself, that it knows best. Its halls are filled with career politicians, most of whom are allied with corporate inter-

ests because they are themselves stockholders and CEOs. Profits and job security provide the politicians with all the motivation they need to remake Mars in their own vision regardless of the will of the people.

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It doesn't have to be this way. On Mars we can be free, severed from our Earthly roots. Most Colonists believe that we need Earth to replenish our supplies and provide us with security. Food, water, building materials, and even comfort goods need not come from Earth. We can make them all here on Mars. We need only free ourselves from the fear of failure. We are strong. We can take what we need from Mars and start a new life here. It ends and begins with you, Lane Novak.

You, Lane Novak, are a native Martian, born and raised. Once a trusted government insider, you have been tapped by the Martian uprising. A group calling themselves "39 Dark" is protesting for change. They are in need of a talented leader with a history of making the voice of the people heard. The current system is broken, and the everyday citizens that have joined the ranks of 39 Dark are looking to

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you for guidance and strength. You are obviously in over your head, but you have the potential to make good on the promises you have already made. You must calm the schisms that threaten to divide the movement, guide the loyalty that is fomenting in the streets against the Colony government, and force Mars Colony to change for the better before apathy and entrenched interests doom it to continue down its current path. This is no easy task. You will probably fail, as has everyone who has tried before. But for now, you are the hero to be. A traitor to some, but a beacon for many.

### **Audio playback on Eckhardt\_Poulson.video, at 11:17:43**

“The first people to come to Mars were, of course, the astronauts. Theirs was a mission of politics and science. They meant to explore the planet’s soil, atmosphere, geography, and fossils. But it was also a mission of political bravado. Mankind first stepped foot on Mars in an era before the Earth Coalition was formed. The United States of America, galvanized by an increasingly powerful China, spent down what goodwill it had left on Earth in order to fund its manned mission to Mars. The debt was enormous, but so was the demonstration of power and political will.

“So you see, Mars has always been a planet shaped by politics. How could it be any other way? Mankind is inherently a species of social organization. It cannot help but to impose a political order on the places to which it spreads. However, we must ask ourselves: Whose political will should be allowed to survive on Mars? Whose agenda should the people of Mars support? Should we always be yoked to

the policymakers of the mother world? Or will we allow ourselves the freedom to make our own fate? 'Allow' ourselves? Ha! Even my own phrasing betrays the Earth Coalition's grip on my conscience! It is not a matter of being *allowed* to do anything. It is a matter of asserting our basic right to self-govern.

"The astronauts had their day on Mars. They were the ones to establish the first long-term colonies. These consisted of nothing more than soft domes supplemented, slowly, by shipments of prefabricated buildings from Earth. A number of individual colonies were established at various locations on Mars. Among the first colonies are names familiar to us all: Hope Colony, Endurance Colony, Olympus Colony. These were the first true settlements of Mars, and remain bastions of Martian independence to this day only because the Coalition sidelined them as antiquated. Eventually, the Earth Coalition formed, and the technologies for long-term habitation on Mars were developed. It was no longer necessary that only highly skilled scientists, engineers, and other explorers be the ones to live on our unforgiving, hostile planet.

Mars was opening up. It was opening its secrets to all of mankind. The last hurdle was merely an infrastructure to support the eventual swell of immigration. Unfortunately, that infrastructure was designed by bureaucrats and ad men.

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“Mars Colony, that beautiful ‘paradise’ that was packaged and sold to Earth inhabitants, was willed into being so quickly that its shoddy construction still threatens to implode under a pressure differential! The name of the colony itself is a joke, as if any single colony can dare to stand for all of Mars! Hundreds, if not thousands, of immigrants, unprepared and untrained for life on Mars, were rushed here with promises of freedom, property, and opportunity. Is it any surprise that political unrest was an immediate consequence? Does anyone dare argue that the failure of Mars Colony was not inevitable? Even the Coalition’s savior, Kelly Perkins, was unable to truly eradicate the disease festering in the foundation of the Colony. Perkins’ noticeably brief tenure as consultant was, at best, a bandage used to conceal the voice of everyday Martians straining for authentic political voice.