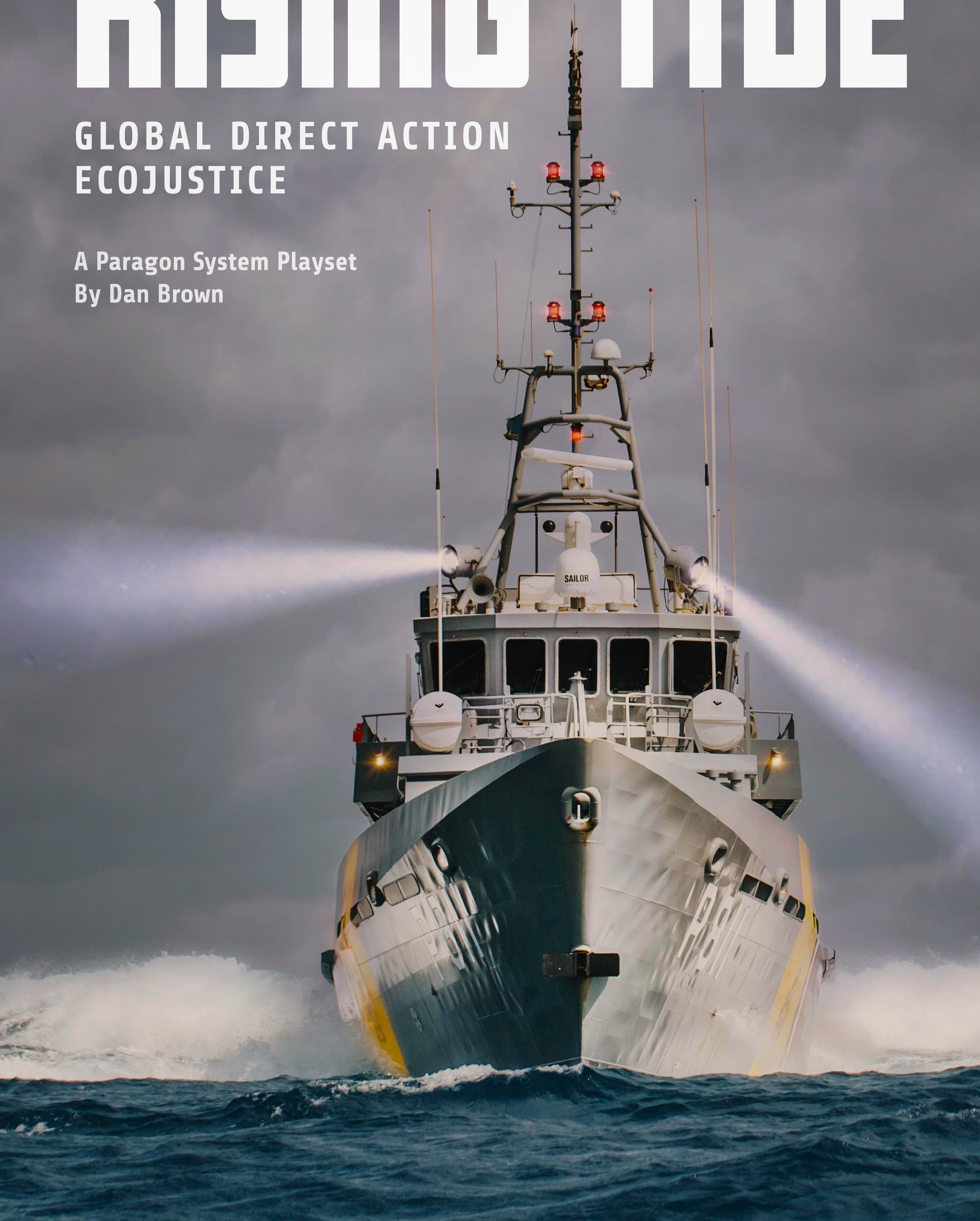


RISING TIDE

GLOBAL DIRECT ACTION
ECOJUSTICE

A Paragon System Playset
By Dan Brown



Rising Tide uses the Paragon System © 2021

by John Harper and Sean Nittner.

To play this game you must have a copy of Agon. AGON-RPG.com

Acknowledgements

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The Palette is a concept from Microscope by Ben Robbins.

Cover and Interior Photos by [Stiven Sanchez](#) on [Unsplash](#)



ABOUT RISING TIDE

Concept

In *Rising Tide*, you are a member of a crew fighting for ecojustice. You live your life aboard a ship, in a near-future Earth where the oceans have risen, destroying coastal areas. Corporations and corrupt governments continue to abuse the ecosystem, too dependent on natural resources or too inept to break old habits.

Aim

In the story, your crew's aim is to perform missions to take down the people and organizations exploiting the Earth's ecosystem. As you complete missions, you live up to ideologies, retiring when you've completed one ideology.

Tone

The stories are meant to be intense, violent, and gritty. The crew is working outside the law and establishment to render justice. They will witness real harm being done to the environment, to animals, and to disenfranchised people. They will mete out restitution as they see fit.

Subject Matter

Rising Tide deals with environmental disasters, injustice, and violence. There may be tension between the crew as they debate the ethical, moral, and appropriate actions to take.

Content Warning

Rising Tide deals with injustice, as different populations are affected by global climate change differently.

The game may include violence, terrorism, economic disparities, and ecological disasters.

NOTES FOR THE GM

Safety Tools

Always use safety tools. Establish them in the first session and remind the players about them in subsequent sessions. Rising Tide raises heavy political, social, and moral questions. The stories deal with people struggling through the aftermath of a climate crisis. They put the crew in difficult situations. While it is challenging, it is a game and every player should be having fun.

Safety tools give your group mechanisms for helping every player feel comfortable and safe. They are no guarantee. Used correctly, however, they offer players means to exert some control over the direction of the narrative, should it become uncomfortable or unsafe for them.

Above all, let the players know that you want them to have fun and being comfortable and feeling safe are essential for having fun. Remind them that their safety and enjoyment is paramount to you, and to do what they need to do to ensure their comfort and safety.

Assumptions

The game makes a few assumptions. Review these with your players to make sure they're OK with them, and revise as you see fit.

- The team belong to a crew who make their home and base of operations on a ship.
- The crew all know each other already, and have already been on the ship for a few months or much longer.
- The ship is lead by a captain who is not played by one of the players.

SESSION ZERO

World Palette

The climate crisis is a complex and complicated geopolitical phenomenon with implications for government, society, and economy. If playing more than one mission considering using a palette: lists of concepts, tropes, and ideas that should and should not be included in your world.

Make two lists, one headed “Yes” and the other headed “No,” and go around the table, asking the players what they want to include. You can frame the questions like this:

- What tropes from the post-apocalyptic or climate fiction genre do you want to include or not include?
- What are some of the characteristics of this post-crash world?

The Ship

After creating characters, ask the players questions about their ship.

- How is the ship painted?
- How large is the crew complement beyond this team?
- Who is the captain? What is their name? Where are they from?
- What special feature or technology does the ship have?
- What is the ship’s primary port-of-call?
- How active is the crew’s public relations and media presence?



EQUIVALENTS TO AGON

Functions

Command, Navigation, Medical, Communications, Meteorology, Science, Security, etc.

Values

Justice, Freedom, Diversity, Knowledge, Natural World, Equality, etc.

Characters have a **Function** and a **Value** in place of a Name and an Epithet. You may pick from the following options at left or write your own.

Characters have four **Domains**:

- Combat and Tactics
- Politics and Communication
- Support and Logistics
- Science and Technology

Instead of Divine Favors, characters now have **Training, Talent, Background and Luck**. When you create your character, indicate what your character's training, talent, and background are. Characters start the game with two marks in background and one mark in each of the other categories.

Characters may bring **Assets** with them on their missions, which take the place of Great Deeds & Trophies. Characters have a signature Asset, which they may re-set between missions. Also between Missions (perhaps upon learning the objective) they may choose another Asset to bring with them. You may mark an asset to add a D6, D8, or D10 to your pool, depending on its relevance to the action you're taking.



Instead of Pathos, characters take **Stress**. When you take a fifth Stress, mark **Dedication**, in lieu of Fate. You may clear Stress between missions. In the mean time, if you have five Stress and need to mark another, mark Dedication instead.

Characters get **Ideologies** between missions, instead of Legendary Virtues. Each player identifies the Ideology exemplified by each other player during the last mission. When you reach the end of the Devotion track OR mark the fifth box in any Ideology, your character retires.

Finally, instead of earning Glory, characters demonstrate their **Duty**. You earn the amount of Duty after each contest equal to the contest's difficulty value.

Differences From Agon

Rising Tide adds two elements **Complications** and **Momentum**. Every character has one **Complication** in their lives. You may earn extra Duty if you elect to allow the GM to include a complication die in the threat roll. The amount of Duty you mark determines the potential impact of the Complication. The GM may choose to limit how much you spend based on the fiction.

After rolling a contest, everyone who beats the difficulty score gets the same amount of Duty, equalling that score. The person who rolled highest gets to mark **Momentum**. Each mark of Momentum is worth a different level die. Characters may spend Momentum to add a die to their pool.



MISSIONS

ENEMIES ON THE OPEN WATER

The ocean off the coast of Eastern Africa is notoriously home to poachers. These fishing vessels “accidentally” net protected species, despite strict international conservation laws.

Arrival

Your ship arrives at the coordinates you received from your contact. A crew member scans the horizon with binoculars.

Questions (Answer up to 3)

- Who informed you about the presence of poachers?
- How often have you dealt with poachers in these waters?
- How did you deal with the last poaching vessel you encountered?
- What marine species is being poached? What for?

Contests (Pick 1)

- The poachers scramble your instruments so you cannot pinpoint them.
- The poachers attempt to evade your capture.
- The poachers launch an attack using torpedoes and guns.
- The poachers are unaware of your approach, but will undoubtedly escape if they detect you.

Encounters

The only way you make sure the poachers deal with their illegal catch is for your team to board their vessel. What you find when you get aboard is anybody's guess.

Questions (Answer up to 2)

- What feature of the poaching vessel surprises you?
- How does the weather make this operation difficult?
- What evidence of the poaching can you see?

Contests (Play up to 3)

- The poachers ambush you when you get aboard.
- The poachers repel your boarding.
- The poachers' allies approach in another vessel.
- The poachers appear to be malnourished and sick.
- You know one of the people among the poachers personally.

Resolution

It's time to make sure protected marine life remains safely out of the hands of these poachers.

Questions (Answer 1)

- What about this poaching crew makes this encounter personal for you?
- Someone suggests disabling the vessel altogether. How do you respond?

Final Contest

- How will you make sure the poachers stop catching protected marine life and/or adhere to international conservation law?

Characters and Threats

The Ocean Fox, the poachers' vessel: Experienced Crew (d10), Seaworthy (d8), Greedy (d8)

The **Poacher's Deck Crew**: Vicious (d8) or Desperate (d8), Armed (d8), Numerous (d6)

Captain Sal (d8): Authoritative (d10), Military Training (d8), Stoic (d8)

First Mate Sari (d8): Strong (d10), Bold (d6)

The Sea Marten, allied vessel: Ragtag Crew (d8), Fast (d8), Undaunted (d6)

LOOKING OVER THE GREEN WALL

Activists planting trees at the edge of the Sahara have planted well over a million trees, but their efforts are being thwarted by local militia in Sudan. The group, People's Justice, sees the international and UN-backed project as a threat to sovereignty, not to mention their smuggling and trafficking enterprise.

Arrival

People's Justice has targeted a village 750 km inland from the Eritrean coast. You need to make your way there from the port in Eritrea.

Questions (Answer up to 3)

- Which crew member is most familiar with this part of the world?
- Who meets you at the port?
- What arrangements do you make to get from the port to the village?
- What gifts do you bring for the villagers?
- Who among you has a prior connection with the Green Wall Project?

Contests (Pick 1)

- Docking your ship on the Eritrea coast requires a delicate negotiation.
- [If driving] People's Justice has set up a roadblock in the middle of the desert.
- [If flying] People's Justice uses surface-to-air ordnance to disable your helicopter.
- A sandstorm disrupts your travel.

Encounters

People's Justice is careful to avoid killing activists but they have been known to destroy their work and employ terror tactics, making conditions dangerous.

Questions (Answer up to 2)

- What is the state of the village when you arrive?
- How apparent is People's Justice in the village?
- What does the Green Wall Project's field office look like?

Contests (Play up to 3)

- People's Justice set fire to the new growth forest.
- People's Justice members kidnap several key activists.
- The villagers reject the help of your group, which they see as part of Western hegemony (regardless of your group's ethnicities).
- Militia and local government officials end up in a fire fight, with activists and villagers caught in the crossfire.

Resolution

The Green Wall Project needs reassurance that they will not be targeted by People's Justice or any other militia group.

Questions (Answer 1)

- How did People's Justice play to your sympathies?
- Someone suggests killing the head of People's Justice, Copper Knife. How do you respond?

Final Contest

- What measures can you put in place to ensure the Green Wall Project remains unmolested?

Characters and Threats

The Desert: Scorching (d12), Unforgiving (d10), Desolate (d10)

Eritrean Government Official: By the book (d8), Officious (d6), Unimpressed (d6)

People's Justice small militia unit: Armed (d8), Enraged (d8), Zealous (d8)

People's Justice commando unit: Armed (d10), Trained (d10), Stealthy (d10)

Copper Knife (d8): Warlord (d10), Charismatic (d10)

Silver Fist, People's Justice commando leader (d8): Brash (d8), Trained (d10)

JUST NEED TO REMOVE THE HEAD

Jeff Webb, CEO of American oil company Atlantico, is flying from Houston to Monaco. He is charged with violating international carbon laws and committing fraud by inaccurately reporting carbon capture efforts. The US Justice Department indicates they are actively pursuing him, but it's clear they are not acting with any urgency.

Arrival

Getting Webb in international waters means no interference from any sovereign states.

Questions (Answer up to 3)

- Who helps you determine Webb's flight plan?
- What preparations do you make to get at Webb's private jet?
- You had a confrontation with Webb before the crash. What happened?
- What intel do you gather about Webb?
- What does it say on the news about Webb's crime and departure from the US?

Contests (Pick 1)

- You can get access to Webb by posing as cabin crew on his jet.
- Drone strikes may be able to take down the plane without costing any lives.
- Capturing the plane while flying will require a special aircraft with a coupling mechanism.
- Webb's jet turns out to be a decoy. You track him down to a yacht, but they have a half-day lead on you.
- Hacking into a satellite system lets you influence the plane's flight path and navigation.

Encounters

Now that you have access to Webb, you have to get him aboard your ship.

Questions (Answer up to 2)

- How does Webb respond to your arrival?
- What evidence have you accumulated against him?

Contests (Play up to 3)

- Webb arranges for someone to come after him. How do you cover your tracks or mis-direct him?
- Webb's bodyguards are well-trained private security forces.
- Webb is stranded in the ocean. You can pick him up with your inflatable boat with an outboard motor, but his private security force is in pursuit.
- When cornered, Webb turns out to be pretty good at getting away -- perhaps through guile, strength, or stealth.
- The CIA has also sent a squad to capture Webb, but their motives are unclear.

Resolution

Webb must be brought to justice.

Questions (Answer 1)

- What does Webb offer you to let him go?
- What tricks does Webb use to undermine the crew?

Final Contest

- It's up to you to play judge, jury, and executioner. How do you give Webb an opportunity to plead his case, and how do you handle the verdict?

Characters and Threats

Jeff Webb (d10): Powerful (d8), Arrogant (d6), Resourceful (d8)

Mercenary Security Team:

Trained (d8), Ruthless (d8), Stealthy (d8)

Private Jet (d8): Fast (d8), Concealed (d10),

Webb Wide World, Jeff's Yacht:

Experienced Crew (d8), Champion Racer (d10), Modern Equipment (d10)

CIA Carbon Enforcement Team:

Highly Trained (d10), Disinterested (d8), License to Kill (d10)

HIDING AMONGST THE SHADOWS

American fossil fuel company Atlantico continues to operate shadow oil rigs they conceal from international regulatory bodies, avoiding the carbon tax and carbon offset investments. One such rig, nestled in the Caribbean serves as a base of operations for Basil Hawthorne, Atlantico's president of "Strategic Initiatives," and overseer of this shadow network.

Arrival

The crew needs to pinpoint the location of the rig, named *Betsy Ross*, with limited information.

Questions (Answer up to 3)

- Who do you know who might be able to help?
- What preparations do you make to infiltrate the oil rig?
- One of you has been to the rig once before. What do you remember?
- At one point you worked for Atlantico. What did you do?

Contests (Pick 1)

- You can infiltrate Atlantico's Houston office to gather information and supplies.
- Combing the area around the rig's last known location may expose you to Atlantico, who likely surveys the area regularly.
- Rumor has it that Atlantico's Strategic Operations group recruits workers from Cuba, Haiti, and Dominican Republic, where they do no background checks.

AND THE WAVES

Encounters

With the rig in sight, the crew needs to infiltrate and secure the rig, then decide upon its strategy.

Questions (Answer up to 2)

- How do you intend to take down this shadow network of oil rigs? Sabotage? Exposure? Bribery?
- What might you learn about this operation?
- How does the rig's crew respond to your presence?

Contests (Play up to 3)

- If you are posing as crew, the officers randomly do more detailed background checks.
- The security chief activates the security team, directing them from the rig's command center.
- The crew of the rig is holding a small group of geologists hostage.
- Your intel about the rig's weaknesses and flaws is out-of-date.
- Data about the other shadow rigs are being held in Hawthorne's secure office at the top of the rig.

Resolution

Time to implement the crew's strategy for taking down the shadow network.

Questions (Answer 1)

- What does Hawthorne offer you to let him go?
- What information does Hawthorne have on you that he uses against you?

Final Contest

- The shadow network is far larger than you realized. How do you deactivate what you can? How do you choose which sections of the network to focus on?

Characters and Threats

Basil Hawthorne (d8):
Conniving (d8), Arrogant (d10),
Resourceful (d6)

Anastasia Galuszka (d8):
Hawthorne's Security Chief
(d10), Trained (d8),
Dispassionate (d6).

Betsy Ross, concealed (d10):
Armored (d8), Complex Layout
(d8), Ragtag Crew (d6).

Security Team: Highly Trained
(d10), Loyal (d6), Well-Equipped
(d8)

Command Center: Surveillance
(d10), Guarded (d6), Traps (d8)

Secure Office: Quantum
computer security system (d10),
Remote Location (d8)

NO WHERE TO HIDE ON

After a massive heat wave devastates Azerbaijan, killing tens of thousands of people, refugees flee northward into Georgia. Mercenaries hired by the Russian government terrorize the incoming climate migrants, hoping to turn them back or fleece them of their meager valuables.

Arrival

A caravan of refugees sits 5 miles inside Azerbaijan, preparing to cross the border the next day. The crew sees an opportunity to use caravan to approach the mercenary gang.

Questions (Answer up to 3)

- How big is the caravan? What vehicles do they use?
- What evidence of the heat wave do you see in the caravan?
- How do members of the caravan regard outsiders?
- What is the caravan smuggling?

Contests (Pick 1)

- You convince the leaders of the caravan to allow you to join.
- You disguise yourselves and join the caravan without them knowing.
- You follow the caravan at a distance without either them or the authorities knowing you're there.

SCORCHED BORDERS

Encounters

It takes grit to get to the border and cross it.

Confronting the mercenaries leads to a revelation that will test the mettle and integrity of the crew. Can you survive the confrontation long enough to investigate this new information?

Questions (Answer up to 2)

- What precautions does the caravan take to protect themselves along the way?
- What does the checkpoint at the border look like?
- Who among the caravaners comes to your aid?

Contests (Play up to 3 and 1 revelation)

- An important member of the caravan collapses from illness and injury.
- Aftershocks from the heatwave continue to plague the caravan.
- Half a mile outside the border, the mercenaries have set up a minefield.
- The mercenaries shake down the refugees, attempting to extract valuables.
- The caravan crosses the border, only to be ambushed after they are across.
- The mercenaries were alerted to your presence and are taking extra precaution to search the caravan.
- **Revelation:** A third force arrives to participate in the fight with the mercenaries.
- **Revelation:** The mercenaries were hired by someone other than the Russians.
- **Revelation:** The caravan wasn't what it appeared to be and turns on the crew.

Characters and Threats

Caravan: Threatened (d10), Impoverished (d6),

Zarifa Yazin (d8): Caravan leader (d8), Charismatic (d8), Highly Educated (d10)

Temur Chabukiani (d8): Mercenary leader (d8), Trained (d10), Prejudiced (d6)

Mercenary Team: Trained (d8), Well Armed (d8),

The Border: Difficult Terrain (d8), Fenced and Trapped (d10), Neglected (d6)

The Heat: Relentless (d10), Dazzling Brightness (d8)

Resolution

The new information revealed that the real threat wasn't the mercenaries at all. You must confront the larger threat to make the border crossing safe for all climate refugees.

Questions (Answer 2)

- What is the state of the caravan after the revelation?
- What tactical advantage did you gain after the encounters at the border?
- Who among the crew is most affected by the revelation? How?

Final Contest

- The real threat is the climate crisis affecting people in different ways all over the world. In light of the revelation and this larger threat how can you make the border safe?

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