

DOLPHINS, GUNS, AND MONEY

BY MARK STOUT



**SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN
THE WORLD OF BLUE PLANET**

DOLPHINS, GUNS, AND MONEY

An Adventure for the BLUE PLANET™ Roleplaying Game, by Mark Stout

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INTRODUCTION

Working for a salvage company as a reclamation technician is rarely a dull job. Most of the time you're diving into waters to recover something that belongs to someone else, because you were paid to retrieve it or because there's profit in recovering and selling it. But that water is never the beautiful, peaceful, shallow sea you see on holovids. It's too deep for casual salvagers to attempt, or in waters teeming with dangerous creatures, or located in areas frequented by violent insurgents or protected by Incorporated soldiers. Any way you look at it, it's not an easy job. So when a client shows up at your door with a fairly simple job, you jump on it.

The client in this case was a bottlenose dolphin who went by the name of Surfjumper. She was a courier and transporter, specializing in delivering small cargoes discreetly. Her latest job was hauling a cargo pod of scientific monitoring equipment and the resulting data from a small island about 700 kilometers north of Second Try.

The haul went without incident until approximately 62 kilometers south of Summer Island, a lesser white appeared at the extreme edge of her echolocation and assumed a hunting pattern. Surfjumper attempted to lose the white by using the terrain, but she couldn't maneuver quickly enough with the cargo pod. She dumped the cargo pod, noting the coordinates, and proceeded to evade the white. However, when she circled back, the white had returned to the area where she dumped the pod. It refused to leave the area, forcing her to abandon the cargo pod and seek help.

Being an independent courier, she had no resources to call on, so she came to your company to hire you to retrieve the cargo pod for her. She will pay the standard rate plus danger money, even if the white is no longer in the area. The water is just over 600 meters deep, which is not that bad. All you have to do is return the pod to her at Dock Berth 94 in Second Try as soon as possible.

Easy money, right?

GETTING THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED

- The characters are employed by a salvage company.
- The characters are independent operators, but have a boat at their disposal and could undertake a small salvage operation like this one.
- The characters are known in criminal circles and Dodger personally seeks them out for this reason.
- The characters are undercover law enforcement (GEO or local) investigating smuggling rings in Second Try.

BACKGROUND

The dolphin calling herself Surfjumper is actually named Dodger. She really does work as an independent courier and hauler, but almost exclusively deals with illegal cargoes. She typically avoids shipping lanes and heavily-traveled routes, favoring longer out-of-the-way paths.

The incident with the white took place exactly as she described it, but the cargo is not scientific gear. The cargo consists of unregistered small arms and illegal heavy weapons, including grenade launchers and man-portable missile launchers. It was a pay-on-delivery order for a group of native insurgents, kindly provided by Second Try elements of the Gorchoff crime family. The problem is the order is now late, which has the insurgents upset, and the delivery wasn't made, so the Gorchoff family hasn't been paid for their weapons yet. Dodger is in a tight spot, so she contracted the salvage company (or the characters directly) to retrieve it.

The family isn't content to sit by idly and wait for payment. They have sent a group of thugs to persuade Dodger to pay up and to harass the characters whom they don't want retrieving the cargo. They are putting together a ship and crew to retrieve the cargo pod themselves. If the characters go out anyway, that crew will be there to try and take it from them. They aren't interested in cooperating or sharing, and won't want to talk it over.

The native insurgents are upset about the non-delivery and lack of explanation. They also have a group out searching for the pod. The group will try to take the pod from whoever has it, and aren't going to be willing to negotiate either.

The characters will quickly end up in the middle of this mess, and will learn that on Poseidon, there really is no such thing as easy money.

EVENTS

- Dodger, as Surfjumper, hires the characters or their company to retrieve her lost cargo pod. She provides the coordinates, but currents could have moved it despite its weight. The job will entail some searching on site.
- The characters start prepping their boat and equipment, but are interrupted by a group of thugs who deliver a warning to drop the job, and start a brawl if they refuse. At the first sign of weapons or threats of calling the harbor patrol, they break off and leave.
- As the characters leave the dock on their boat, another boat begins to follow them. The thugs on the boat quickly pull guns and begin shooting. A chase begins to lose the thugs before anyone gets injured or killed, or the boat gets too damaged to use.
- Characters travel to the coordinates and begin searching. They notice native boats, with people diving in and out of the water. The natives avoid the characters and aren't friendly at all. They claim to be simply spear fishing, but watch the characters intently.
- Another boat arrives within an hour, with fishermen on board. They seem to keep busy doing things on deck with towed nets. These are actually Gorchoff thugs prepping a mini-sub

to find the pod themselves. This is a different group than those who pursued the characters at the docks, so the characters won't recognize any of them.

- Characters begin searching for the cargo pod. If they find the pod and start bringing it up, both the thugs and the native insurgents both launch an assault to capture the pod. If they sneak the pod out underwater, it will be picked up on sonar by the thugs, who will pursue.

- Characters may decide to deal with the thugs and/or the natives before searching. Both won't respond to threats or intimidation, violence will be the only thing they listen to. An attack on one will cause the other to arm themselves for a fight as well as speed up their search.

- Once the pod is recovered and the threats dealt with, the characters may wish to return directly to deliver the pod, or open it to find out what is in there. Knowing what's in there may cause them to change their plans.

- If they deliver the cargo pod, Dodger is waiting with some family thugs. They got to her after she hired the characters and is being forced to hand over the pod. She will stay underwater at the dock and stay out of the fight. When the fight is over, the GEO patrol will show up to sort things out.

- If they want to turn in the guns to the patrol, a group of native insurgents ambushes them at the outer channel before they make it into the docks. They wait for the boat to slow down for channel entry, then jam the engine intakes with kelp and climb up the boat to attack. Once the fight is over, the characters can reach the dock to meet with waiting patrol officers.

- If they want to turn over the pod to one of the groups without provoking a fight, that will be possible. However if the other group is there, the characters are likely to get caught in the middle of the fight for the pod.

A FIN IN NEED

If the characters are working for the salvage company, then they are going about their shore-side job duties at the Long Shot Salvage Company of Second Try. They are the most experienced salvage team, usually assigned to the most difficult recoveries. Their supervisor comes out to the dock to brief them on their next job. The following can be paraphrased to the players. If an alternate beginning is desired, such as Dodger approaching independent characters, then she tells them the following information.

Their client is a *fin*—slang term for a bottlenose dolphin—named Surfjumper. Five days ago she had to abandon a cargo pod full of scientific analysis equipment, while trying to evade a lesser white that was hunting her. She was able to lose it in a narrow canyon, but the white refused to leave the area, making retrieval of the cargo pod impossible for her. The area is approximately 62 kilometers south of Summer Island, about 510 kilometers north of Second Try, in 600-meters-deep water. The equipment on board the pod is extremely expensive, and the dataspikes full of information gathered by the equipment are irreplaceable. The cargo pod needs to be retrieved and brought back to Second Try as soon as possible.

The supervisor knows this job is not the usual challenge the characters are used to, but the fin is paying the standard fee plus danger pay, and the water depth is not that great, so this job should be quick and easy. If independent operators, Dodger offers them 5,000 scrip pay for retrieval, and another 5,000 scrip as danger money. They have a general set of coordinates where the pod may be, but Surfjumper didn't have time to anchor the pod to the seafloor or activate its locator beacon, so a manual search will have to be conducted. Good weather is predicted for the coming week, and there are no cyclonic systems near that could threaten the recovery operation. Once the pod is recovered, the characters are to deliver it to Surfjumper at Dock Berth 94, where she will pay the remainder of the recovery fee (she already put down a deposit).

Getting ready to go takes several hours, as the characters prep the ship and the mini-sub they'll be using for the job, and stow needed equipment. Everyone will have a drysuit to dive in (even ones that let aquaforms dive deeper than normal), although people will be needed both in the water and on the boat. Part way into the preparations, a group of people approach the boat. They are thugs in the employ of the Gorchoff family. The thugs plan to retrieve the cargo pod themselves and are here to warn the characters to refuse the job or bad accidents may happen. To punctuate the point, one of the thugs will kick something valuable into the water. They aren't afraid to start a fist fight to get their point across, but they won't pull weapons. If anyone calls the Patrol or pulls a gun, they back off right away, warning the characters that they'll regret taking this job.

GORCHOFF THUGS (1 for each character, plus 2 extra)

GOAL: Wealth

MOTIVATION: Loyalty

ATTITUDE: Arrogant

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect -1, Presence 0, Will -1

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1

APTITUDES: *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge

PRIMARY SKILLS: Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 3, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Lockpicking 3, Persuasion 4, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5

GEAR: Casual clothes, knife

These are petty thugs that do strong-arm work for the Gorchoff family. They are tough, loyal, and not too bright, characteristics prized by the syndicate. They're here to intimidate the characters into quitting the job, or rough them up at worst. They'll back off if things get serious since they already have a backup plan in case intimidation fails.

CAST OFF

Once the characters are ready to leave, they may cast off and head out. The first part of leaving is navigating the harbor, which is crowded near the docks with fishing boats, recreational watercraft, and big ships coming and leaving. As they move out, all characters on deck (except the pilot) may make Awareness rolls. On a success the character notices a boat

similar to theirs coming up fast from behind, faster than allowed in the harbor. This begins a chase, with the Gorchoff boat starting behind the characters' boat at Short range.

BOAT PILOT (1)

GOAL: Wealth

MOTIVATION: Loyalty

ATTITUDE: Arrogant

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect -1, Presence 0, Will -1

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1

APTITUDES: *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge

PRIMARY SKILLS: Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 3, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Lockpicking 3, Persuasion 4, Piloting 5, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5

GEAR: Casual clothes, knife, small caliber pistol

THUGS (8)

GOAL: Wealth

MOTIVATION: Loyalty

ATTITUDE: Arrogant

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect -1, Presence 0, Will -1

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1

APTITUDES: *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge

PRIMARY SKILLS: Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 3, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Lockpicking 3, Longarms 4, Persuasion 4, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5

GEAR: Casual clothes, knife, small caliber pistol; three thugs have hunting rifles

If the characters can make it through five rounds of the chase, they've made it to open water and escaped. Otherwise if the thugs get to Close range, they'll board the salvage boat and try to sabotage it—breaking controls, shooting holes in the fuel tanks, and so on. Calling the Harbor Patrol right away means the characters only have to evade the thugs for three rounds before a patrol boat arrives and chases down the Gorchoff boat.

SALVAGE SHIP/GORCHOFF BOAT

DIMENSIONS: 25 m long, 6.1 m wide, 15 t

POWER SOURCE: Fuel cell, propeller

FUEL EFFICIENCY: 16 km/L

RANGE: 2,000 km

SPEED: 36/72 km/h (Combat 30 m)

POWER: -2

HANDLING: -3

RIGGING VALUE: Standard

LEGALITY: Legal

AVAILABILITY: Uncommon

COST: 120,000 cs

ARMOR: 12

DURABILITY: 2

CREW: Pilot, five crew

PASSENGER/CARGO CAPACITY: 80 t of cargo

STANDARD ACCESSORIES: Mini-sub, onboard computer, radar suite [1], security system, sonar suite [2]

ARMAMENT: None

THE SEARCH

The trip to reach the coordinates takes about six hours and passes uneventfully. The weather is clear and hot, with only a bit of cloud cover; about as nice as weather gets on Poseidon. There are several native catamarans in the area when they arrive. These boats are clustered in a small area several hundred meters away. They can be seen coming in and out of the water, occasionally bringing up fish. They appear to be armed only with knives and spearguns. They seem to have no interest in the characters' boat, but are gruff and unpleasant, even to other natives. These are actually some of the insurgents who were buying the weapons from Dodger. They found out where she dropped the pod and have started looking for it themselves. They keep an eye on the characters' activities while pretending to dive and hunt fish with spearguns. Anyone observing them for several minutes, and succeeding at an Awareness roll, sees that they are chumming the water near the boats. This isn't unusual for fisherman to do, but could attract a large predator which is not a good thing.

The characters have a number of resources for conducting the search: the boat's sonar, an underwater ROV (remotely operated vehicle), the mini-sub, and drysuits for the non-aquaform crew members. A combination of efforts will yield the best results. One character can be on boat using the sonar to scan the seafloor to identify likely search sites—this uses the Electronics skill. Another may pilot the mini-sub to potential sites, or do grid sweeps of the area. Aquaforms can go down with the sub and do their own searching with, or keep an eye out for hostile sea life. Another can pilot the ROV from the ship using the Remote Operation skill.

A fishing trawler arrives an hour after the characters get there. The crew works on deck, seemingly very busy. The crew is a group of Gorchoff thugs, somewhat sea-skilled, sent to take the pod from the characters or find it before they do. Although nothing goes on up on deck, below they are prepping a mini-sub to go down and search for the pod. They got the coordinates from Dodger, who was caught by the family shortly after hiring the characters. If hailed, they wave and smile, saying they're in their usual fishing spot and don't mind the characters being there. The thugs on deck set up line rigs to maintain the deception. They sweep with their sonar to try and find the pod, but keep the mini-sub inside until they find the pod or the players bring it up. The mini-sub exits a hatch in the bottom of the boat, which can be detected by sonar when it opens.

Finding the pod requires some time. It drifted west in the bottom currents for about three kilometers before the tow harness snagged under a boulder. Once per hour of game time, one character who is actively searching should make a roll based on the relevant skill against a TN of 2. Other characters searching (by sonar, ROV, swimming, or looking) can make cooperative rolls against a TN of 2. Each success the other characters get increases the primary character's TN by 1, to a maximum TN of 5. If the primary character fails, the pod is not located, but TN increases by 1 for each additional hour of searching. Once the roll has succeeded, the pod has been located. However, the characters' troubles aren't over yet.

The natives aren't going to find the pod first due to the distance involved, but the thugs have a chance of locating the pod first. The boat pilot makes an Electronics roll every hour

with the same requirements as the characters, but no cooperative help. If he makes the roll before the characters do, the thugs locate the pod and send their mini-sub down to get it. The character manning the sonar will see the mini-sub head down, and be able to track it.

CLAIMING THE POD

Both the Gorchoff thugs and the native insurgents will be observing the characters closely. They would prefer to let the characters do all the work and take the pod from them after. The thugs are searching anyway, hoping to get lucky. The pod is 2 kilometers due west, at about 580 meters depth. It is stationary on the ocean floor near a sea cave, as the tow harness has lodged under a boulder. The snag is too wedged to clear by hand or the mini-sub robotic arm, so the pod will have to be cut loose of the harness. The mini-sub arm as an attachment for cutting. The pod has a place to attach a hook or clip from a towline. The characters can hook a line on it from the mini-sub and haul it up, or drop a towline from the boat and pull it up. This would be very simple, except there is unfriendly sea life down there.

The natives have been catching fish on their dives, and cutting them up to chum the water. As a result a dangerous predator has moved into the area, following the blood scent in the water. A swarm of blood hunters are roaming the waters here. While the blood hunters pose no threat to the mini-sub, divers are another matter. In addition the cargo pod lies near a low cave that happens to be the lair of a polypod. The polypod considers nearly anything to be food, even mini-sub. If the thugs have found the pod first and gotten down here in their mini-sub, they run afoul of the polypod first. It's worth noting that neither mini-sub has weapons.

BLOOD HUNTER SWARM

ATTACKS: Bite 4 (3/action; DR 2)

MOVEMENT: 6/15 m

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build -20, Fitness 4, Agility 4, Awareness 2, Will 2

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 5, Reflexes 3, Strength -8, Toughness -4

ARMOR: None

Since this is a swarm of small fish, attacks made by weapons must incapacitate 6 targets before the fish retreat. Area of effect weapons, like mini-torpedoes or other explosives, can take out the swarm with one incapacitation or death result.

POLYPOD

ATTACKS: Grapple 4 (DR 8)

MOVEMENT: 3/5 m

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 8, Fitness 4, Agility -4, Awareness 2, Will 2

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 3, Reflexes -1, Strength 6, Toughness 3

ARMOR: 1

This polypod is an almost fully grown adult female. She is highly territorial and will attack anyone or anything, even a mini-sub. Anything coming close enough to get the pod or its tow cable is within her territory, and will trigger an attack. Her tentacles are long enough she can grapple targets near the cargo pod without coming out of the cave.

MINI-SUB**DIMENSIONS:** 3 m long, 1.7 m wide, 1 t**POWER SOURCES:** Fuel cell, MHD drive**FUEL EFFICIENCY:** 4 km/L**RANGE:** 400 km**SPEED:** 14/28 km/h (Combat 12 m)**POWER:** -2**HANDLING:** -1**RIGGING VALUE:** Standard**LEGALITY:** Legal**AVAILABILITY:** Common

This is a standard one-man mini-submarine, used for everything from research to underwater construction. It has no weapons, only two manipulator arms with claws.

MINI-SUB PILOT (1)**GOAL:** Wealth**MOTIVATION:** Loyalty**ATTITUDE:** Arrogant**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES:** Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect -1, Presence 0, Will -1**DERIVED ATTRIBUTES:** Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1**COST:** 20,000 cs**ARMOR:** 4**DURABILITY:** 0**CREW:** Pilot**PASSENGER/CARGO CAPACITY:** None**STANDARD ACCESSORIES:** Onboard computer, radar suite [1], robotic arms (2), security system, sonar suite [2]**ARMAMENT:** None**APTITUDES:** *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge**PRIMARY SKILLS:** Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 3, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Electronics 4, Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Persuasion 4, Piloting 5, Sneaking 4**GEAR:** Casual clothes, knife, small caliber pistol**THUGS (6)****GOAL:** Wealth**MOTIVATION:** Loyalty**ATTITUDE:** Arrogant**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES:** Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect -1, Presence 0, Will -1**DERIVED ATTRIBUTES:** Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1**APTITUDES:** *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge**PRIMARY SKILLS:** Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 3, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Lockpicking 3, Longarms 4, Persuasion 4, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5**GEAR:** Casual clothes, knife, small caliber pistol; three thugs have hunting rifles**NATIVE INSURGENTS (8)****GOAL:** Freedom**MOTIVATION:** Loyalty**ATTITUDE:** Rebellious**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES:** Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity -1, Awareness 0, Intellect 0, Presence 0, Will 0**DERIVED ATTRIBUTES:** Endurance 2, Reflexes 0, Strength 0, Toughness 1**APTITUDES:** *Superior:* Survival; *Strong:* Athletics, Firearms, Stealth**PRIMARY SKILLS:** Aquatics 6, Archery 5, Culture (Colonial 4, Native 6), Demolitions 4, Fishing 3, Foraging 4, Hiding 4, Longarms 5, Meteorology 3, Mountaineering 3, Orienteering 4, Sailing 4, Sneaking 4, Tracking 5, Unarmed Combat 3**GEAR:** Simple clothes, knife, speargun, six spears

These natives that claim to be simply fishing are, in fact, the buyers of Dodger's weapon shipment. They come across as dour and taciturn to any character, even another native. They trust no one outside their group, and are loyal only to themselves and the people of their village.

If the characters bring the pod up to their boat, by any means, the thugs and the natives will make their move. The thugs will launch their mini-sub to intercept the pod, and the thugs on the boat will lay down fire on the characters' boat to make them stay down. The natives will take to the water with knives and spearguns and try to get the pod as well. Likely, both will face off with each other while trying to get the pod. The natives will swarm both mini-sub and attack by pulling cables, wedging knives in manipulator joints, cutting hoses, and so on. The mini-sub can do little except try to ram them or crush with a manipulator arm. Characters in the water can fight either. The thugs retreat if their mini-sub takes serious damage. The natives fight until three of them are killed or incapacitated, then retreat.

If the characters try something clever, like tow the pod underwater with the mini-sub and rendezvous with it later, make an Electronics roll for the thug pilot. On a success he spots them on sonar, and dispatches their mini-sub to intercept. Run the fight as above, with the thug mini-sub trying to cut the towline and grab the pod. The natives won't be able to detect the characters' mini-sub running at depth, and will end up departing when the characters do.

BACK TO SECOND TRY

Finally, with the cargo pod made secure, the characters head back to Second Try. The majority of the trip back is uneventful, giving the characters time to talk. The characters may want to open the pod and find out what cargo is so valuable that this many people are willing to kill to get it. Opening the pod reveals the truth.

The pod contains 40 assault rifles, 2 grenade launchers, 3 mini-torpedo launchers, and a man-portable missile launcher. All weapons are still in pieces and sealed in their original factory bags with copious amounts of anti-fungal lubricant. Also in the pod are clips of bullets, cartridges of binary propellant, and various warheads for the launchers. What is not in there are instructions on how to assemble the weapons for use. The Gorchoff family was going to supply the native insurgents with a few trainers to teach them assembly, care, and shooting. A character with a military or law enforcement background knows enough to show the others how to clean, assemble and test fire the rifles, but not anything else. One person can clean and assemble a rifle in an hour. This could come in handy if the characters run into trouble at the docks.

The characters now have a decision to make over what to do with the pod. The most likely options are as follows, but if the players come up with something different, the game moderator will have to come up with a plausible end scenario.

1. The characters deliver the pod to Surfjumper (Dodger) as planned. Dodger has been caught by thugs working for the Gorchoff family, and is being forced to let them take the pod without paying the characters for retrieving it. Jump ahead to **Delivering the Pod**, below.

2. The characters contact the GEO to report the incident and turn over the pod to them. The Patrol tells them to meet at the salvage ship's dock in Second Try. Skip ahead to **Turning in the Pod** (p. 14).

3. The characters combine 1 and 2, by contacting the GEO and reporting their upcoming meeting with Surfjumper. The Patrol will tell them to make the meeting, whereupon they will arrest Surfjumper for arms smuggling. Jump ahead to **Delivering the Pod**, below.

4. The characters turn the pod over to the insurgents or the Gorchoff thugs. Both factions want the pod and are willing to listen to any reasonable offer, although they will try to take it by force if they believe they can. The moderator should review both sections and make a decision.

DELIVERING THE POD

Since the characters left in the morning, it will be night when they return. Lighted channel markers guide the boat back into the harbor and to Berth 94 where Dodger is waiting. Anyone observing the docking berth may make a Notice roll. On a success they see about half a dozen people on the dock waiting casually, as well as a dorsal fin moving through the water near the docks. On a raise, they also see a small aerial remote hovering over the water near the dock.

Nothing about this looks particularly unusual. Cetaceans always make use of remotes to do tasks on land they can't do themselves. Hiring people to carry cargo on land is also common. If the characters opened the pod and found the guns, they are likely suspicious, and with good reason. The "dock workers" are Gorchoff thugs here to seize the cargo pod from the characters. There are six thugs on the biocrete platform at the end of the dock, and two aquaforms in the water on either side of the dock. They are there to exit the water after the characters pass, or to climb the boat to find the cargo pod and handle crew still on board.

When the characters debark and walk up the dock to meet their client, she greets them via her remote. She explains she is very sorry, but the men here will be taking the cargo pod and she will be unable to pay them the remainder of the salvage fee. The men will move to take the pod from the characters or tell them to get it off the boat. Dodger stays underwater away from the dock and can't be seen from there.

What happens next is up to the players and depends on whether the characters opened the pod and reported it to the GEO Patrol.

If the characters have just themselves to rely on, they may acquiesce and turn the pod over without a fight. The thugs will take the pod, load it on a nearby vehicle and leave. While they're doing this, Dodger's remote will fly off over the harbor as she swims away. Jump ahead to **Wrapping Things Up** (p. 15).

If the characters put up a fight, they'll have to deal with the six thugs on the dock and the two aquaforms in the water. Dodger won't fight with her remote unless someone actually hits it, then she'll get angry (dolphins consider remotes an extension of themselves) and attack the person who hit it. If the remote is destroyed, she'll be angry, but won't risk herself on a direct attack. The sound of gunfire will eventually draw the GEO Patrol to the docks, after the characters have taken care of the thugs or when half the characters are down. Jump ahead to **Wrapping Things Up** (p. 15).

If the characters called the GEO before they got back and told them about the deal, the characters will be instructed to debark with the pod. As soon as the thugs take the pod, patrol cars and a patrol jumpcraft converge on the docks, while a patrolman calls over a loudspeaker for everyone to throw down weapons and hit the ground. The thugs begin a gunfight with the patrolmen, who outnumber them by two to one. The characters can help, or just hit the deck and wait it out. Characters actively helping will be targeted by thugs. The aquaform thugs will jump in the harbor and swim away to avoid arrest, they won't stick around to help their fellow criminals. Dodger also swims away at the first sign of the patrol, taking her remote with her. In any case, the amount of patrolmen present will result in a quick clean-up of the Gorchoff thugs. Jump ahead to **Wrapping Things Up** (p. 15).

THUGS (5)

GOAL: Wealth

MOTIVATION: Loyalty

ATTITUDE: Arrogant

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect -1, Presence 0, Will -1

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1

APTITUDES: *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge

PRIMARY SKILLS: Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 3, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Lockpicking 3, Longarms 4, Persuasion 4, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5

GEAR: Casual clothes, knife, small caliber pistol; two thugs have submachine guns

GORCHOFF LIEUTENANT

GOAL: Wealth

MOTIVATION: Loyalty

ATTITUDE: Arrogant

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity 0, Awareness 0, Intellect 0, Presence 0, Will 0

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1

APTITUDES: *Superior:* Close Combat; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Subterfuge

PRIMARY SKILLS: Aquatics 2, Armed Combat 5, Computers 1, Culture (Colonial 5, Street 6), Fast-Talk 4, Handguns 4, Lockpicking 3, Longarms 5, Persuasion 4, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5

GEAR: Casual clothes, light vest diamond knife, large caliber pistol, submachine gun

The lieutenant is just like the thugs, only a bit smarter and more ambitious.

DODGER**GOAL:** Contentment**MOTIVATION:** Pride**ATTITUDE:** Holistic**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES:** Build 6, Fitness 2, Agility 0, Dexterity -12, Awareness 2, Intellect 0, Presence 0, Will 1**DERIVED ATTRIBUTES:** Endurance 4, Reflexes 1, Strength 4, Toughness 2**SENSES:** Chemical (Taste 2, Smell —), Hearing 5, Intuition 4**APTITUDES:** *Superior:* Stealth; *Strong:* Military Weapons, Survival, Tech**PRIMARY SKILLS:** Aquatics 10, Culture (Cetacean 6, Native 5), Demolitions 5, Foraging 4, Gunnery 4, Hiding 4, Orienteering 4, Remote Operation 6, Sneaking 4, Theology 3, Tracking 5**GEAR:** Remote (see below)

Dodger is a young adult bottlenose dolphin who has been working as an independent courier for three years. She started with normal, legal jobs, but soon found out she enjoyed not only the increased pay of illegal cargo runs, but the excitement of it as well. She takes great pride in delivering her cargoes on time and without problems, so this incident has her frustrated. She's not a callous or mean cetacean, disliking violence intensely. She simply follows the teachings of Whalesong Theogony that emphasizes survival. She will do anything she needs to do to ensure her continued survival.

DODGER'S REMOTE**DIMENSIONS:** 30 cm diameter disc, 2.25 kg**POWER SOURCE:** Standard battery (2)**DURATION:** 20 hours low activity, 2 hours high activity**SPEED:** Combat 40 m**RIGGING VALUE:** Standard**LEGALITY:** Legal**AVAILABILITY:** Common**COST:** 2270 cs**ARMOR:** 2**DURABILITY:** -1**STANDARD ACCESSORIES:** Basic A/V suite, basic computer, radio link, voice synthesizer**ARMAMENT:** Small caliber handgun (35 rounds)

This is a small, disc-shaped aerial remote designed for surveillance and self-defense. It is fast, but somewhat fragile.

TURNING IN THE POD

If the characters opted to contact the GEO Patrol and turn in the cargo pod to them, they'll be instructed to come directly back to the company dock and meet the patrolmen there. However they will have to contend with a problem before that.

The natives watching them at the search site contacted more of their insurgent group in Second Try to let them know the cargo pod was on its way back. The natives in Second Try have assembled a small team at the head of the harbor, which is several kilometers from the docks. They are in the water, and will approach the boat as it comes in and release several bundles of pump weed in front of the boat. The weed will get sucked into the MHD intakes and clog the drives, shutting them down. This will show up on the pilot's console in the cabin.

It isn't an unusual occurrence, as pump weed is fairly common, but the characters probably aren't very trusting of coincidence right now.

Someone, or several people, will have to get in the water to clear the intakes. That's when the natives plan to grab whoever does and ransom them for the pod. If the characters stay on the boat, the natives assume they're calling for help and scale the sides to get to the pod. They come up on all sides, making it hard to stop them all. The fight will be over one way or another before any help arrives, as it will take a GEO Patrol boat at least 5 minutes to get there. Once the natives have taken half their number in wounded or dead, they jump into the ocean and vanish underwater. Go to **Wrapping Things Up**, below.

NATIVE INSURGENTS (10)

GOAL: Freedom

MOTIVATION: Loyalty

ATTITUDE: Rebellious

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Build 1, Fitness 1, Agility 0, Dexterity -1, Awareness 0, Intellect 0, Presence 0, Will 0

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Endurance 2, Reflexes 0, Strength 0, Toughness 1

APTITUDES: *Superior:* Survival; *Strong:* Firearms, Stealth, Tech

PRIMARY SKILLS: Aquatics 6, Culture

(Colonial 4, Native 6), Demolitions 4, Fishing 3, Foraging 4, Handguns 3, Hiding 4, Longarms 5, Meteorology 3, Mountaineering 3, Orienteering 4, Sailing 4, Sneaking 4, Tracking 5, Unarmed Combat 3

GEAR: Simple clothes, knife, speargun, six spears

WRAPPING THINGS UP

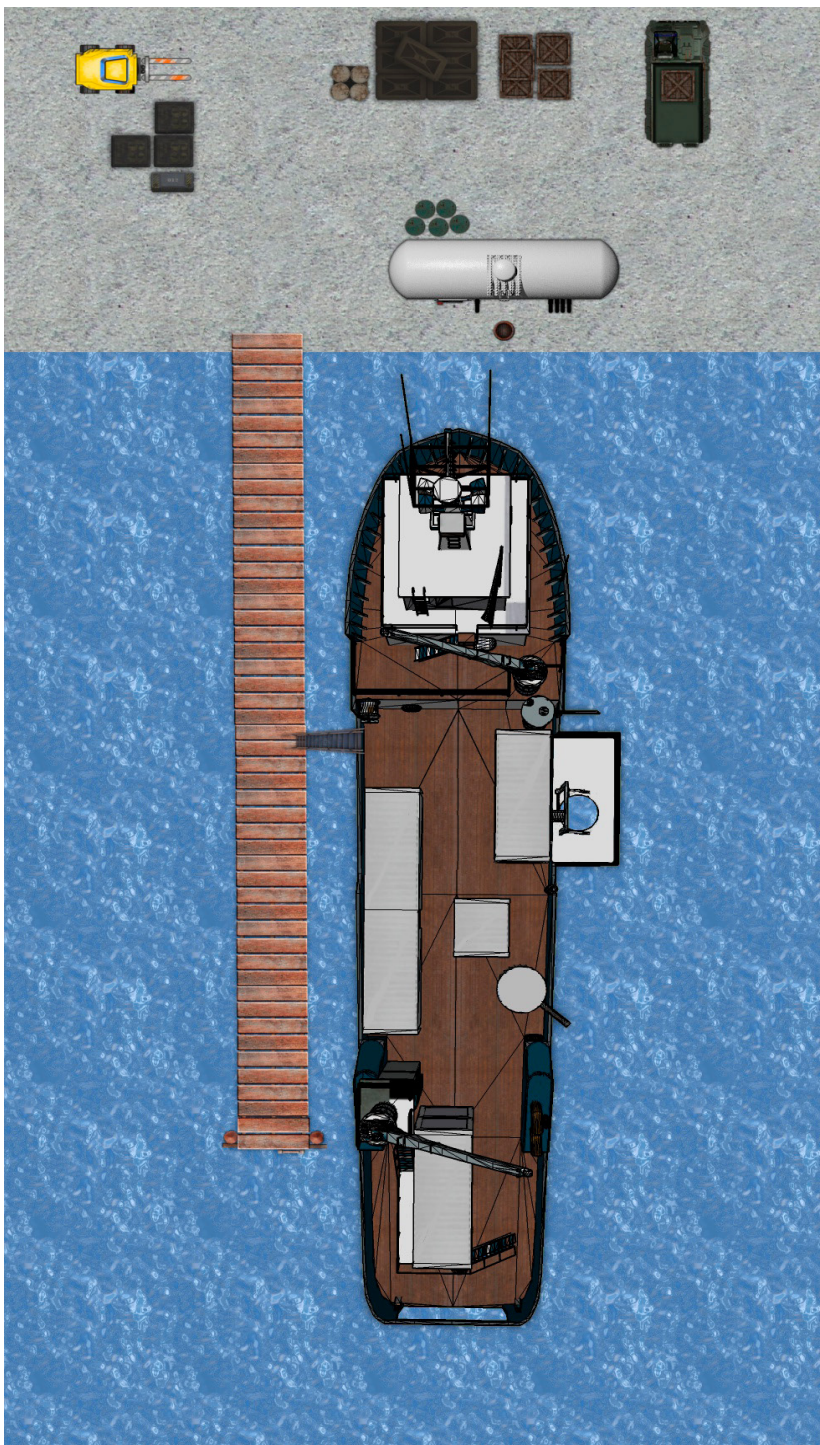
When all is said and done, the characters will have gotten rid of the troublesome pod, although they might not have gotten the rest of the pay. The company certainly doesn't hold this against them, and they have earned themselves a week off work to rest.

If the Gorchoff thugs or insurgents got the weapons, the GEO is not happy and subjects the company to an investigation and other legal hassles, which the characters end up getting sucked into.

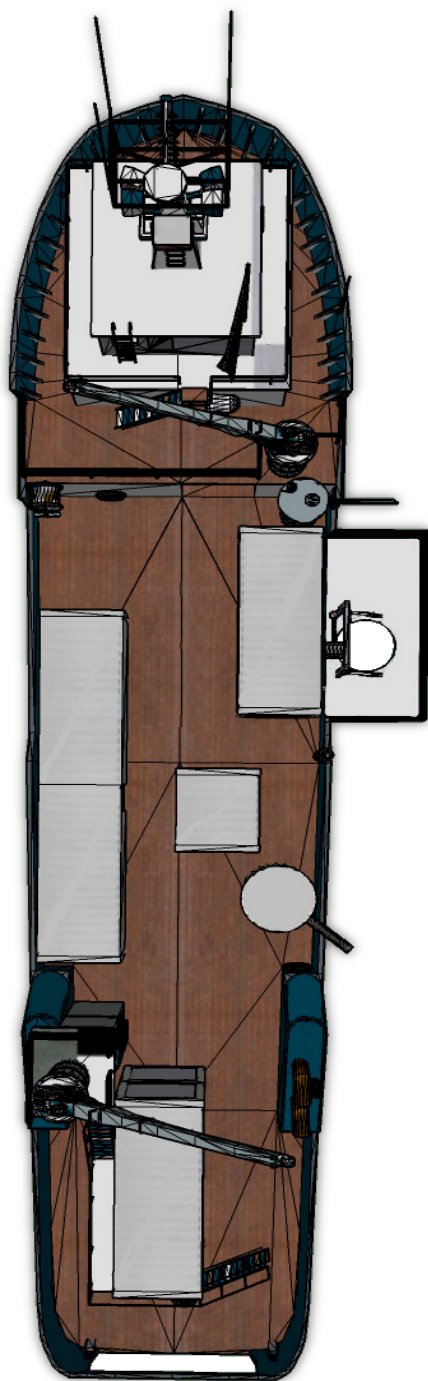
If the weapons were turned over, the GEO is grateful they didn't end up in the hands of insurgents or other criminals, and award the characters and company a civilian citation for excellence in community responsibility. While not a monetary award, it gets the characters and company noticed, which means more clients.



CARGO POD SITE



DOCK MAP



SALVAGE BOAT