

OUTPOST SISYPHUS

The background image is a perspective view down a long, dark, industrial corridor. The walls and ceiling are lined with complex machinery, pipes, and structural elements. A series of bright red lights are mounted along the sides of the corridor, creating a strong red glow that reflects off the floor. The floor itself is made of metal grates. At the far end of the corridor, a bright, white light source is visible, creating a strong backlight effect and illuminating the dust or smoke in the air. The overall atmosphere is dark, mysterious, and ominous.

A Sci-Fi Horror Scenario

OUTPOST SISYPHUS



INTRODUCTION

The late 22nd century is an unforgiving era of interstellar expansion and corporate greed, where simply being an employee of the wrong company at the wrong time can get you into a world of trouble. In **Outpost Sisyphus**, a scenario involving a recently acquired barren planet, shady megacorporations and hostile alien organisms, the characters are administrators, geologists, technicians, medics, construction workers, corporate liaisons and marshals mostly looking forward to the next paycheck until something sinister disrupts their lives.

Outpost Sisyphus is structured in a cinematic style with three acts that escalate in terms of action, drama and tension. The scenario is designed for 3-5 players plus a GM and takes at least 4-5 hours to complete or more, depending on how the players decide to approach the situations and problems presented.

Note: This scenario is published on Patreon in two parts. This release contains one of the three acts, three PCs out of a total of nine and an assortment of relevant VTT-friendly maps. GMs will need to refer to the core rules of their favorite space horror roleplaying game from time to time to determine appropriate skills to be used in certain situations and to flesh out the stats of pregenerated player characters (PCs).

CREDITS

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CHARACTERS

This scenario features nine pre-generated PCs across a wide spectrum of character types and professions. Any leftover characters become NPCs, which may once again become PCs should a player's first character meet their demise. In this scenario the names, professions, personalities, buddies, rivals and personal agendas of the characters have been provided. Either GMs or players should fill in the rest of the characters' stats or create their own characters from scratch if they prefer. The letters F, M and NB inform GMs and players about whether the first name of a character is generally seen as female, male or nonbinary.

PERSONAL AGENDAS

Each player character has a personal agenda that tells the player what drives their character and what they will risk life and limb to accomplish. At the end of each act, GMs should evaluate and reward players roleplaying their characters' agendas by awarding them story points.

F: (PATIENCE) OSEI-JONES - OFFICER

Administrator Osei-Jones is far too qualified for her job running Outpost Sisyphus (or outpost Shit-o-phys as she thinks of it), but she is stuck on this rock anyway and has enough professional pride and empathy to care about her staff, whom she has grown to like. She loves playing poker and smoking cigars but is a sore loser.

- **Profession:** administrator
- **Friend:** Harrison
- **Rival:** Novak
- **Agenda:** Osei-Jones will go to great lengths to get far way from RV-556 and find a better job, perhaps with the Company.

NB: (MANAIA) TE AWA

Manaia Te Awa is an idealistic young medic with a deep distain for megacorporations and a true love of helping others, which is why they signed on to become the chief medical officer of this miserable planetary body. Due to their being an active proponent of unionization, Te Awa is always present whenever any discussions concerning workers' rights come up or whenever Haascorp tries to increase the workload of its employees without raising their wages. They will never be the first one to bring hostility to negotiations, but they will certainly kick ass and take names if they have to.

- **Profession:** Chief medical officer
- **Friend:** Zhuang
- **Rival:** Novak
- **Agenda:** Te Awa will do anything to ensure the people under their care and the people they work with are safe, even if it means risking their own life.

M: (JERRY) NOVAK

Jerry Novak "secretly" makes moonshine in the warehouse. Naturally, everyone knows. Novak is somewhat of a loner with a dark sense of humor, and sometimes he feels like the Handy Dan androids are the only friends he has in addition to Navarro, who doesn't always seem to be on the same wavelength as Novak. Deeply individualistic and cynical, Novak finds chief medical officer Te Awa's rants about solidarity and the common good to be particularly annoying.

- **Profession:** Android technician
- **Friend:** Navarro
- **Rival:** Te Awa
- **Agenda:** Novak sees the Handy Dans as his only friends and will do anything to protect them.

RIVAL CORPORATIONS

"THE COMPANY"

While this corporate powerhouse has an actual name, most simply refer to it as The Company due to its ubiquitous and monolithic presence throughout human-occupied space. While seen on the surface as an innovator in space exploration, logistics and colonization, The Company owns pretty much everything from the bland cereal workers eat when they wake up to the formulaic entertainment they watch as they drift off to sleep, clutching a can of beer adorned with the logo of one of The Company's subsidiaries.

HAASCORP

A direct rival to The Company and relative newcomer to the terraforming business. While being much smaller than its competitor, Haascorp has managed to manufacture much of its own equipment including its own line of Handy Dan androids by manufacturing its products in remote colonies where human rights are secondary to the schedules of inexpensive mass production.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The Company has recently acquired a dangerous alien organism known only as a "xenogen", which its shareholders are dying to test out as a weapon against its rivals.

As luck would have it, The Company's bitter rival Haascorp announced its interest in buying RV-556 without revealing its intention to build a massive fulfilment center where the beginnings of a Company colony once stood. However, The Company is quite aware of this project through corporate espionage, which has led to a young, up-and-coming shareholder to suggest killing two birds with one stone by letting Haascorp buy the barren rock and testing the biological

weapon on its facility, thereby simultaneously getting valuable field data and delaying the Haascorp construction project significantly. Since Haascorp has not publicly shared its data on a lack of alien life on the planet, the optics of the incident should be relatively simple to manage by spinning news stories about hostile, previously undiscovered indigenous life forms.

On RV-556, the Haascorp employees stationed there are anxious to receive a supply drop from a passing Haascorp freight vessel within the next few days. However, the next crate will arrive a few days early and will not be from Haascorp.

DO THE COLONISTS HAVE WEAPONS?

This scenario is inspired by monster movies from the likes of R. Scott and J. Carpenter, so if the GM wishes to present a desperate struggle where the PCs must use their wits to survive, the colony does not contain any weapons beyond fire axes, flare guns, seismic charges, etc. In this case, omit the pre-generated marshal player character.

However, if the GM prefers a more action-oriented scenario, the colony contains a small weapons locker in the Ops building with a 2d3 sidearms and one 12-gauge pump-action shotgun, which can be replaced with an assault rifle as well as desired. The weapons locker can only be accessed with administrator Osei-Jones' keycard. The presence of weapons can be explained through a need for security against passing raiders or saboteurs from rival corporations. This style supports the inclusion of a marshal character.

LOCATIONS

RV-556

RV-556 is a barren rock where The Company had earlier intentions of terraforming the planet for colonization, but due to a core meltdown caused by poor management and user error the newly constructed atmospheric processor became a glowing, irradiated beacon of failure, wasted capital, and corporate embarrassment.

The planet and outpost were eventually bought by rival Haascorp. The new Haascorp crew were ordered to decommission the entire operation, salvage the processor for parts, and destroy the rest in order to set up Haascorp's largest fulfillment center, spanning 25 square kilometers.

So far the colonists have set up shop by building additional facilities around the old Company compound, including an industrial android station where 30 Handy Dans recharge after long days of laying the foundations of the sprawling warehouse.

RV-556 has Earthlike gravity and features

a landscape of jagged onyx and ash-grey rock formations swept by gale winds. The atmospheric processor managed to establish a 75% Earthlike atmosphere before its meltdown, which resulted in clouds and precipitation, mainly in the form of snow due to the cold temperatures of the planet. However, the atmosphere does not contain enough oxygen to be breathed without a respirator mask. All interior locations and vehicles contain a breathable atmosphere unless they are depressurized. Any human character exposed to the planet's atmosphere without a respirator can hold their breath for two rounds while engaged in combat (or one minute while in stealth mode), after which they suffer the effects of suffocation as if their air supply had run out.

Ops, Medlab, and the Residential block have charging stations for respirators. Charging a respirator takes 30 seconds for a depleted air supply, 20 seconds for an air supply of 1, and 10 seconds for an air supply of 2.

OUTPOST SISYPHUS

While originally being named Outpost 556 after the backwater planet it was built on, the colony compound quickly got the name “Outpost Sisyphus” due to its failure-laden history. Currently, the compound features a mix of both older Company-era buildings and newer Haascorp construction projects run by a skeleton crew of 13. The layout of Outpost Sisyphus is as follows:

Ops

This two-story building is the nerve center of the outpost and also its visual centerpiece with its distinct, oversized observation windows overlooking the entire compound, and its large communications dishes covering the roof. External safety lighting and the cold blue glow of fluorescent lights and computer monitors inside the building make it stand out in the otherwise understated and industrially drab look of the rest of the outpost.

While Haascorp’s flagship AI is used to govern larger installations such as space stations, a smaller-scale version called “Artemis” runs the day-to-day operations of Outpost Sisyphus in addition to controlling its androids remotely. By streaming Artemis into each android, Haascorp has been able to avoid the significant cost of equipping each of the 30 artificial workers with their own equally artificial intelligence.

Due to Haascorp’s concerns about employees trying to crack Artemis’ DRM and create an open-source version, each Artemis CPU core is protected by an armored casing that is buried 10 meters under Ops by a team of loyal Haascorp technicians. The core has its own powerful wireless transmitters, but their effective range is only 50 meters, so signal boosters litter the Ops comms array and dot the peripheral landscape to ensure the androids working at the construction site receive uninterrupted instructions from Artemis.

Gear: 5x emergency respirators (air supply 3), 3x emergency flashlight (optional: 2d3x service pistol, 1x 12-gauge pump-action shotgun, accessed with Osei-Jones’ keycard)

GARAGE

This relatively small garage houses six bipedal forklift suits, four ATVs, two personnel carriers, and two heavy dump trucks. Most of the construction vehicles, such as cranes, front-loaders, drills, and excavators are left at the fulfillment center construction site, where the androids commute using the two personnel carriers. The garage is equipped to encounter any repair needs the vehicles might have. An incinerator unit (flamethrower) is concealed in a locked cabinet to rid any returning vehicles of pesky parasitic barnacles that attach themselves to the vehicles’ undercarriages and secrete a corrosive substance that allows them to feast on the carbon contained in the metal plating.

Gear: 1x grappling gun (for emergency rescue use), 1x incinerator unit

WAREHOUSE

The warehouse mainly contains industrial equipment that might be hazardous or unnecessary to keep in immediate proximity to the residential quarters, while admittedly the building is relatively close to Ops. Some of the more volatile materials stored here include explosives and detonators used in rock blasting along with oxygen tanks and various other gas tanks.

Gear: 3x bolt gun, 3x cutting torch, 2x motion tracker, maintenance jack

HANDY DAN CHARGING STATION

This building acts as a home base for the outpost’s 30 androids when they are not working their 72-hour shifts. While most industrial androids can operate for significantly longer, Haascorp has chosen to opt for less expensive and more frequently charged alternatives in projects that can afford the reduction in productivity.

When the Handy Dans work on dismantling the destroyed atmospheric processor, they wear radiation suits to protect their sensitive components.

Each charging station is numbered and features a dock in which a charging android stands and a computer console that provides diagnostic information about each android.

While the more expensive Pro version of Artemis is advertisement-free, small backwater colonies such as Outpost Sisyphus usually receive the lower-tier version where the Handy Dans occasionally work commercials into their speech patterns, including “Good evening, sir. There’s nothing like a cold Tsuba beer from your nearest vending machine after a hard day’s work. Wouldn’t you agree?”

Gear: electronic tools

LABORATORIES AND THE SAN RAFAEL MEDICAL FACILITY

While Outpost Sisyphus is not a scientific installation, it includes a laboratory for studying geological samples along with potential undiscovered or hazardous flora. Planetary scans have indicated a lack of indigenous fauna larger than single-celled organisms.

The medical facility lacks the expensive automatic surgery suites featured in some of the more lavishly equipped scientific installations, but it does provide the necessary equipment for first aid and moderately invasive procedures. In cases where a patient has sustained more severe physical trauma, the facility acts as a field hospital in which the patient is commonly placed in one of the five hypersleep chambers until they can be transferred to a better-equipped medical facility. Most of the Crew on the outpost call the building “Medlab” instead of referring to the laboratories or medical facility by name.

Gear: 5x emergency respirators (air supply 3), 2d4x scalpels, 1x laser scalpel, various pharmaceuticals (GM’s choice), 2x personal medkit, 1x surgical kit

RESIDENTIAL BLOCK

The manual labor conducted at Outpost Sisyphus is mainly left to the Handy Dans, while the 13 officers, technicians, and colonists run the operation with the help of Artemis.

Despite being staffed by a relatively small crew, Haascorp has once again cut costs by allowing its employees minimal living space.

Each of the 13 living quarters feature a bed, locker, entertainment wall, small desk, and chair. Communal bathroom and shower facilities are located at the end of the hallway to foster daily interaction and an almost military-like team mentality.

Gear: 15x respirators (air supply 3), crew’s personal effects

FOOD COURT

The residential complex also includes a small food court where Haascorp employees can share their rehydrated meals together and complain about the monotony of working on RV-556. The food court comes equipped with automated food dispensaries that rotate the meals available based on the time of day. Two large screens provide eaters with entertainment, should conversation run dry.

Gear: cooking utensils, knives, various foodstuffs (prefabricated meals, coffee, beer, soda, candy, etc.)

LANDING PAD

Outpost Sisyphus does not have a fully equipped airport like some of the larger colonies run by The Company, but it does have a landing pad with room enough for two shuttles to land at a time. Currently, the landing pad features one skimmer, a two-person, twin rotor aerial craft meant for patrol missions and rescue missions in an earthlike atmosphere.

DESTROYED ATMOSPHERIC PROCESSOR

The atmospheric processor left in ruin by The Company emits a faint orange-red glow against the night sky due to its core meltdown. Haascorp's plan is to blast the ground underneath the processor and let it collapse into the chasm, proceeding to cool the core and seal it in a concrete sarcophagus. While 200 years earlier these types of containment projects would have required hundreds of people and almost a year of work, modern equipment and the use of androids has sped up the process significantly.

HAASCORP FULFILMENT CENTER

Haascorp's largest fulfilment centre has yet to be announced to the public, but The Company's spy satellites have captured images of the 25-square-kilometer colossus of a warehouse. While the fulfilment center mostly consists of its bare foundations at this point, construction is scheduled to be completed only two years from now.

EVENTS

The following section contains events to present to the players, some of which are "mandatory" key points in the scenario, whereas others are optional and can be used where the GM sees fit. The events are divided into three acts. Let each act unfold naturally at its own pace, giving the players ample time to explore and tackle situations how they wish. If you would like to increase the pace of the scenario, consider doing this towards the end, when the action is reaching a crescendo.

ACT 1

Outpost Sisyphus opens with the crew of the outpost eagerly awaiting a supply drop from Haascorp, since they have run out of Tsuba light beer and salted algae chips much earlier than they anticipated. The crew are also running low on actual food supplies but are in no danger of starving yet. While most of the crew have clocked out for the day and are drinking coffee in Ops, watching monitors and shooting the breeze, some of the crew are returning from the fulfilment center with androids in tow.

HEADING HOME

Two ATVs and two personnel carriers loaded with 15 Handy Dan industrial androids each are returning from the fulfilment center after a hard day's work. On the way, a freak blizzard reduces visibility significantly, and the convoy are at constant risk of losing sight of the road and each other. The blizzard is packed with shards of ice the size of golf balls, which pound the vehicles and potentially injure anyone outside their vehicle. Roll three dice and inflict one point of damage for each six (or success) rolled. Even if exposed characters avoid taking damage, they are bruised by the shards of ice.

GMs should choose which characters have been working at the fulfilment center and which ones are at waiting back at the Outpost.

OFF-ROAD

The blizzard causes the last vehicle in the convoy (an ATV) to lag behind the rest while the other ATV and the trucks carrying the androids continue ahead.

A sudden gust blows the last ATV off its path so that is in danger of falling into a ravine (causes stress to any PCs in the vehicle). Either the driver or passenger of the ATV must contact the first ATV or Ops to get help. Ops can use Artemis to send a signal to the androids to help lift the ATV back on the road.

WE'VE GOT SOMETHING

Once the Handy Dan androids are safely recharging, the radar screens in Ops show a blip in low orbit but cannot help the crew make out if it is a vessel of some kind or a glitch. If it is a Haascorp resupply vessel, it is three days early. In reality, it is a Company vessel using signature masking to hide its identity.

INCOMING! (MANDATORY)

Suddenly, a violent crash startles the crew of the outpost. A supply crate crashes into the compound (due to a broken parachute strap), destroying comms dishes and breaking some of the windows of the Ops building, resulting in a loss of atmosphere, which needs to be repaired quickly. The crate shears off a part of the roof of the android recharging station and causes minor damage to the androids. Finally, the crate plows into the warehouse, destroying a section of wall and roof and knocking over shelves and gas bottles. Both the android recharging station and the warehouse are completely depressurized beyond immediate repair (causes stress to any PC in Ops or within 50 meters of the crash).

COMMS ARE DOWN (MANDATORY)

The comms array is damaged severely by the falling crate, and communicating with any potential passing ships requires three separate tasks at 1-2-hour intervals, depending on the flow of the session and the tastes of the GM. This means that attempting to fix the comms array should spill out into act 2 and potentially act 3. Each stage of the repair process takes 30 minutes to complete. However, reduce the time required by five minutes for every rank in the appropriate skill to a minimum of ten minutes.

Each stage of the repairs requires parts found around the compound. Stage one involves redirecting power from the residential block and rewiring the cables to feed power to the comms array. After an emergency power reset period of 1-2 hours, the PCs may attempt stage two, which involves acquiring a new antenna that can be cannibalized from one of the vehicles in addition to a welding torch, found in the remains of the warehouse, to attach the new antenna with. The fixed comms array will not be as effective without its original antenna, but it will be better than nothing. After jury rigging the new antenna, updating its firmware to match the dish requires 1-2 hours to complete. Once this process is complete, the PCs may attempt to contact passing ships using the consoles in Ops. GMs should note that even if the PCs manage to get through, it will take a while for any help to arrive.

EXPLOSION! (MANDATORY)

The damage sustained by the comms dishes, android recharging station and warehouse starts an electrical fire that spreads to the warehouse, igniting the leaking gas from the ruptured tanks, and setting off a series of explosions. Roughly 30% of the seismic charges explode, 30% are rendered unusable by the fire, and 40% remain usable. These explosions destroy most of the 30 androids and kill two NPCs (causes stress to PCs within 50 meters of the explosion). The number of remaining functional androids is determined in the following way: If there are 1-2 PCs, four androids remain intact, if there are 3-4 PCs, six androids remain intact, and if there are 5-6 PCs, eight androids remain intact. Consider adding an additional active android or two if the PCs have access to firearms. The remaining androids are externally severely damaged and are locked out from being accessed or operated until Artemis runs a complete diagnostic scan and reboots the surviving Handy Dans in safe mode.

COMPLICATIONS

The results of the explosion and fire include two dead crew members, multiple wounded (possibly including a few PCs for any medically oriented PCs to treat), damaged life-support systems requiring a -2 check to fix (otherwise the atmosphere in Ops cannot be re-established), and the remaining Handy Dan androids requiring a technician to oversee the reboot process, further described in "REACTIVATION".

The fires and decompression will likely require the PCs' full attention. However, if a PC or NPC stays with the crate, they won't be able to see the crate clearly due to the thick smoke, but they will hear the hiss of the pressurized container opening followed by a scream, a sickening crunch and the slithering sound of something moving through the debris. The crate will be in the flames and too hot to touch until the fires have been put out (causes stress to PCs who hear the scream and panic to PCs who are close enough to see the creature burst out of a person strapped into the crate). Note that being close enough to see the birth requires being in the burning warehouse.

Repressurizing Ops requires using a bolt gun to affix transparent emergency pressurization tarps to the window frames with self-sealing bolts. The tarps are stored in compartments under the windows.

SINISTER SUPPLIES (MANDATORY)

As the crew of Outpost Sisyphus find themselves in control of the situation, they will most likely want to inspect the crate. As they fan away the smoke, they see that instead of normal food and other supplies, the crate contains a horrifically gored corpse strapped to a metal frame. The interior of the crate is padded and upholstered in a cream-colored leatherette, which is specked with blood from a gaping wound the size of a tennis ball in the chest of the corpse currently crudely on display. A trail of blood leads into the wreckage, as is something the size of a rattlesnake had shared the container with the victim and had now escaped (causes stress for any PCs witnessing the corpse)..

Outpost Sisyphus has a wide variety of ducts, lockers, shelves, and other small spaces a frightened animal could be hiding in. Considering that the crew do not know the nature of the escaped animal, it is imperative to trap it in order to avoid any potentially venomous bites. The corpse is clothed in a plain gray jumpsuit but otherwise has no distinguishing features. If the PCs attempt to identify the corpse, they find that its fingerprints, teeth, and eyes have been removed to make identification almost impossible.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Soon after investigating the corpse, those present hear a soft beeping and a click, which results in the corpse bursting into flames, incinerating the body completely (causes stress to any PC witnessing the immolation). Any PCs in close proximity to the corpse may make a -1 check to get away from the corpse. Any character who fails to do so must roll six dice and take as much damage as there are sixes (or successes) rolled. Note that any armor worn may mitigate the damage sustained.

REACTIVATION (MANDATORY)

Meanwhile at the damaged but (hopefully) extinguished android recharge station, the remaining functioning androids' rubbery skin has been blackened and melted by the fire to form horrific masks resembling twisted works of art. Some Handy Dons have a permanent droopy scowl while the faces of others mostly resemble something from an abstract nightmare. Until now, the androids have been stuck in a reset loop in which they await instructions from Artemis to select the appropriate operation profile. Because Handy Dons are at their core the same android Haascorp sells as an urban pacification model to violently shut down hunger riots on worlds far away from RV-556, combat functionality is hidden under the Handy Dan operating system. Hacking or sufficient catastrophic failure can lead to the androids' combat protocols being activated. If friendly targets have not been set, the androids default to treating all targets as hostiles to be neutralized.

In this case, the damage caused by the crate has severed the Handy Dans' link to Artemis and has resulted in the scarred androids viewing every human in Outpost Sisyphus as a threat. Any characters present in the android recharging station when this happens will witness how the diagnostic panels suddenly flash the words "Reboot complete", followed by the androids stepping out of their recharge bays in unison and turning to look at the character(s) with glowing red eyes (causes stress to any PCs witnessing the reactivation).

This is an appropriate cliffhanger to end the first session of the scenario on. However, if you wish to continue the session, use the stats for an android character to represent the

Handy Dans, who will attack anyone on sight. The Handy Dans will slowly start to search the compound for targets and will mainly congregate outside in front of the Ops building, occasionally patrolling the entire compound area. If the PCs get too comfortable in any given building, have the Handy Dans start pounding on the doors until they manage to get inside, forcing the PCs to relocate and keep moving.

Note that due to the respirators having relatively low air supply capacities, PCs will likely have to visit Ops, Medlab, or the residential block to replenish their air supplies.

TO BE CONTINUED...

OUTPOST 556 SISYPHUS

1 Square = 5 meters

Warehouse

Residential
Block

Food Court

San Rafael
Medical Facility

Laboratories

Garage

Wind Wall

Handy Dan
Charging Station

Ops

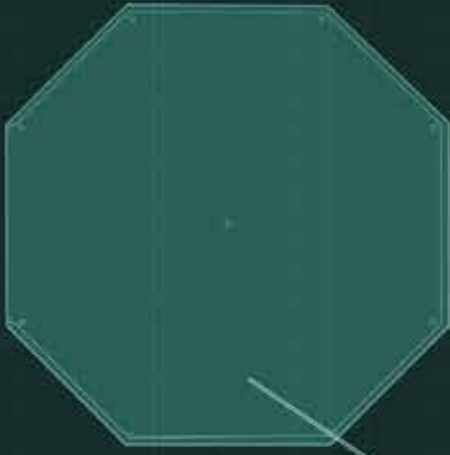
Haascorp
Fulfilment
Center

Distance: 2 km

Landing Pad

Atmospheric
Processor
(Decommissioned)

Distance: 5 km



1 METER / 3 FT
20×20 sq





1 METER / 3 FT
20×20 sq







