

# WELCOME TO MY TABLE

GM / ST STYLE & INTRO SHEET FOR MICHEL V69 / 902PE\_GAMING  
[michel@michelrvaillancourt.com](mailto:michel@michelrvaillancourt.com)



Credit: carloscara @ DeviantArt

# MICHEL R. VAILLANCOURT

**AGE 50, ABLED, PRESENTS MASCULINE**

he / him / they

## EXPERIENCE

### YEARS GAMING

39 (since 1981)

### YEARS ST/GM

38 (since 1982)

## SUBJECT MATTER / STORY ELEMENTS

### LINES

- Sexual violence

### VEILS

- Torture
- Violence against children

## GENERAL CONTENT RATING (ESRB)

Mature (17+)

"...may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content, and / or strong language."

## LET'S TALK ABOUT STYLE

### PREFERRED DESCRIPTOR / TITLE

Relevance & Priority*	Title
--	Dungeon Master
2	Games Master
--	Referee
1	Story Teller

\* lower is higher priority.

\* "--" means does not apply



Credit: RoBs0n @ DeviantArt

### OVER-ALL STYLE

R&P	Description
--	Fully Developed Story; Rails-Ride
--	Partially Developed Story; Wide-Corridor Explore
1	Primary Focus is Themes & Questions, clearly visible danger signs; Safe Sandbox
2	Fully Open World, Problems & History progress independent of Character actions, no story guidance from the GM/ST, danger signs may not be obvious/visible; Mean Sandbox

### CHARACTER DEATH / WORLD LETHALITY

R&P	Description
--	Everyone keep a spare character rolled at all times, the TPK is real
--	The world is a savage place, and eats an adventurer per party 3 levels, minimum.
1	Character death can happen at random from Bad Dice, nasty Villains, but is relatively infrequent
2	Character death will normally only happen with prior discussion of the GM/ST and affected players
--	Heroes Never Die.

## COMMON SETTING MORALITY

R&P	Description
--	Everyone is inherently evil, dishonest. Trust no one, even the mirror. The beggar at the corner will shank you for a copper. The inn-keeper has a room where the bed is a mimic that he feeds to safely loot your stuff. Civil leaders are tyrannical despots.
--	Most people will do whatever it takes to survive. Life is cheap, yours is cheaper. Some diamonds in the rough. Civil leaders are indifferent to the plight of people; law over justice.
2	Darwin & Dickens would be proud. Still, a lot of people think the world is wrong and are actively working towards a better place. Some civil leaders are vocal in trying to change the world for the better.
1	Most people are trustworthy, and will treat you at least as well as you treat them. Life has value. Beggars get donations from common folk. Civil leaders balance law and justice, trying to do the most good they can.
--	Villains twirl mustaches, laugh ominously, and have a clearly audible soundtrack announcing their arrival. Only the player-characters notice, because everyone else in the world is so kind and nice.

## RULES VS STORY

R&P	Description
--	the Rules are much more important than the Story. Rules As Written Rule (RAWR).
--	the Rules are somewhat more important than the Story. A few House Rules apply to fit better to the world / setting.
1	Story is cinema. Situations may arise where exceptions to RAWR happen. That's ok. More than a few House Rules apply to fit better to the world / setting.
--	It's not RAWR, it's meow. If the rules are in the way of a good story, we'll junk the rules. Even all the House Rules in the 77-page document I gave you.
--	the Story Before All. Where we're going, we don't NEED rules!

## ACTION / COMBAT VS SOCIAL & FEELS

R&P	Description
--	JJ Abrahams is a poser. "Fast & Furious" are sleeper movies.
--	The action only stops long enough to change exotic locations and reload. No scenes, just plot and automatic weapons.
--	Talking is an excellent lead in to punching, after which we can then talk about how we felt while punching. Before we punch something else.
1	Action leads to either joy or tears. We have to feel for meaning. Meaning is what drives action.
2	We haven't fought anything or talked about fighting anything in two gaming sessions. The tea is good, the feels are real, and now we know what we're fighting for. Time to confront the next Nefarious Villain Plot.
--	Combat is the last refuge of the incompetent. We're here to diplomacy the sh!t out of this.
--	Ghandi was a poser. Real social change characters would have subverted the entire British Empire to the first Egalitarian Workers Solarpunk Green Collective With Sparkles; allow us to demonstrate.

## LEVELING / REWARDS

R&P	Description
--	No dead monsters, no character XP. That is the Whole of the Law.
1	Encounter resolution, either combat or social, rewards XP.
2	XP / Levels are awarded based on actions and milestones
3	XP / Levels are based on time and distance traveled.
--	XP / Levels are irrelevant and archaic constructs that create reward-loop mentalities, and are to be shunned.



Credit: ForrestImel @ DeviantArt

## GREEN-ON-GREEN COMBAT

R&P Description

- There are no Greens. Everyone is Yellow or Red. It's a free-fire zone kind of world. Reds are Deds.
- 3 Sometimes, a punch in the mouth is the best expression of social displeasure available. No need to warn anyone, but no killing, either.
- 2 It can happen, but only with plenty of foreshadowing and mutual consent of everyone at the table.
- 1 It can happen, but only with plenty of foreshadowing and mutual consent of the players involved.
- Forbidden under all circumstances.

## PHILOSOPHY & COMMENTS

- **I'm of the opinion that the best TTRPG games are collaborative story telling.** In other words, at a table with 4 players, plus myself, I get about three shares in eight of the say about what happens. The remaining 5 shares are owned by the Players. This is important to understand, because it means that a significant portion of the direction and tone of the story is in the hands of the Player Characters.
- **We're telling a story about extraordinary people at an extraordinary time.** While individual Characters may die or retire due to Good Reasons in the plot, the idea is to tell a full story that tells us all about the group of Characters and the world they live in.
- **I apply the "Great Person Theory" of history to my game settings.** In other words, the outcome of the story I have in mind is fixed, and the Villain will win, in absentia of Heroes to challenge them. The Heroes are not obligated to try to hinder or stop the Villain; their actions or omissions of action will directly impact the story and setting at the micro and macro levels.
- **This means that I do not know how the story ends, when we start it.** I know who the Villain(s) is / are and what they want, and what they are willing to do to achieve their desires. The actions of Player Characters throw all of that into flux. By definition, I cannot out-guess, out-think or out-imagine five other people.
- **I will create a set of plot points in the near future with consequences attached to the addressing or ignoring of each one.** The story takes shape based on what the Player Characters do with what they see and what they understand.
- **My Villains are genre-aware.** They know what swords and sorcery/ lasers and starships / brass-knuckles and speak-easys are, as appropriate. They understand the risks posed by adventurers / posses / merc units. They got to be the Villain by not screwing up thus far in their dealings with the world around them.
- **I will create "Boss Fights" or "Lethal Encounters" that run the risk of Bad Dice or Player mistakes of killing a Character.** Risk must exist.

- **I will not do a "Total Party Kill" (TPK) unless I have no reasonable alternative.** Intelligent creatures will take prisoners for ransom, interrogation, etc, instead of coup-de-grace. A Gelatinous Cube, on the other hand, will not. My usual default is to roll 4d4 and that's how many days pass when the Party wakes up figuratively or literally chained to a wall.
- **Emotion is important.** Expect me to question for feelings and thoughts of your Character as much as about the actions they are taking. I have no problem with an entire session happening as conversation between various members of the Group, so long as everyone gets a chance to shine.
- **I will try to move the "camera" around the party as much as possible.** Please respect the chance for the Players "in front of the camera" to play their Characters. Your Character should not have to be in every scene, all the time. You'll get your chance, perhaps just not right now. If you are feeling left out, please straight-up ask me for camera time. I will usually ask "does anyone (else) have a scene they need to do?"; that's your queue.
- **I will talk a lot.** I'm the camera man, the scene director, the teleprompter, the narrator, the tour guide and the scene painter, plus the voices of an entire world of Non-Player Characters that might need to talk to the Player Characters. That doesn't mean I'm more important, it just means I've got more work to communicate.



Credit: ForrestImel @ DeviantArt

- **XP will be awarded based on resolving an encounter; you don't have to kill anything.** If you manage to sneak around it, or socially convince it to go elsewhere, or intimidate it into fleeing forever, or you whack it with a stick until it gets irritated and moves along, you've resolved the encounter. Additionally, for sessions of pure RP or pure Overland Travel, I'll usually award ~3% of XP required to level per session; the act of talking about your adventures and what you've learned is as valuable as traveling or whacking monsters with sticks.
- **I'm the Story Teller in charge, or the Game Master, but I am not the Referee.** Everyone at the table shares a responsibility for being the Referee, both of rules and conduct. I have an entire world to present and history to move; I need your help in sorting out things like how shooty-whack stuff works as much as "hey, give someone else a chance to talk".
- **Communication is key.** Improvisational collaborative story-telling requires trust and communication. There is an implicit social contract that says we're all here to have fun and explore a fantastic story together. Please respect that social contract, and talk to your fellow Players at the table.
- **I actively dislike "Player vs DM" or "DM vs Player" mentality at the gaming table.** That wrecks trust. While I will do things like randomly number NPCs ("Armored Assault Spiders, 007, 021, 252" for a 3-critter encounter) that's just a story-telling tool to add suspense / uncertainty. If you're concerned out-of-character about something you are seeing in an encounter, please ask. I'll happily take the time to pull the hood off and explain the moving parts to you.
- **I am a firm believer that we have to be having fun together to keep playing together.** If you aren't having fun, that's different than your Character not having fun. Your Character will routinely be stressed out, miserable and under the weight of the world. None of those things should apply to you, the Player, at my gaming table. If they do, please speak up right away and give everyone at the table a chance to help sort it out and make it better. That's how we "win"; by having fun together and making a truly amazing story together.

This isn't my game and story. It's *our* game and story.