

UNDERCURRENTS

...A GUIDE TO THE ON-GOING COLONIZATION OF POSEIDON.

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A VIEW FROM ORBIT

We bet you were all beginning to think that the next issue of Undercurrents was stuck on the other side of the wormhole or something. We sincerely thank you for your patience, and hope you have not been too frustrated by the wait. Undercurrents is a non-profit production for Biohazard, and we offer the newsletter to provide Blue Planet players a little something extra between major releases. Unfortunately, we are often forced to delay UC to work on said mainline supplements. Now that Access Denied is out, we will see what we can do about playing a little catch-up on Undercurrents.

As a reward for your patience, and because our good friend Tun Kai Poh submitted so much cool stuff, we decided to make this UC a wormhole-sized double issue, with twice the flotsam and jetsam you have come to expect from Undercurrents. So, dog the hatch, turn life support up to maximum, put the comm on standby and get to reading. Enjoy...

ACCESS DENIED

Speaking of Access Denied, the Blue Planet moderator's resource is now available at your local retailer, or direct from Biohazard mail order (see our website for ordering instructions). AD features a moderator's screen that we honestly believe is one of the best in the industry. The front is a beautiful set of full-color "satellite photos" based on the six regional maps from Archipelago. The maps were rendered by Matt Sturm, of Archipelago cover fame, and he did a superlative job. The back has all the information you could need to run your Blue Planet games and then some, including compiled weapon and skill tables, as well as summaries of hand-to-hand combat and special damage effects. There is a hit location table, a Poseidon clock, vehicle combat information, and even a quick reference for NPC skill and attribute ranges.

Included with the screen is a twenty eight page booklet containing over

two dozen Access Denied adventure hooks that expand on the behind-the-scenes goings-on of the GEO, the Incorporate, the natives and the aborigines. There is an expanded index for Blue Planet with over 1,400 entries, an inter-settlement distance chart, vehicle range data, a set of quick reference damage tables and more. The kit comes in a durable magazine storage bag, fit to keep all a moderator's secrets safe and secure. Access Denied retails for \$15.95 and is a must-have resource for any Blue Planet moderator.

SHIRTS OFF OUR BACKS

Biohazard is pleased to announce that we also have new tee shirts for sale. There are two versions to choose from, and if we do say so ourselves, both are very cool. The first is sand colored with a dark green Biohazard pocket logo on the front and a reproduction of the Access Denied "ScubaTrooper" on the back. The second is hunter green with the GEO Marshal Service emblem on the front, and a large GEO logo across the shoulders. No self-respecting BP player would even think of assaulting an ecoterrorist safe house without one - it's what all the best dressed marshals are wearing these days.

The shirts are \$12 each, postage paid, and are available only from Biohazard through direct mail order.

UNDERCURRENTS SEVEN

As a sort of heads-up we wanted to let you know that starting with issue seven, Undercurrents will be going thematic! Periodically, future issues of UC will focus on specific aspects of the BP universe, with a thematic thread running through the regular features. Issue seven will detail hybrids, offering a scenario set in Bright Savanna (Arch 79), as well as information on hybrid biology, sociopolitical background, and cultural heritage. To this end, if you have any ideas, articles, or home brewed game bits that you think might compliment a hybrid issue, send them along. Heck, if you have ideas for a future theme issue of any kind, send those along too. As always, we would be happy to consider all submissions for Undercurrents.

ON THE HORIZON

REINFORCEMENTS

With tensions in the Sierra Nueva continuing to escalate, and news of armed conflict and brutality beginning to leak out of the Westcape interior, the GEO has taken steps to increase its military presence on Poseidon. Over the last three months, the GEO Armed Forces has doubled the number of active military personnel on the colony world, to more than 10,000. The majority of these reinforcements are stationed on Prosperity Station or at Fort Pacifica, on Cartagena Island. The influx of new personnel at Fort Pacifica has far outstripped the base's permanent facilities, and hundreds of tents and prefabricated buildings have sprung up almost overnight around the installation. Several hundred of the newly arrived soldiers have been deployed to a growing network of smaller garrisons throughout the Pacifica Archipelago. Several of these outposts have already seen combat, including Fox Base on Southpoint Island, and Mustang Base on Isla Verde.

These new deployments have resulted in growing political opposition and public protest, both on Earth and Poseidon. Incorporate and Independent representatives in the GEO General Assembly claim that this increased militarization of the colony world can only lead to escalating violence. Travis Denton, the US representative to the General Assembly, has stated, "This military buildup on Poseidon offers further evidence that the GEO, once a benevolent and even heroic institution, has degenerated into a despotic empire. What the leadership of this empire cannot command by political or moral right, it will take by force."

Neither has the outcry been limited to Earth. Incorporate representatives and native activists alike have protested the rapid influx of new military personnel. Said Morgan Finely, an activist in Kingston with alleged ties to the NRM, "These new soldiers aren't going to solve the problems on

Poseidon. The problem is too many newcomers trying to take what isn't theirs. All this is going to do is bring more killing."

There have already been reports of increased Peacekeeper patrol activity in several hotspots in the archipelago. Security patrols have become a regular occurrence along the coast of Southpoint Bay in Westcape. Intended to suppress the guerilla fighting in the region, critics charge that the increased patrol activity is merely for show, that the real violence between the HSS and native insurgents is occurring deep in the Westcape interior. Patrols in the Northwest Territories have largely been restricted to Isla Verde, especially the area around Santa Elena and the GenDiver refining facilities. Casualty rates in the Sierra Nueva remain prohibitive of constant GEO Peacekeeper patrol activity.

As the new Peacekeeper reinforcements began arriving on Poseidon, rumors spread of a fundamental change in the GEO's military policy on the colony world. To many, the reinforcements indicate that the Peacekeepers will begin playing a more preemptive role in the defense and security of Poseidon. Critics continue to charge that the GEO has become a police state, and that the Peacekeepers have simply escalated their police action against the citizens of the colony world.

Many observers believe that the situation on Poseidon is slipping out of the GEO's control, spiraling toward some uncertain conclusion. It remains to be seen whether the thousands of new Peacekeepers recently arrived on the waterworld will help to contain the spread of armed conflict, or simply exacerbate it.

LIVE ACTION

Researchers at the HIST Oceanographic Station in Dyfedd (Arch 111), with the help of several Incorporate sponsors, have undertaken an ambitious joint study. As part of a project called Sea Rover, they have launched a fleet of over twelve hundred autonomous oceangoing survey probes. The team is using these remotes to explore Poseidon's undersea world in a systematic and uniquely effective way. Each remote is an engineering wonder containing an array of sensors

and recording devices controlled by robust onboard expert computer systems. In operation, each probe follows a pre-plotted course, making regular dives to measure basic oceanographic variables such as salinity, temperature, and current structure. They also make sonar recordings from which the researchers plan to create detailed maps of the ocean floor. While at the surface, the probes recharge their storage batteries using solar cells, and transmit their collected data, via satellite, back to HISTOS. Equipped with the latest in electromagnetic anti-fouling gear, these MHD-driven robotic submersibles are theoretically capable of continuing their explorations for a decade or more.

The programming used to guide the probes is robust, and the expert systems have the latitude to divert their probes to investigate phenomena that fit any of a number of identification profiles. As a result, the remotes often deviate from their courses to collect data and take pictures of unique encounters. Though it is not an "official" goal of the project, many of the HISTOS personnel involved in the study hope that this armada of submarine eyes might finally lay to rest the question of the existence of Poseidon's legendary aborigines.

Access Denied

These hopeful scientists may yet get their wish. Though most groups of aborigines have managed to avoid the attention of the human's strange little machines, one Creator cache and its attendant aborigines have not been so lucky. Just over a week ago one of the Sea Rover drones came upon the cache and took several hours of holographic footage of the site and the aborigines as they moved in and out of the area. Undiscovered, the probe then went on its way, eventually surfacing and transmitting its priceless footage back to the HISTOS computers where it was automatically marked for the Biological Survey, and archived for later review.

With the large number of probes, and the endless flow of data they are transmitting, it is likely to be some time before the research team discovers this unique footage, even with the aid of computer sorting, search and identification algorithms. Until then, the pictures sit patiently in the HISTOS computer core, awaiting the storm that will likely follow their discovery.

As for issue #4, the colonial contribution we received this time around was just too good to edit down to size. So here, in its entirety, is Tun Kai Poh's bitchin' ensemble piece about the Widow of the Storm.

THE TALE OF THE STORM WIDOW
A Blue Planet Mythology

Once upon a time, when humans were new to this world, Maya Mahsuri came with her husband and children to a small island far from other settlers. Life was not easy back then. The couple worked long and hard, braving the fierce wilderness to build a place for their small children.

One day, a terrible storm blew in while the husband was out at sea, and his fishing boat vanished in the raging waves. Maya Mahsuri searched the surrounding islands for her husband for thirty days, but could find no trace of him.

At last, the widow of the storm climbed to the highest peak on her island and shouted her bargain to Poseidon: "My children are but few, and your children are many. We do not ask for much from you, only what we need to survive here. Since you have taken my husband away, I will claim this small island as sanctuary for my children. And if ever you take one of mine, I shall take something of equal value in return. But never will we take what we have not paid for."

And so it was that Maya Mahsuri made her pact with the world.



The years passed, and the tides rose and fell. Maya Mahsuri created houses, gardens, and farms for her children, who grew brown and strong under Poseidon's sun. They learned to respect the animals of the island, and the animals respected them in return.

But there was a great serpent of the sea who did not respect the children of the widow of the storm. This serpent and the children hunted fish in the same bay. The serpent was greedy and coveted all the fish for itself, although it did not need to eat more than a few to survive. A murderous envy grew in its heart, and it wished the children dead. When Maya

Mahsuri's youngest son was alone in the bay one day, the serpent came out of the water and swallowed him whole.

Maya Mahsuri heard the cries of her child and came to his aid. The serpent dived into the deepest part of the sea to hide from her, but she followed it into the sunless depths. For thirty days, she chased the serpent and wrestled with it beneath the sea.

At last, the widow of the storm slew the serpent, but her little child was dead. So she claimed in return the great kelp forests to the north, where the waters were rich with fish. And never did a child of Poseidon challenge Maya Mahsuri's claim to the forests.

Of Maya Mahsuri's children, the oldest and strongest was her daughter Sawari. Now, Sawari was every bit as bold and powerful as her mother, and in time, she had children of her own. Maya Mahsuri's island was big enough for all her children and grandchildren, but Sawari wanted an island of her own.

Sawari's mother warned her: "You cannot take from the world unless you pay its price. That is the way of the world. To claim a part of the world is no small thing, for the price is always high. Better to be content with what you have." But Sawari rebelled, and took her children to a great island in the north, the island of Kauai. There she claimed the island for herself, cutting the forests and hunting the animals.

Poseidon was displeased, and spoke to Maya Mahsuri in a dream. "If you let your children claim a part of me, I shall have to exact my price," said the world. But Maya Mahsuri replied: "Let me be the one to exact your price. She is my daughter; she is mine to punish." So she went to Kauai to demand that Sawari and her children leave the island. Sawari refused, and for thirty days, mother and daughter waged a terrible battle across the slopes of Kauai.

At last, the widow of the storm slew her daughter. "I have paid Poseidon's price," she told the children of Sawari. "Now, will you come home with me, or will you stay here to fend for yourselves on the island your mother bought with her blood?" Half of Sawari's children left with

Maya Mahsuri, but half stayed to make their homes on Kauai.

And so Kauai was settled by Sawari's children.

The years passed, and the tides rose and fell. There came a time when Maya Mahsuri was old and grey.

One day, a great many strangers came in a fleet of boats. Their leader was a gray man dressed in finery, surrounded by many wives and grown children. There were also others, dark men with dark machines and many guns. And the leader met with Maya Mahsuri on the beach of her island.

"I am your long-lost husband," he said, "and I have come back to claim what is mine." He told her his story. The storm had taken him away to another settlement, and there he lived for a long while. There he became an important man, a leader of his community. Now, Progress had come to Poseidon, and he was leading the forces of Progress to the distant islands to claim the riches of the world for humans. He asked Maya Mahsuri to join him. And she thought long and hard.

At last, the widow of the storm answered: "You cannot take from Poseidon what you have not paid for in blood. That is the way of the world. I will not join you."

"Poseidon cannot stop us," said the gray man. "All the world cannot stop Progress."

"All the world will fight you," said the widow of the storm. "I and my children will fight you."

And so our war began...

THE STORM WIDOW MYTH, AND ITS IMPACT ON NATIVE INSURGENCY – as published in the HIST Anthropological Proceedings, Vol. 3, Issue 11.

Introduction

Every new frontier and every new movement of humanity creates new cultures, and with them come the myths, legends, and folktales that define their values and traditions. One such folktale is the story of Maya Mahsuri, the Storm Widow, whom some consider a "patron saint" of native resistance in the New Hawaii region. Her importance as a symbol of the native experience on Poseidon is akin to that of Paul Bunyan or John Henry in the settling and development of North America. A significant percentage of native parents name their daughters after her, and over thirty distinct versions of the Storm Widow myth have been recorded by anthropologists since Recontact. Most importantly, in the past twenty years, the tale of the Storm Widow has become a political weapon, a symbol of the growing native resistance movement.

This article looks at the origins of the Maya Mahsuri legend, the major cultural values that its various versions represent, and its influence on native insurgency, focusing on the high-profile extremist group known as the Children of the Widow.

Origins

Like many other folktales, the Tale of the Storm Widow has been passed from one teller to the next, and as an oral tradition has undergone continuous evolution. It is guessed that the story did not take on its current isolationist overtones until at least 2178, thirteen years after Recontact. Still, many native insurgent groups insist that the isolationist elements have been part of the folktale for as long as it has been told.

Native storytellers trace the Storm Widow myth as far back as 2124. A traveling storyteller is reported to have told the story of his acquaintance with a "Maya Mahsuri" to children in numerous communities throughout New Hawaii, to cheer them up in the wake of the destruction of the Atlantis settlement in a volcanic eruption. The first recorded version of the tale is somewhat different, and much shorter than later versions. In the story, Maya Mahsuri loses her husband and children in a

terrible storm, and spends thirty-three days (one-tenth of a Poseidon year) searching for them. She only manages to find her children, but resolves to go forth and continue the couple's dream of building a better future for the children. No mention is made of where the family was attempting to settle, but it is often believed to be in the New Hawaii area. The story ends with Maya Mahsuri finding an island paradise with fresh running water, edible fruits, and ample shelter from the winds.

Academics strongly believe that there was a real Maya Mahsuri, although it is doubtful that she performed a tenth of the exploits credited to her down the years. Researchers looking for the name in the records of the Calypso's passenger manifest have come up dry, and no known records of anyone being born with that name in later years exist. However, it is a telling sign of the folktale's power that since Recontact, "Maya Mahsuri" has become the second most common name of newborn native girls, after "Jessica."

Some anthropologists point to the origin of the name "Mahsuri" as a clue; Malay folklore speaks of a martyred princess who lived and died on the island of Langkawi on Earth, cursing her betrayers with seven generations of misfortune. Hence, it is assumed that the real Maya Mahsuri was of Malay descent. While this would seem to indicate a second-generation Poseidoner born of one of the two hundred colonists of Malay descent (a Malaysian-Indonesian consortium pushed for a strong Southeast Asian representation in the original five thousand colonists), an estimated 106 of those settled in Westcape, leaving ninety-four possible parents. Many natives today proudly claim descent from among these ninety-four, simply because of a possible connection with Maya Mahsuri.

Versions and Interpretations
Since 2124, at least thirty different versions of the story have cropped up across an area spanning the Northwest Territories (where some Sierra Nueva insurgents consider it gospel), the Haven Cluster, and the New Hawaii islands.

Four elements are common to all the versions: 1) Maya Mahsuri's husband is lost in a storm, so Maya Mahsuri claims a small island from Poseidon

in return. 2) A serpent violates the balance of nature by murdering Maya Mahsuri's youngest son, so she slays it and claims a kelp forest from Poseidon in return. 3) Sawari, Maya Mahsuri's oldest daughter, rebels, settling the island of Kauai with her own children, and hence violates the balance of nature, so Maya Mahsuri slays Sawari, her own daughter, to pay for Sawari's claim on Kauai. 4) In Maya Mahsuri's twilight years, her long-lost husband comes back to the island at last, in the company of "dark men" who want to rob the riches of Poseidon, and Maya Mahsuri takes up arms once more to defend the balance of nature.

Less common elements of the folktales sometimes mention the Storm Widow taking a new husband, her many fierce disputes with Poseidon's elements (although she always preserves the balance of nature), or the exploits of her children as they grow to adulthood. As always, the exact exploits of the Storm Widow differ by region, and even with each telling of the story.

Cultural anthropologists tend to view the Storm Widow story as being a conservative reinforcement of traditional elements of native culture. They point to the reverence of Poseidon as a quasi-sentient, almost spiritual entity with which the Storm Widow seeks to live in harmony. However, this is a harmony often enforced with stark violence: Maya Mahsuri fights for thirty days (or thirty-three, depending on the version) with the serpent, and even with her own daughter. That she would even kill her daughter is meant to be a lesson that the law applies to humans just as much as it does to beasts.

Most experts agree that "Poseidon's price," often referred to in the stories, is an attempt to bring meaning to the tragic loss of life that has inevitably come with the taming of the new frontier. This is supported by the evidence that the story was told to restore morale in the aftermath of the Mt. Odysseus disaster in 2124. Rather than creating a mythic, idealized recent past, the folktale tells of a brutal existence for early settlers, with mortality ever-present. Two of the most commonly found supporting characters in various versions of the story, the widow's youngest son and Sawari, the oldest daughter, both die. Mortality is a feature

of the stories, and in the last part of the Storm Widow tale, even Maya is described as old and gray – hardly the eternal youth of the traditional folk hero.

The tale of the Storm Widow has undergone a subtle shift in emphasis in the last twenty years, from a story of living by paying nature's price for survival to one of hostile reaction against the evils of Progress. There are two particularly meaningful changes, both apparently occurring in or around 2178.

First, Sawari's rebellion, once meant to be a tragic story of the Storm Widow being forced to pay Poseidon's price by killing her own daughter, is now told as a lesson about what happens to natives who "sell out" and seek to despoil Poseidon to glorify themselves. This has ingrained itself in native culture, exemplified by the fact that "Sawari" has become a synonym for "Judas" in native colloquialism.

Second, the addition of a story in which Maya Mahsuri's husband returns in league with foreigners seeking to rob Poseidon's riches coincides with the increasing native resistance to the massive colonization of the planet in the wake of Recontact. This new ending subverts the whole tale, making it a suitable anthem for various native insurgent groups and environmental extremist organizations.

Rallying Cry

Most native groups hostile to the increasing newcomer presence on the planet will claim to fight in the name of Maya Mahsuri, but only a few actually go so far as to claim to be led by the Storm Widow or a descendant of hers. Rivalry and conflicting claims about their leader being the "real" Storm Widow keep these groups from working together towards the same goal. Nonetheless, one group has drawn ahead of the pack and is considered to be a major threat on the level of the New Rastafarian Movement, Zero Nation, and Blue Water Circle.

The organization known as the Children of the Widow was once a minor radical group called Native Pride, but it also boasts a link to one of the earliest native extremist groups, the Army of Maya Mahsuri. In 2180, the Army claimed responsibility for the massacre of an Atlas Materials geological survey team off

the coast of Mandalay, as well as several acts of sabotage. A MacLeod Enforcement task force was hired to track down the extremists responsible, and the group's headquarters in Nomad was raided on the eve of the completion of Undersea Habitat One. All sixteen of the group's members were captured without a struggle. After a speedy trial found thirteen members guilty of participating in the massacre and sent them to prison for life, the Army ceased to exist – except for three juvenile members who could not be tried as adults and were instead placed in a minimum-security detention facility. All three apparently escaped and vanished shortly thereafter.

The records are sketchy, but a recently published GEO Justice Commission report traces one of the three, Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton, from her escape in 2182 to the founding of the Children of the Widow in 2194. The talented and charismatic Harwati-Colton drifted from town to town, eventually founding a traveling neo-folk band called Poseidon's Price, which specialized in protest music with a radical bent, encouraging "violent political expression."

In 2194, Poseidon's Price performed in the Floats area of Haven. The concert was abruptly ended when the lyrics of one of Harwati-Colton's songs, "Crusade on Kauai," triggered a riot in which a crowd of drunken unemployed natives attacked and burned a passing GenDiver cargo truck, killing the driver.

To avoid the subsequent investigation by the authorities, the members of Poseidon's Price apparently accepted the aid of a radical native activist group called Native Pride (est. 2189), and disappeared into Haven's criminal underground.

One month later, the band's allies in Native Pride invited Harwati-Colton to perform at a meeting of its leaders. It is not clear what happened at that meeting, but soon after word spread that Native Pride had been renamed the Children of the Widow and that Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton, a "bona fide descendant" of the Storm Widow, was to be its "envoy to the people." Membership and financial support grew slowly but steadily, and the Children have never looked back.

Like Native Pride before it, the Children of the Widow has a well-hidden central leadership cell (which, interestingly, does not include Harwati-Colton), and numerous cells of field operatives supported by a grassroots network of allies in native villages. The scope of the Children's operations rivals that of the Blue Water Circle: cells have been found to operate as far north as Kauai in the New Hawaii island chain, as far south as Kansas on the south coast of Prime Meridian, and as far west as Sandy Hook in the Northwest Territories.

All those considered Despoilers are fair game: the Incorporate, the GEO, and even those newcomer colonists sponsored by major international powers. Targets get one warning in the form of a recorded threat (sometimes in the form of clever song lyrics) after which they are hit by a campaign of sabotage, arson, and assassination which lasts for as long as a cell can keep up the pressure.

The organization's greatest weapon – and apparent source of income – is Poseidon's Price. Harwati-Colton has been hailed in neo-folk circles for injecting new life into the Storm Widow stories by adapting them into the band's songs, thereby bringing them to a new audience. Ever since the band was outlawed by the authorities for its membership in the Children, it has become more popular than ever. Its hip, creative, energetic neo-folk protest songs get plenty of airtime on the archipelago's pirate radio stations. A million dataspikes containing their songs circulate on the black market. One-of-a-kind IA chips, programmed with original threat messages performed by Envoy Jeanette Harwati-Colton, sell for insane prices in underworld auctions. Thanks to CommCore, they've even found a cult following on Earth.

Although most of the band's output is available for free in the darker corners of CommCore, the band's music still earns the Children fairly large donations annually. The GEO Justice Commission's recent misguided attempt to crack down on the distribution of the band's music on CommCore and the black market has actually caused the prices of their dataspikes recordings to increase exponentially. It hasn't hurt that several native heritage groups have shown their support of the band by

declaring Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton all but a reincarnation of the original Storm Widow.

The Children of the Widow are currently courting the Blue Water Circle and the Sierra Nueva insurgents as potential allies. They also maintain a love/hate relationship with the Gorchoff Family, which distributes Poseidon's Price's music and paraphernalia in the Haven cluster, but keeps trying to take a bigger piece of the profits. The Children keep their distance from Zero Nation because of some sort of obscure disagreement dating back to the days of Native Pride, and this may be the big stumbling block in the current negotiations with the Sierra Nueva insurgents, who are believed to be assisted by Zero Nation. The NRM have yet to make official contact with the Children, but they are starting to sit up and take notice.

The GEO Justice Commission's report indicates that the Children's activities are expanding; by 2201, the Children of the Widow will likely cost the GEO and GenDiver almost as much in annual damages as the Sierra Nueva conflict.

ACCESS DENIED

The two individuals most responsible for the growth and success of the Children of the Widow are Party Elder Thomas Khalid and Envoy to the People Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton. What little that the GEO knows about these two is derived mostly from records prior to the founding of the Children of the Widow; after 2194, the two vanished deep into the depths of Poseidon's native underground...er...undersea. Since that time, Harwati-Colton has occasionally made public appearances with Poseidon's Price, usually in outflung native settlements sympathetic to the cause, and always under tight security.

Jeanette Maya
Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton was born in 2168, the daughter of two well-known native musicians from Atlantis, John Travis Colton and Maya Harwati. She inherited her father's talent at composition and her mother's magnetic personality and anti-Recontact beliefs. Raised from birth on tales of her namesake's mythical exploits, she never doubted her destiny in life. She and her mother joined the Army of Maya Mahsuri in early 2180. The

young Harwati-Colton was only eleven years old, but she participated in many of the group's operations, serving as courier, lookout, and mascot.

Less than a year later, the organization was broken up by MacLeod Enforcement agents and the members were turned over to the GEO for trial. Jeanette Harwati-Colton escaped serious punishment because of her age, and was separated from her mother to be placed in a GEO-run juvenile detention facility in Haven. This separation was the defining moment in her early life, and it turned her against the GEO and Incorporated forever.

She escaped the facility in 2182, and joined a native street gang in the Floats, the Skippers. For the next four years, she rose through the ranks of the gang by the sheer power of her personality, and gradually turned the activities of her fellow gang members towards anti-GEO vandalism.

In 2186, the same year her mother died in prison, a "disagreement" with the leader of the Skippers forced Harwati-Colton to flee Haven, and she soon took up with reformed NRM gangster and legendary tribal reggae musician Deon "Blind Man" Malcolm. Malcolm recognized her potential and took her into his band as his protege, helping her to develop her musical talents over the next three years. During that time, Harwati-Colton followed Malcolm's band across the Pacifica Archipelago, performing with them in back-alley bars, native villages, Incorporated mining towns and even gangster hideouts. The former gang lieutenant blossomed into a brilliant singer-songwriter, capable of electrifying crowds with her powerful lyrics and inventive electronic compositions.

As Harwati-Colton grew into adulthood, she restrained her urges to rejoin the growing native resistance movement. Her mentor's pacifist philosophies guided her to direct her energies into music, instead. She eventually developed her musical style far beyond the limitations of Malcolm's traditional tribal style, and in 2189, she reluctantly split with her former mentor. She formed her own band, Poseidon's Price, together with guitarist Abel Ransom and trumpet maestro Jessica DeMarco Vasquez, two of Malcolm's

musicians who defected to follow her.

As it turned out, Harwati-Colton's music was veering from old tribal to the neo-folk style. Neo-folk, born of the post-Blight era, had arrived from Earth with Recontact, but was now starting to die out. The old neo-folk musicians, all post-Recontact colonists from Earth, had reached creative dead ends, and many were retiring or switching to other musical traditions. What Poseidon's Price did was to merge the tribal sound with neo-folk, adding elements of political protest and native folktales into the lyrics. The result was a potent mixture that brought new life to Poseidon's music scene.

The timing was almost perfect, and Poseidon's Price sparked a host of copycat bands who took the new "tribal neo-folk" label and ran with it. Unfortunately, the very group which had started it all soon became lost in a sea of new tribal neo-folk bands. Although Harwati-Colton's creativity always kept the band one step ahead of the rest of the pack, their radical political message made many media broadcasters reluctant to play them, and so they often went unnoticed by the public. Until 2194, the Price was merely a cult favorite with a loyal core of fans among Poseidon natives.

Harwati-Colton, aware of the band's many extremist fans, refused to tone down her message, and instead made her songs more and more radical. Agent after agent quit in protest, and it appeared that the band would never break into the mainstream. The band's troubles got worse when Jessica DeMarco Vasquez quit the band to go solo, citing Harwati-Colton's extreme beliefs as her reason. Harwati-Colton was drifting farther and farther away from Deon Malcolm's teachings. Then, a turn of events resulted in the ultimate publicity stunt.

It was the storm season of 2194. Poseidon's Price was performing in the Floats of Haven, close to the neighborhood where Harwati-Colton had once run with the Skippers. While the band was playing the popular favorite, "Crusade on Kauai," a drunken riot broke out, and a GenDiver truck driver was killed. A local radical group, Native Pride, helped the band evade the authorities. This was the point of no

return. Immersed anew in the native resistance movement, Jeanette Harwati-Colton felt like a Nathaniel Lesear, coming home to the waters of Poseidon.

She accepted an invitation to perform at a meeting of the leadership cell of Native Pride. Her music so impressed them that Party Elder Thomas Khalid proposed that the party be reorganized to use the Storm Widow as a symbol to rally native support, with Poseidon's Price as the group's public voice. Harwati-Colton was appointed the Envoy to the People. Word of the Children of the Widow spread. Respectable native elders proclaimed Harwati-Colton a direct descendant of the Storm Widow. A legend was born.

Today, Harwati-Colton leads a nomadic life, traveling with Poseidon's Pride across the Archipelago to perform in the most far-flung of native settlements. In some ways, she has come full circle, returning to her roots as a native extremist. In other ways, she is still the traveling neo-folk musician her fans have known for the last ten years, only with an outlaw reputation that makes her all the more exciting to follow.

Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton has always been a native revolutionary first, a musician second, and a leader last. Although her greatest strength is music, she has turned it towards the goals of the Children of the Widow. She always felt restless under the tutelage of Deon Malcolm, and only by joining the Children has she found true contentment. She is perfectly happy to play her music and spread the message of the Storm Widow, and is content to let others like Thomas Khalid lead.

Despite her radical goals and the dark humor evident in her lyrics, the Envoy to the People is a surprisingly warm and compassionate person. She justifies the violent acts of the Children as being necessary to preserve the balance of nature. Although she feels some remorse when innocents get caught in the crossfire, she sees these as regrettable sacrifices for a good cause. Still, she would gladly call an end to the bloodshed if immigration and industrial activities on Poseidon could be halted, and believes that the leaders of the Children would, too. Harwati-Colton is a small woman of

mixed Caucasian and Malay descent. Her dark eyes flicker with seemingly unlimited energy. She wears her short brown hair in tribal braids. She also sports several bioluminescent "smart" tattoos on her torso, shoulders and arms, which change shape and color in response to loud sounds. The tattoos are often the focus of attention in particularly energetic concerts, when they come to life and dance wildly across her skin, in time to the music. She is often accompanied by longtime lover and cofounder of Poseidon's Price, Abel Ransom. She is always accompanied by a pair of harmless-looking young groupies, who are in fact highly trained, fanatically loyal bodyguards.

Species: Human, Genetic Redesign (Genie), Aquaform Squid

Profile:

Origin - Poseidon Native

Background - Cosmopolitan

Education - Primary, Technical, Vocational

Goal - Revolution

Motivation - Discontent

Attitude - Energetic

Profession: Artist

Mental Attributes: Awareness 64, Charisma 84, Education 15, Experience 49, Initiative 33, Intellect 52, Will 51.

Physical Attributes: Agility 48, Appearance 57, Constitution 44, Dexterity 45, Endurance 75, Speed 39, Strength 43.

Modifications: Aquaform Squid, Neural Jack, "Smart" Tattoos.

Primary Skills: Acting 55, Aquatics 80, Colonial Culture 40, Computer Operation 60, Disguise 40, Electronics Operation 45, Fast Talk 40, GEO Culture 40, Hacking 40, Incorporate Culture 40, Language 50, Music 90, Native Culture 80, Oration 40, Persuasion 75, Street Culture 40, Writing 40.

Thomas Khalid

Thomas Khalid believes strongly in family traditions and obligations to native society. With a family like his, it's enough to drive one to extremes. After all, he's a child of the Storm Widow - literally.

Thomas Khalid was born in 2128 on a tiny island in the Gulf of Kauai. His parents were second-generation colonists: an unassuming farmer named Hafiz Khalid who died a few years after Thomas was born, and a strong-willed woman named Maya Kasturi. Growing up far from other settlements was frightening and dangerous. Of five siblings, including two half-sisters from his mother's previous marriage, only two others, his brother Gabriel and his half-sister Sawari, survived to adulthood. Thomas watched his mother grow hard and grim as the family suffered tragedy after tragedy. But somehow, she pulled through and kept the family together for many years.

After their mother vanished at sea in 2148, the surviving siblings went their separate ways, and Thomas ended up in Atlantis, where he became a respected fisherman and eventually a community leader. Over the years, he began to hear stories circulating through the archipelago which sounded like distorted versions of his mother's life.

It was a strange and terrible thing to have a mother who seemed to live on in legend, her stature growing with every year. As the decades passed, Thomas gradually accepted it, and began to almost believe in the stories himself. He even began to use the tales to preach native values to his community, and added his own exaggerated contributions to the tradition. By the 2170s, Thomas Khalid had spun a web of his mother's mythology around himself.

But the times were changing, and not for the better, as far as some natives were concerned. Thomas Khalid prophetically saw trouble coming with the newcomers from Earth, and, with several fellow elders created and spread a new chapter in the Storm Widow myth, the story of Maya Mahsuri's reunion with her long-lost husband, who had brought Despoilers to the islands. He reasoned that it was what his misanthropic mother would probably have done, anyhow.

Sure enough, the Long John rush brought the Incorporates and increasing GEO control over the archipelago. When his youngest grandson was "accidentally" shot by a GenDiver miner in a drunken brawl, Thomas Khalid knew that it was time to follow in his mother's footsteps. Never mind that his mother's exploits were nine-tenths fiction; the important thing was that it was his duty to the society and the very myth he'd helped to shape.

Following the example of the Zero Nation terrorists who'd come to Poseidon to stop colonial expansion, Thomas and his fellow elders set up a militant group, Native Pride, in 2189, just as native resistance was starting to really grow. Although initially limited to New Hawaii, the group cautiously expanded to the Haven Cluster in 2191, to take advantage of the concentration of its native population.

Native Pride was far from successful in its early years. Funding was a problem, as was the media suppression of many of its activities. Native Pride lost an entire cell in a botched joint operation with Zero Nation that left ties between the two groups shattered. Most of the truly committed native warriors were flocking to the NRM, Blue Water Circle, and the Sierra Nueva insurgency. Thomas Khalid was desperate for some sort of shining flag to set Native Pride apart from the rest of the native groups. And he found it in the Floats area of Haven, in 2194.

It was Thomas Khalid who gave the secret order to instigate a riot and kill a GenDiver truck driver, forcing Poseidon's Price to seek help in avoiding the authorities. It was he who convinced Jeanette Maya Mahsuri Harwati-Colton to join the cause. It was his idea to transform her - a young, magnetic musical genius - into an avatar of the Storm Widow, uniting native resistance and creating the Children of the Widow.

The Children of the Widow are strong now, and growing stronger. Thomas hopes to join forces with other native resistance groups, and has released a manifesto calling for the unification of all native resistance groups by the year 2201, and the expulsion or extermination of all Despoilers by 2211. The "2211 Manifesto" is silently making the rounds through the native under-

ground in 2199, stirring up all sorts of reactions. Which is all that matters. All Thomas now needs only one more thing, to finish what he believes to be his mother's work – a martyr.

Thomas Khalid is convinced that Harwati-Colton will hit her peak soon. Eventually, she will do more good to the cause as a martyr than as a living symbol. After all, living symbols can make mistakes, and Thomas fears that the singer is not ruthless enough for the campaign of terror he plans for 2201. Living symbols can weaken. But the dead, like the original Mahsuri of Malay folklore, can only grow in power...

Thomas Khalid is a brilliant, highly disturbed mastermind. He doesn't believe in the cause so much as he believes that he should believe in the cause. His own sense of duty to societal obligations has become so ingrained over the years that he justifies his ruthlessness as being necessary to uphold his duty to native society. All that he can do through the Children of the Widow, he does for the sake of the values that the Storm Widow stands for. Even if they aren't true. But who's to say what's true? Caught in a recursive loop, he is trapped by the very values he injected into New Hawaii native society through his mother's legend. And he will never recognize this.

The Party Elder of the Children of the Widow appears a kindly, bent paternal figure, a bald, beardless little man who wears simple robes and coughs a lot. He is nearly blind, but makes up for it with a keen sense of hearing. He speaks softly so that everyone is forced to listen closely to his every word. A pair of harmless-looking native women accompany him everywhere he goes. They are, of course, far from harmless.

Species: Human, Genetic Redesign (Genie), Aquaform Diver

Profile:

Origin – Poseidon Native

Background – Religious

Education – Secondary, Vocational

Goal – Accomplishment

Motivation – Duty/Social

Attitude – Arrogant

Profession: Native Elder

Mental Attributes: Awareness 35, Charisma 64, Education 25, Experience 71, Initiative 29, Intellect 46, Will 62.

Physical Attributes: Agility 39, Appearance 47, Constitution 39, Dexterity 29, Endurance 63, Speed 36, Strength 32.

Modifications: Aquaform Diver.

Primary Skills: Aquaculture 60, Aquatics 90, Bureaucracy 60, Fast Talk 60, First Aid 50, Fishing 90, GEO Culture 40, History 95, Incorporate Culture 30, Law 50, Leadership 80, Logistics 30, Management 60, Meteorology 50, Native Culture 95, Navigation 50, Negotiation 60, Oration 80, Persuasion 90, Pharmacology 40, Political Science 70, Psychology 65, Sailing 50, Strategy 85, Theology 60, Tracking 60.

MOST WANTED

RAMON ORTEGA

He entered the wounded world ten minutes before midnight on Recontact Day, 2165, in a cheap hostel room in San Fernando, Mexico. A twin sister, as pale as he was dark, was born nine minutes later. They were christened Juan Ramon and Maria Consuela Roxas.

The Roxas were migrant laborers who followed seasonal jobs across the country, and so childhood for Juan and Maria was a rapid succession of trailer parks, company towns, and unfriendly schoolrooms. Their mother and father were a brutal combination of fringe religious fundamentalists and raving alcoholics, and their older siblings were quiet and sullen. The only friends they had in the world were each another.

In 2180, their parents dragged Maria away to Mexico City and came back without her, 20,000cs richer. Something snapped inside of Juan, and he ran away that night, hopping a train he mistakenly thought was bound for Mexico City. A month later, he was wandering the streets of Panama City, unable to even remember his own name. Years of abuse and the loss of his sister had driven him into a profound fugue, and all he was left with was a deep need to run, to get away, although he knew not from what. He boarded a ship headed for Morocco as a cabin boy, and he was gone.

For the next nine years, he literally hitchhiked across the globe. Luck, fear and innate toughness kept him alive long enough to learn the rules

of the streets and waterways. He learned from grifters and sailors and prostitutes and refugees, from Africa to the Middle East to India to Southeast Asia. A kindly art photographer in Sandakan took him in as an apprentice and he stayed there for almost a year before that terrible wanderlust woke him up one night and he left on a cargo ship before dawn.

He crossed the Russian Free Zones with his camera in hand, taking pictures of the sad beauty of the people and towns of the wounded land. It was his way of dealing with images which would otherwise burn into his memory. By the time he arrived in the bloody New Balkans in 2189, he was selling his photos to CommCore magazines under the name 'Ramon Ortega.' It was there that he met veteran war journalist Julia Barnes. They found plenty of work among the ruins, and they also found each other. Eleven months later, they were married in Paris.

The Ortegas became a renowned husband-and-wife team, traveling the globe to chronicle its images in the dying years of the century. Ramon became the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in 2197 for his powerful images of the chaos and terror of the '96 Olympic Crisis. At the same time, Julia's compassion and empathy helped to heal his psyche. He was no longer running. He was no longer alone.

In late 2198, the Ortegas left for Poseidon on an assignment to photograph the elusive aborigines, but Julia died en route in a freak hibernation failure (Arch 4). When Ramon awoke, it was 2180 all over again. This time, he threw himself into his work and vanished into the wilderness. Few have reported seeing him since, and many believe he is dead.

In reality, Ramon is still wandering the waterworld like a ghost, keeping low and anonymous in fringe settlements, evading notice, and occasionally exposing injustice and tragedy with his camera. Recently, he has joined with Bernardo Oliveira's forces (Arch 116), and his anonymous images of the Westcape War circulating on CommCore have helped fuel the growing public awareness of that conflict.

Ramon Ortega is a small, lean, dark-skinned Hispanic man. His hair is black but he is prematurely balding,

and he has grown a bushy black mustache since his arrival on Poseidon. He is quiet and speaks little, but his weary brown eyes are always watching, observing everything around him. Although he is only 34 years old, Ramon is in many ways more mature than a man twice his age. His time on Poseidon has changed him, however, and he is no longer running from his past, or at least, not as desperately as he once did. He's not sure what he's searching for now, but intends to keep going until he finds it.

Species: Human, Modi Profile: Origin - Earth, Nomadic (see below)

Background - Abusive/Cosmopolitan, see below

Education - Elementary, Vocational (Photographer)

Goal - Oblivion

Motivation - Compassion

Attitude - Brooding

Profession: Journalist

Mental Attributes: Awareness 66, Charisma 40, Education 15, Experience 54, Initiative 45, Intellect 45, Will 58.

Physical Attributes: Agility 50, Appearance 41, Constitution 75, Dexterity 50, Endurance 54, Speed 50, Strength 44.

Modifications: Immunological Symbiote, Salt Tolerance

Primary Skills: Aquatics 40, Bureaucracy 40, Computer Operation 60, Driving 40, Earth Culture 70, Electronics Operation 40, Fast Talk 70, Forgery 50, History 40, Language (English) 50, (Interspec) 10, (Mandarin) 10, (Serbo-Croat) 20, (Swahili) 20, Mechanical Repair 30, Persuasion 70, Photography 90, Political Science 50, Psychology 40, Writing 70

Notes: Ramon Ortega has a custom Origin, described below. In addition, to reflect his complicated background, he has half the attribute modifiers and skills from each of the Abusive and Cosmopolitan Backgrounds.

Earth (Nomadic) This indicates an early life as a part of a migrant or refugee movement, constantly going from one settlement to another, without enjoying the full benefits of city life.

Experience, Will / Charisma, Education

Brawling, any Culture skill except Native or Spacer, Language, Negotiation, Persuasion, any Subterfuge skill.

CUTTING EDGE

PAIN INHIBITOR

Pain inhibitors, or PIs, are biodigital implants that do just what the name implies. These relatively simple devices intercept neural input from pain receptors, eliminating the sensation of pain. PIs are integrated within the neural pathways that deliver impulses to the pain processing centers of the thalamus. When stimulus exceeds preset levels, the implant shunts the excess impulses. This results in the user feeling only minor discomfort, regardless of the level of stimulus.

Because pain is an evolutionary adaptation against bodily harm, elimination of the stimulus is inherently dangerous. Therefore, the shunted signal is interfaced with tactile or even auditory centers, where the excess nerve impulses are perceived in an alternate form. This allows the user to sense and react to the magnitude of possible injury without having to deal with the potentially debilitating effects of the pain itself. Learning to gauge the severity of an injury based on this alternate perception is a slow process and requires specific training.

Shunting the impulses at the point of the thalamus also eliminates the autonomic responses associated with pain, such as hormone release and the metabolic shock pain can induce. The elimination of incapacitating pain and the body's physiological responses too it can be life saving advantages. Traumatic injury can be temporarily ignored, allowing the user to do first aid on himself, to move, or even to continue fighting after suffering horrendous wounds. Pain inhibitors are therefore common modifications among soldiers, covert operatives, and frontiersmen - anyone with a dangerous profession.

The pain inhibitor biomod gives the user a three level bonus to all pain related Will rolls and a permanent one level bonus to Endurance. The mod allows an individual to ignore mental action injury penalties and reduces all physical action injury penalties by two levels. PIs also add a two level bonus to all trauma rolls.

Healing time: 4 weeks
Cost: 27,000cs

REMOTELY PILOTED SUBS

Remotely piloted submersibles are used in countless applications on Poseidon. These robotic devices are typically simple

and self-contained machines, driven by impellers or tiny MHD drives. Though designs vary, there are three basic versions.

The most common design is controlled from the surface via reinforced fiber optic cable. Through the cable, digital instructions are passed to the remote and sensor data is passed to the operator. These devices are versatile and efficient, and are limited to ranges and depths constrained only by the length of their tethers. This design is most commonly used in scientific and industrial applications.

Another version relies on sonar signals much like those cetaceans use to control their CICADAs. In certain circumstances this offers the operator greater maneuverability, but the design has its own limitations. Instructions must be given through a sonar interface and therefore operational range is limited to the range of the control output. This is typically about one thousand meters.

The third version is an entirely autonomous, programmable design. These devices are typically quite simple and are commonly used by oceanographers studying Poseidon's seas. They are given course and survey instructions and set loose to explore, periodically surfacing to broadcast their collected data via uplink. More sophisticated versions of these robotic probes are common in military applications. Programmed to monitor perimeters, recon landing sites, or run patrols, these devices are becoming increasingly important in marine operations.

Remote submersibles can be fitted with all manner of sensor packages, manipulators, and communications suites, including synthesizers that convert human speech to cetacean sonar. Versatility, speed, and cost vary greatly depending upon the design. Hydrospace manufactures the most diverse and reliable line of submersible remotes. One of their most popular is the Hard Fish IV, a simple cable controlled design, outfitted with multi-band video and broad-range sonar imaging, and two cybernetic manipulators.

Hard Fish IV
Dimensions: 18.3 kilograms and 20.7 liters
Power Source: Heavy duty cell
Availability: Uncommon
Cost: 2150cs

DIVE IN

DUSK 'TILL DAWN

by Greg Benage
and Jeff Barber

– *wherein something wicked this way comes...*

WARNING – If you intend to play in a Blue Planet convention scenario presented by Biohazard Games during the 2000 convention season **READ NO FURTHER**. We are considering using this adventure as the basis for next year's convention demo. You have been warned...

This scenario takes place on Kraken (Arch 58), the massive xenosilicate refining station built by GenDiver at the southern end of the Haven Cluster's Wall. As described in Archipelago, the Incorporate has withdrawn its personnel and now leases the facility to a collective of independent miners and prospectors. The facility is detailed in the key at the end of the scenario and the station deck plans on the facing page.

This adventure consists of a sequence of increasingly dangerous events that occur over the course of a single night. The only requirement for including this scenario in any campaign is a plausible reason for the player characters to stop over on Kraken. Though every campaign has its own unique motivations, we offer a few suggestions for getting characters involved.

The facility lies along a major travel route and is one of the only refueling stops along the way. Characters bound for New Hawaii, the Northwest Territories or points within the Haven Cluster, may need to stop there for fuel. Alternatively, traveling characters may be forced to stop over in Kraken for mechanical repairs. Perhaps word about Kraken's recent trouble has gotten out and mercenary types are looking for ready employment. Miner or prospector characters visiting, or even working in, the collective would certainly become involved in the adventure. Terrorists and insurgents sometimes use Kraken as an out of the way meeting place, and so such characters could be there to rendezvous with underworld contacts. Smugglers, pirates, or other criminals sometimes use Kraken as a temporary

bolt hole, and such characters could be there hiding out.

This scenario was inspired by the film of the same title, and could be considered an homage of sorts. Therefore, we would like to recommend the latter option. If your players usually opt to be the guys in the white hats, we suggest running this adventure as a one-shot, where the characters are desperate criminals fleeing with a valuable cargo they have just hijacked. Putting the players on the wrong side of the law will offer some unique roleplaying opportunities, provide some interesting motivation, and remove some otherwise pesky moral dilemmas. For a little more punch in the final play, the moderator should consider having the posse chasing the player characters arrive just before the climactic scenes. They might eventually even be forced into an interesting alliance with the law, just to survive the night.

Regardless of motivation, the scenario will work best if the characters are forced to overnight on Kraken. Perhaps a storm is threatening, the hydrogen still is temporarily down, their vehicle cannot be repaired until the following morning, or their contact has not yet arrived. Things on Kraken are going to get ugly, and it will make for a more exciting adventure if leaving is problematic at best.

From Dusk 'Till Dawn is organized into a series of events that should be spaced out through the course of a single night. Despite the implication of the section headings below, the precise timing of these events is left to the moderator's discretion, with two possible exceptions. The first event should occur at or near dusk, and the conclusion should occur with the break of dawn. This is not strictly necessary, but it is dramatically effective.

DUSK

The characters do not know it, but they are about to enter a nightmare. The rogue biomechanical combat drone described in the access denied entry for Kraken (Arch 60) has made return visits over the past couple nights, and it will be back for more the night the characters arrive at the facility. In the two nights prior to the character's arrival, seven of Kraken's residents have been brutally murdered.

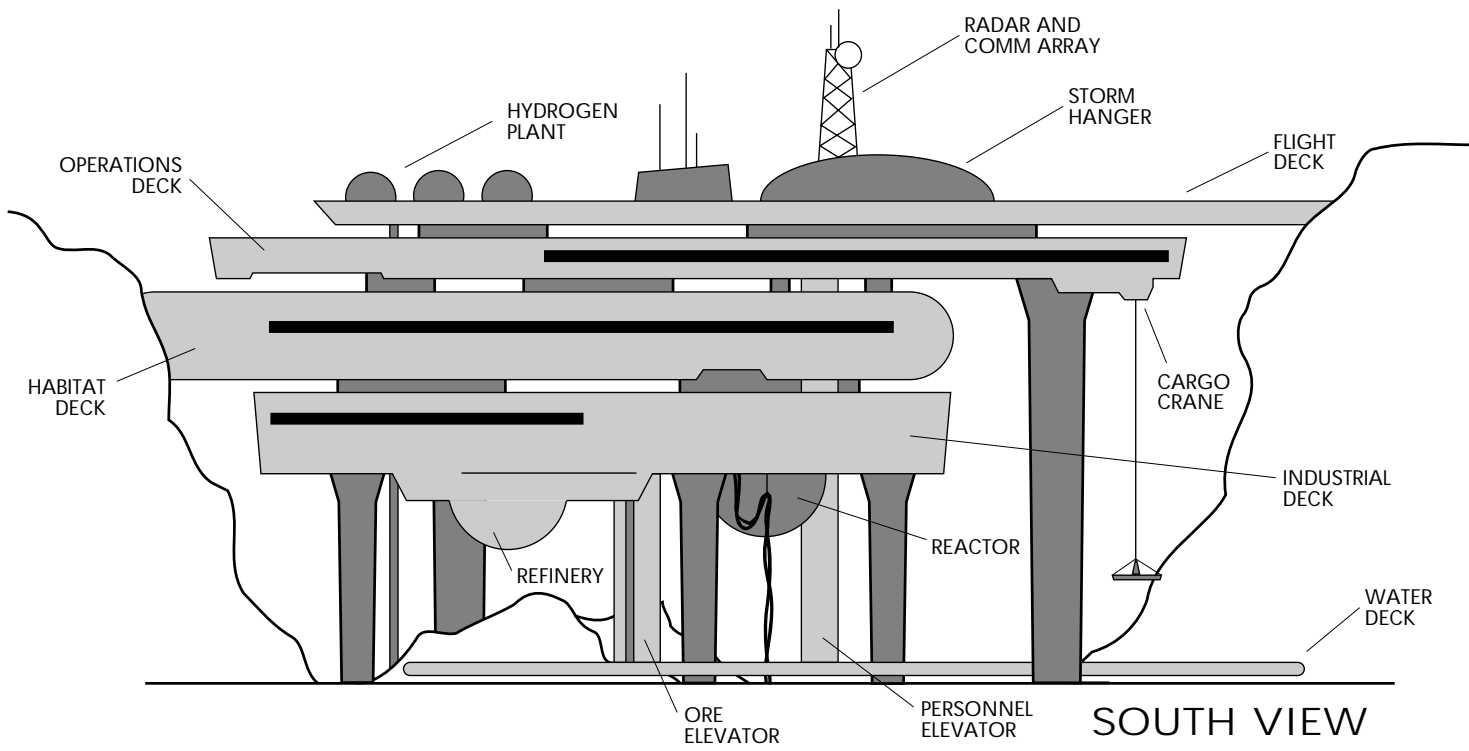
No one on Kraken knows who or what is responsible for the killings. All of the GenDiver personnel who witnessed the drones' original three-month spree are long gone, and only rumors and local legends of psychotic murderers, rampaging predators, or Incorporate genetic experiments persist among the prospectors. During their night at Kraken, the characters will be caught up in the bloodbath, and may be able to solve the mystery...if they themselves do not become the next victims.

The miners' collective on Kraken was initially very loosely organized, and the only real law was that against hoarding Long John. As times have gotten tougher, however, so has the collective. An edgy ex-con and veteran Long John prospector named "Cutter" Smith is the self-appointed boss of the collective. He maintains order with the help of about twenty enforcers, whose membership ranges from former Gorchoff and NRM thugs to mercenaries and deserters from GenDiver Security.

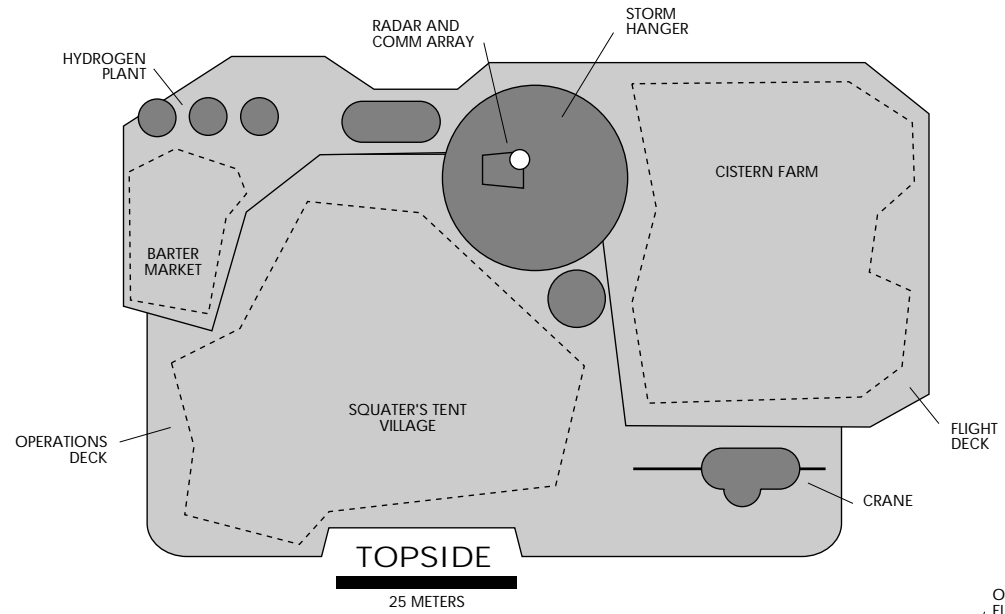
Cutter wants to see the killing stopped, but he and his gang have had little luck figuring out what is going on. In fact, one of his enforcers is among the seven that have been killed in the recent attacks. The boss has become extremely paranoid, and he and his thugs may be as big a challenge for the characters as the rogue drone.

2300HRS

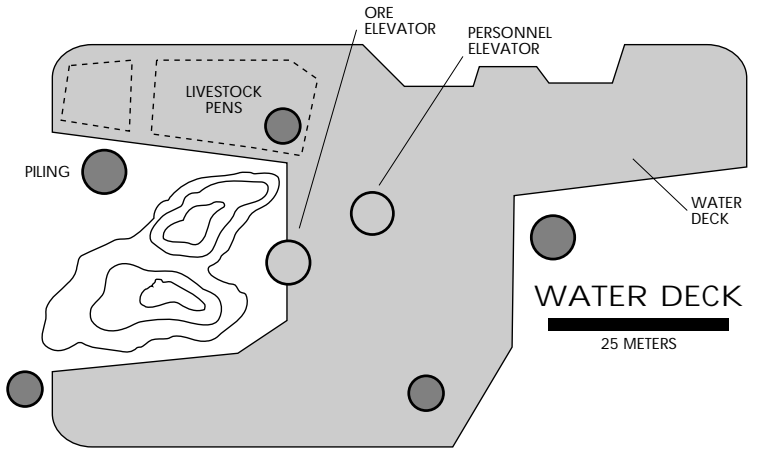
If the characters are arriving by air, they will likely touch down on one of Topside's flight decks. If they arrive by sea, they will pull into one of the docks on the Water Deck. In either case, they will be met by a couple of enforcers. The thugs are armed with submachine guns and sidearms, and observant characters will notice that they look exhausted and extremely edgy.



SOUTH VIEW
25 METERS



TOPSIDE
25 METERS



WATER DECK
25 METERS

N

KRAKEN

The thugs are not especially talkative and will not offer much information about Kraken. If offered even the slightest provocation, they will not hesitate to react violently. They insist that the characters leave all firearms in their vehicle, though if offered a bribe of 100cs or so, will agree to allow them to carry handguns. The enforcers also inform the characters that "The Boss" likes to meet all the new arrivals to Kraken personally, and one of the thugs will escort the characters to meet with him.

Despite the recent troubles, Cutter is on the Industrial Deck overseeing the collective's refining operations. The Boss is a hulking, ebony skinned pure-strain human with a bald pate and rumbling, baritone voice. He asks the characters who they are, what they are doing on Kraken, and how long they plan to stay. He explains the rules – basically, "stay out of trouble" – and answers any general questions they may have. He will not mention the murders. Assuming the characters play it cool and do not do anything foolish, he will then leave them to go about their business.

If the players opt to go the criminal route, the game moderator should consider foregoing the whole Cutter Smith angle, leaving the town without any strong authority and up for grabs. This would give the scenario the flavor of a classic western with a gang of bandits riding roughshod over the helpless townfolk. The plan could be for the characters to go to ground in Kraken until things blow over, intimidating the residents into keeping their mouths shut and providing them with safe haven.

2600HRS

In the course of their business on Kraken, the characters will inevitably visit Topside. This is Kraken's most heavily populated level, and as they wander through the open-air market, they will eventually hear about the murders. Everyone on Kraken is in a high state of anxiety, and rumors and theories about the killings run rampant. Some residents believe Cutter is responsible for the murders, exacting justice on prospectors who have been caught stealing Long John. Others think some unknown sociopath aboard the facility has launched a bloodthirsty murder spree. Still others believe that an unclassified predator from the Wall is preying on the residents of the platform.

If the characters take the time to talk to the residents about the murders, they will learn some helpful details. First, five men and two women have been murdered, and there seems to be no pattern associated with age group, occupation, economic status, or location on the facility. The murders have all taken place at night, three the first night, and four the second. The victims' wounds are ragged and extremely severe, lending support to proponents of the predator theory. No one living has ever spotted the predator, and none of the victims of the attacks have survived their wounds.

If the characters visit the residential tents on Topside, they will see a man hosing a large bloodstain from the bioplastic decking. If questioned, he will report that this was the site of the last murder, the previous night. The body has long been disposed of, but a careful search of the area will reveal additional clues. In addition to the bloodstain on the deck, there are blood-spatter patterns on several nearby tents. Characters with Forensic Medicine skill will be able to analyze these patterns and determine several facts about the murder.

The patterns indicate that both attacker and victim were upright when the assault took place, and the angle and spread of the blood spatter indicates that the attacker was as much as sixty centimeters taller than the victim. The man scrubbing the bloodstain will confirm that the victim was a male human, 1.6 or 1.7 meters in height. The analysis will also reveal that the victim suffered at least three separate wounds. The patterns are indicative of multiple strikes from both left and right angles. This could be explained by either forehand blows with both hands, or a combination of forehand and backhand blows with one hand. A good roll will reveal that one of the attacks severed the victim's carotid artery, based on the height of the spatter marks and the distinctive high-pressure, "spurt" patterns. A skilled and observant investigator may also conclude that one of the victims lungs was punctured, based on the presence of expiratory blood, or "foam," on the tent walls. Finally, the "castoff" patterns – trails left by blood being flung from the murder weapon – indicate that the victim was slashed by a large claw or clawed weapon, such as a gardening fork. If there were any bloody footprints or other evidence

at the scene, they have been scrubbed away. The man doing the cleaning does not remember seeing anything.

Alternatively, if the characters are criminals on the lamb, the scenario could be stretched into a more suspenseful, multi-session adventure with only a few small changes in the timeline. If they arrive before the drone begins its killing spree, the players can work through some potentially complex and entertaining roleplaying as they go to ground on Kraken, tree the local population, and settle down to the business of hiding out from the law.

With a little creativity on the part of the moderator, the threat posed by the drone can develop slowly. Maybe one killing, and then nothing for several days, followed by a disappearance or two. Did someone flee to the authorities to inform on the characters? Maybe the locals suspect the characters of killing a few of the residents to further intimidate the population. Perhaps the characters think some other, more subtle operators are working Kraken, and have designs on their stolen booty.

2900HRS

Several hours after dark, the combat drone will return to Kraken. The drone will surface near a fishing boat, climb out onto the dock, and begin stalking the two enforcer guards standing nearby. If there are others in the vicinity, including the characters, the drone will remain concealed until it can attack unseen.

Once it gets the opportunity, the drone will dispatch the two thugs easily. One will die without making a sound, but the other will get off a wild burst from his submachine gun, as he is attacked. After finishing its work, the drone will slip back into the water, and swim around to the north side of the Water Deck, where there is an access ladder to the Industrial Deck.

If the characters investigate the gunfire, they will find the two guards lying in a growing pool of blood. The first is missing most of the left side of his face, and has had his chest torn open, exposing the lungs. He is quite dead. The second – the one who fired the burst – has been disemboweled, but will remain alive for a few minutes after the attack. Assuming the characters arrive within that time, he will croak out the words

“Devil...water” before lapsing into unconsciousness. He has suffered a level five wound and failed his trauma roll badly. Assuming adequate medical supplies are available, it is possible for a skilled medic to stabilize him with First Aid.

The wounds and blood spatter at the scene are consistent with those discovered Topside. The drone did, however, leave a trail of bloody footprints leading from the murder scene, across the dock to the water. Characters with either Forensic Medicine or Tracking skills will be able to determine that the prints were left by a large, barefooted humanoid. The prints are poorly defined, however, so it will take a critical success to determine with certainty that the prints were not left by a human.

Ten minutes or so after the attack, Cutter will arrive at the scene. He will, of course, be in a bad mood, but if the characters are still around and have proven themselves competent, he will offer them a bounty if they can catch the killer. He will offer 10,000cs in GenDiver scrip, but will go as high as 15,000cs if pressed. If they accept the job, the Boss will allow them to retrieve heavier weapons from their vehicle.

If the characters are criminals and have successfully intimidated the residents into submission, at this point they will be stuck with the responsibility of saving their collective asses. Assuming the characters are unable to simply pack up and flee, and a few simple acts of sabotage or an attack by the drone can prevent this, they will have their hands full dealing with the rapidly increasing threat.

0200HRS

Once it reaches the Industrial Deck, the drone will stalk through the dimly lit, cluttered area killing any targets of opportunity that present themselves. It will remain concealed at all times, and kill only if it can do so without revealing itself. It will move through the Industrial Deck to a maintenance shaft, then climb the ladder up to the Habitat Deck.

On the Habitat Deck, the drone is really in its element. The deck is a maze of narrow passageways and small rooms, and is mostly dark. It is also almost completely abandoned, but the drone will stalk through the corridors, killing any occupants it

finds. It may even use the Habitat Deck as a safe haven from which to make killing forays on the Industrial and Operations Decks. It will enter the Operations Deck through an access shaft into one of the makeshift greenhouses. Though the vegetation in the greenhouses will provide ample cover for the drone, it will quickly continue up to Topside after killing any lone residents it comes across.

High on bloodlust and emboldened by its previous kills, the drone will abandon stealth and go on a true rampage once it reaches Topside. It will race through the open-air market killing everyone it sees, retreating to cover only if fired upon. It will rage over the deck and into the squatters village, where it will go from tent to tent maiming and slaughtering as many humans as it can find.

This is the most likely place for the characters to catch up with the drone. Once they do, it will react based on the level of the threat they pose. If they have sufficient firepower to seriously wound or kill it, the drone will use its speed and the clutter of the tent town to keep itself out of line of sight as much as possible. It will also use stealth and ambush to try to neutralize the characters if the opportunity presents itself. If it is seriously wounded, it will race to the edge of the deck and dive into the water in an attempt to escape.

Again, for dramatic effect, try to time the rogue drone's passage through the facility so that it reaches Topside just before dawn. It can stalk and hide in the Industrial and Habitat Deck as long as drama requires, and making the characters hunt, track, search, and pursue through these poorly lit and cluttered areas is an excellent way to build tension and excitement.

0500HRS

Shortly after the combat drone reaches Topside and begins its rampage, a small group of aborigines will arrive in the waters just off Kraken. They will use their chemo-empathic abilities to suppress any interference from humans they might encounter, but otherwise, they will leave the residents of the facility alone. The reason for the visit to Kraken is to recover the rogue drone, and to that end, they have brought two functional drones along with them.

The two drones will be directed to board the platform, find the rogue, and either kill it or, if it is already dead, recover its body. The drones will enter the facility on the Water Deck, and proceed level by level until they reach Topside. It will not take them long, because their chemosensory faculties are sophisticated enough to track the rogue easily. They will not attack humans unless it is necessary to defend themselves or to recover the body of their target. The drones are relentless, and will continue in their mission until they have secured the rogue, or they are incapacitated.

If the characters do comprise a criminal band, this would also be the perfect time to have the posse that has been on their trail arrive at the station. The posse can come in guns blazing, or maybe the characters are hiding in plain sight, counting on threats to force the residents into harboring them. In this case the posse will have to try and sniff them out. Either way, with the players caught between a rock and a hard place they are at the mercy of the game moderator. With a little creative timing the moderator should be able to bring the whole mess to a chaotic, high action climax where the players do not know where to point their guns first. Between the rouge drone, the desperate residents, the hunting aborigines and now the posse, the players will have a hard time just keeping their hides intact. With a cinematic presentation style, this could be a scenario finale players will remember for a long time.

DAWN

Assuming the characters survive their nightmare, there are a couple possible outcomes. First, they may have killed not only the rogue drone, but those sent to recover it as well. If so, they have some pretty remarkable specimens that GEO and Incorporate scientists would love to get their hands on. If informed by the characters or residents of Kraken, the GEO and GenDiver will both have a keen interest in claiming the cadavers, which could turn out to be an adventure in itself.

Alternatively, the characters may have failed to stop the rogue, or it may have been taken by the drones sent in to recover it. In this case, all they have are the claims and rumors they heard when they first arrived on Kraken – unless someone was quick-

witted enough to get some video or sensory-recorder footage of the beast...

THE FACILITY

Kraken was once a state-of-the-art facility, productive and efficient, but little remains of its past glory. Storms, fast fungus, scroungers and neglect have taken their toll on the once impressive station. The gray bioplastic decking is now patchy and dull, and pitted with caustic growths. Most of the automated systems have fallen into useless disrepair and the few remaining residents live in almost primitive squalor.

Kraken spans open water between foundations of rock outcroppings, and is supported beneath by a network of suspension cables and several large pilings. Unfortunately, the pilings have begun to show dangerous signs of corrosion and decay. The platform actually consists of three decks of workspaces, machinery, support facilities, and living quarters, and a superstructure of docks, aircraft hangars, and warehousing. Catwalks, piping systems, HVAC ducts, and communications antennas wrap around or dot every exterior surface. The deterioration of the facility has, however, removed or hidden much of this structure under layers of improvised and haphazard necessity.

Most of the open decking and superstructure has been covered in a random garden of collecting pipes and cisterns that has sprouted up to compensate for the failed desalination plant. Though the station reactor remains operable, the facility power grid is offline and in need of long neglected repairs. In consequence, makeshift windmills and solar collectors squeak and glint, gathering the little power there is to be had on Kraken. The sewage system is, of course, also out of order, and the residents have resorted to rather medieval practices. On calm days a low pall of cook-fire smoke hangs over the facility. The smell of sewage, chickens, and drying fish rises into the air along with the sounds of goats, gulls, and clanking refining equipment.

Only two systems aboard the station still function with any reliability – the refinery and the hydrogen plant. The Long John refinery is relatively well maintained, as it is necessary to the livelihood of the few diehard miners living there. They baby the

equipment, and when repairs or spare parts are needed they pool their resources to get the system up and running again. The hydrogen cracking still is relatively new. The system was purchased, and the refueling stop it supplies is operated, by a gruff little cooperative that takes advantage of the only good thing about Kraken – its location along a major travel route.

Topside

The upper surface of the platform supports the flight decks, the hydrogen plant, and the inoperative communications array. This level also holds the fresh water collection system, the hodgepodge of tents that shelter many of the facility residents, and the numerous stalls that make up Kraken's growing native barter market.

Operations Deck

This deck was once occupied by administration offices, conference rooms, engineering work space, and science labs. Any valuable equipment has long since been stripped out for use elsewhere, and large windows and skylights have been cut into the bulkheads to compensate for the failed air-conditioning and to let in sunlight. Most of the space is now used for hydroponics greenhouses, and one large room has been converted into a chicken coop.

Habitat Deck

This deck is divided into a grid of hallways that lead to small apartments, group barracks, shower rooms, and communal lounges. With no electrical power to spare, most of this space remains too damp, dark, and stuffy to be of use. Most residents have moved into the tent village on the upper deck, leaving this deck empty and abandoned.

Industrial Deck

This level is one large open space, filled with processing equipment for refining raw Long John ore into pure wafer. There is machinery everywhere, with conveyor belts, pipes, ducts, crane arms, hoses, and cables running throughout. The place is poorly lit and dirty, with scattered ore slag covering the floor. Though little else on the station works, the refining equipment usually grinds along thirty hours a day.

Water Deck

Once a busy dock serving mining submersibles and cargo vessels, this

deck now serves only a small fishing fleet and the few miners' craft still operating out of Kraken. The docks also support numerous aquacultural nets and stringers, as well as several livestock pens holding iguana and pigs.

ABORIGINAL COMBAT DRONE

Movement Land – 8/16, Water – 5
Awareness 70
Initiative 75
Intellect 50/4
Agility 65
Constitution 50/6
Endurance 60/6
Strength 50/6
Rounds 1
Attack Claw (x2) – 70, Grapple – 85
Damage Ranks 1/10 2/25 3/40 4/60
5/80 6/90 7/100
Damage Scale 2
Armor 1/10



Hangin' Joe (*unclassified*)

Despite its rather innocuous name, this creature should be considered extremely dangerous. Described here based on only a few specimens, this organism is apparently well known to natives that frequent Poseidon Mangrove islands (BP 140). The animal appears to be some sort of gastropod analog with a thick muscular foot and a lumpy, thick skinned visceral mass. Though arboreal mollusks are not unheard of, even on Earth, this creature is certainly unique, if only for its size. Hangin' Joes are massive and can weigh in excess of two hundred kilograms.

Their hides are a mottled brown, but are typically covered with a thick mat of moss and epiphyte analogs. Joes have ten to twenty long, ropey tentacles that look remarkably like hanging "vines." These limbs are powerfully muscled and can reach thirty meters in length. When the animal is moving or feeding the tentacles are typically coiled near the body. When hunting, they hang below the creature's arboreal perch.

Though edible, the flesh of these animals is foul tasting and extremely tough. When close to the main body the wary can sometimes detect a faint sulfur odor which can give away the creature's presence. Due to the paucity of actual specimens, these creatures currently remain unclassified.

Behavior Hangin' Joes move rarely and slowly, and when they do, it is only from one hunting perch to another. A hunting Joe flattens itself out, wrapping around a large supporting limb, giving the branch a typical, vegetation-covered appearance. Like many creatures on Poseidon, Joes are ambush predators. When hunting they uncoil their long tentacles, draping them over lower branches, or dangling them just below the water's surface. Any hapless animal that blunders into the drooping "vines" is instantly entangled in a flurry of coiling tentacles. Joes kill by constriction, and death can be slow, especially for larger creatures. Once dead, the prey is quickly lifted to the Joe's perch and tucked under the engulfing mass of the creature's body, where a toothy radula makes short work of hide, muscle, and even bone.

Range Tropical
Habitat Poseidon Mangrove Islands
Length Foot 2 to 3 meters, tentacles 30 plus meters
Weight 200 to 250 kilograms
Frequency Rare
Resource Value None
Threat Level High
Movement N/A
Awareness 10
Initiative 55
Intellect 85/3
Agility 30/3
Constitution 45/6
Endurance 30/3
Strength 60/6
Rounds 5
Attack 45, grapple with constriction
Damage Ranks Special – see suffocation(BP 320)
Damage Scale 2
Armor None

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...A GUIDE TO THE ON-GOING COLONIZATION OF POESIDON. Issue 5/6

UNDERCURRENTS

