

When the team is hired to storm the deck of a stolen spaceship, they encounter not only the terrorists who hijacked the vessel, but also a uniquely dangerous cargo their employer wishes to keep hidden.

This scenario works best with either the Action Horror or Epic Sci-fi modes of play.

The Story So Far

A month ago, Utakar System Dynamics (USD) captured a Sovereign Liberation Front (SLF) cell operating out of the Belt. It turns out that this was not just any SLF cell, but one containing several of the organization's leaders. Realizing this, the megacorp transported the members to a secret holding facility to await interrogation.

The SLF, meanwhile, is rife with internal factions, and two of them have come together in an uneasy alliance to break out their captured comrades. These factions are the Curadoros, a group seeking to legitimize the SLF as a more-centralized political movement, and the Quemaros, a militant faction that wants to strike back at the corrupt corps and governments of Earth.

Two days ago, these two factions cooperated to hijack a USD transport ship, the USD-20k2 Damascus. This vessel has transponder codes and equipment that the SLF believes will allow them to slip past security and rescue the captured cell.

What the SLF factions didn't realize is that the nondescript transport ship they hijacked was secretly ferrying a nuclear warhead. After seizing the vessel, the warhead was quickly discovered and that's when the infighting started.

Seeing the seizure of the warhead as too good of an opportunity to pass up, the Quemaros betrayed their Curadoros allies and rerouted the ship from its initial course.

They plan to bring the ship to a remote asteroid, where they can stash the warhead for later use and avoid retaliation. Using the stolen vessel's codes, they know that USD has no other ships in that part of the Sol system. In fact, one of the few other vessels in that region just happens to belong to the player characters.

It is for this reason that the team are contacted by USD.

Accepting the Job

The message the team receives comes in the form of a prerecorded video, the light lag being too great for easy synchronous communication. In it, a woman in corporate dress stands in front of the USD logo and speaks: "Hello. We are seeking a team of dedicated freelancers for a job recovering a stolen spacefaring vessel and its cargo. Moderate armed resistance is expected. Pay is competitive. Please send your acceptance or declination as soon as possible."

If contacted, the USD representative is willing to answer basic questions, but she won't name the ship or the hijackers until the team accepts. Negotiating better terms is possible with a **Chr/persuade-10** flip, in which case she offers to cover any medical bills resulting from the job. With a success by Mag 3+, she'll even offer repairs or an upgrade to the team's ship, but again not until after the job's completion; they need the stolen vessel recovered as soon as possible.

Under no circumstances does the corp representative mention the presence of a nuclear warhead on the stolen ship. This is something USD seeks to keep quiet, and something they hope won't be noticed.

Intercepting the Ship

Once the team has accepted the job, the USD representative will send along the name of the stolen ship, as well as its current trajectory. This will allow the scrappers to plot a course and intercept the vessel. Catching up with it, however, will take almost a week—space is very large, after all!

Two days after the team has changed their course to intercept the Damascus, the Quemaros in command of the vessel take note. The team's spacecraft clearly isn't a USD military ship, and the intercept course could be a legitimate mistake. In response, the Damascus alters its trajectory and sends a laser comm message to the team's ship.

The video message states: "Hello. I am Captain Judice of the USD-20k2 Damascus. It has come to my attention that your vessel was on a collision course with our ship. In order to avoid unnecessary danger, we have altered our course. Please be more careful in the future and send a confirmation once you have received this message."

Sending the message does two things: It means the team will again have to change course to intercept the Damascus, and in doing so they will remove all doubt that they are in pursuit. It also gives the Damascus a reason to point their laser comm and get a lock on the team's ship, something which can later be used as an improvised weapon.

Give the characters a chance to send a response or try to bluff however they wish. Possible flips might include **Chr/deception-12** to tell a convincing lie or **Int/vehicles-12** to do some tricky and deceptive piloting. The moment the Quemaros are sure the team is there to stop them, however, they prepare for combat.

As the ship closes with the Damascus, the SLF opens fire with the transport vessel's laser comm, hoping to disable the team's ship early so that they can make a quick escape.

The Damascus is a modified freighter with a hidden turret. It was damaged during the hijacking and its lone missile has been spent.

- For the Vehicular Combat rules, see *Shiny New Toys*, page 12.
- The Damascus uses the Unitech CF-8 Heavy Fighter stats on page 58 of *Shiny New Toys*. It starts with two moderate wounds.

Storming the Deck

Eventually the team should prevail in ship-to-ship combat and either disable the Damascus or forcibly board it. The former method allows the scrappers time to prepare and board the ship at their leisure, while the latter method forces them to cut through the hull and storm the decks quickly. Either way, once they board, resistance will be waiting.

Welcoming Committee

Waiting for the team are a handful of Quemaros thugs, armed with heavy pistols and flimsy vac suits. They do their best to make use of cover and fight defensively.

Their goal is to slow the team down enough for their allies to hack the ship's environmental failsafes. At the beginning of Round 5, a chime will sound throughout the ship, alerting them that the hack as been successful. After this point, if any are still alive, they begin a fighting retreat, attempting to reach the engine room.

- Use the Thug stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are a number equal to half the number of PCs.

Exploring the Ship

Once the initial resistance either lies dead or has retreated, the scrappers can begin to explore the ship, securing each chamber and confronting any additional hostiles.

As they begin to explore, "Captain" Judice will speak through the ship's internal comms, attempting to frighten or dissuade the team. At first they will hear his heavy breathing. Then, as the team continues, he will begin to taunt them with occasional statements such as "getting warmer" or "Oh no! You shouldn't look behind that door! Heh, heh." Try to make it as creepy as possible.

As the scrappers continue to explore, the "Captain" will finally be in position to turn the ship's environmental systems against the team. He starts by turning the oxygen up, which is dangerous because it makes any sparks or open flame—such as lasers or gunshots—prone to explosion. Long-term, it can also lead to oxygen poisoning. If the scrappers are wearing vac suits, the suits will alert them to the change in oxygen. Regardless, after this point, firing a weapon, or creating open flame, results in a small explosion when any red card is played. The explosion damages the weapon or deals a light wound to the wielder.

Locations the team may search include the following:

- **Cargo Modules:** There are four cargo modules attached to the ship. One is locked and being used to imprison the Curadoros (see right). One houses the nuclear warhead; the Quemaros have retreated to it (also see right). Two others hold mundane cargo.
- **Cockpit:** The Quemaros have rigged a grenade to explode once the door to the cockpit is opened. Noticing the improvised explosive requires success on a **Per/ordnance-10** flip. Otherwise,

Deckplans

It may be useful to sketch out the layout of the ship while the team is exploring. For deckplans of a similar spaceship, download the *Metus Deckplans* from the Tab Creations website or DriveThruRPG.

anyone caught in the explosion should make a **Spd/athletics-14** flip to dive for cover. Failure results in a moderate wound, while success results in a light wound. If the grenade doesn't go off, the environmental systems can be returned to normal with a successful **Int/comp-ops-10** flip.

- **Engine Room:** This room has a heavy metal door, which can quickly be sealed shut. Once sealed, opening it requires either cutting through with a plasma torch and a **Dex/mechanic-10** flip, or using the computer override in the cockpit.

The Curadoros

Locked in one of the ship's cargo modules are the members of the Curadoros faction. As the team explores, they may hear the Curadoros banging on the door of the module. The informal leader is a woman named Salomé. If the scrappers enter the module or otherwise approach it, she speaks to them.

At this point, Salomé mostly wants for her people to escape their current situation, but ideally she also wants to continue with their rescue mission. Towards this end, she attempts to strike the deal with the team. She explains the rescue attempt, the hijacking, the discovery of the nuclear warhead and the resulting infighting between the SLF factions. If she realizes that the team didn't know about the warhead, she'll talk up how USD has kept them in the dark and can't be trusted.

She offers the warhead and the Quemaros as captives, if only they let her continue their mission—or if that fails, if only they let her people escape. Let the scrappers bargain or otherwise decide how to proceed.

- The Curadoros use the Scrapper stats found on page 212 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, but are currently unarmed. There are a number equal to the number of PCs.

Confronting the Quemaros

Whatever the scrappers decide, all that remains is to defeat the last of the Quemaros, including "Captain" Judice, who have locked themselves in one of the other cargo modules. Cornered and desperate, they won't go down without a fight, and may even threaten to blow up the entire ship if the team doesn't immediately leave.

- Use the Thug stats on page 213 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. There are a number equal to the number of PCs, plus "Captain" Judice, who uses the same stats, but who is currently doped up on Stimulox (see the core rulebook, page 188).