

Star Trek Adventures

Insurrection at Ba'ku



Based upon "Star Trek: Insurrection" written by Michael Piller

Adapted by Daniel Li

INTRODUCTION

"Insurrection at Ba'ku " is an adventure for the **Star Trek Adventures** tabletop role playing game. This adventure is meant to be played by a Gamemaster and 3-7 players.

To run this adventure, the gamemaster needs to be familiar with the adventure itself, the **Star Trek Adventures** rules, and the player characters. Familiarity with the motion picture upon which it is based would be helpful but not essential.

For this adventure, you will need:

At least 2 20-sided die (d20) per player

A set of chips or tokens for Determination

A set of chips or tokens for Threat

A set of chips or tokens, or some other manner of marker, for group Momentum.

Character sheets and a starship sheet

Star Trek Adventures Core Rulebook

Recommended:

Star Trek Adventures Gamma Quadrant supplement

Other Eras of Play/Yesterday's Enterprise

Insurrection is a flawed film, and one of the problems was poor coordination with the DS9 writing team, so it remains unclear exactly when *Insurrection* takes place relative to the last two seasons of DS9, and whether or not the Dominion War is still going on. Unless run as a one-shot, the gamemaster will want to fix this in his campaign's timeline more specifically.

I have written this module to take place immediately after the Dominion War ends in 2375.

Transplanting this module to an entirely different era is possible by removing references to the Dominion and replacing them with another antagonist as the Son'a's evil ally, with another drug replacing Ketracel-white as the Son'a's profit generator.

The Klingon Perspective

The Briar Patch, or *Klacht d'kel Bracht*, is on the border between Federation and Klingon space, so the region is easily accessible to Klingon characters and they would have much the same strategic interest in the Ba'ku planet and its metaphasic regeneration as the Federation canonically had. Admiral M'Zas can be replaced by General Kargan, by name or with a new NPC using his statistics. Klingons do not have Prime Directive implications to worry about, making the perfidy of the Son'a the main motivation for Klingon characters to change sides and oppose them.

Synopsis

The Dominion War has just ended, with the player characters and their ship being used to keep the peace while the Diplomatic Corps is busy trying to negotiate postwar relations with the Dominion, Cardassians, and Breen. The players' ship is diverted to the planet Ba'ku in the Briar Patch to search for a missing Starfleet officer well known to the crew who has gone rogue and is holding Starfleet's "duck blind" research team hostage. In the course of recapturing the officer and trying to contain the cultural contamination of the Ba'ku people, the crew stumbles into a plot by the Son'a to relocate the Ba'ku and claim the regenerative properties of the planet for themselves. The crew must disobey Starfleet's orders, defying the Son'a, and possibly battle the Dominion in order to save the Ba'ku and expose the Son'a.

Directives

In addition to the Prime Directive, which will be extremely important for the players to bear in mind and spend Determination accordingly, the following Starfleet Directives apply to this mission:

- Apprehend the renegade Starfleet officer
- Rescue the hostages
- Contain any cultural contamination

As the mission progresses, the following Directives may replace them:

- Carry out the Federation Council's orders to relocate the Ba'ku people and harvest the metaphasic particles
- Alert the Federation Council that the Son'a have betrayed them
- Eliminate the Dominion presence in the Ba'ku system

If necessary, the gamemaster should remind the players that just like Values, Directives can be challenged to obtain an additional point of Determination, and the players should be allowed to spend that Determination immediately if acting in accordance with the Prime Directive.

The gamemaster begins this mission with 2 points of Threat for each player character in the group, increased to 3 per character if the Dominion War is going on. That number includes the renegade if a player character is chosen for that role.

The Renegade

In the movie, Data stumbled across the holoship and deduced the Son'a-Federation plan to relocate the Ba'ku, getting shot by a Son'a disruptor and losing his memory engrams in the process.

In this game, you have some choices about which character experiences this sequence of events and plays the role of the renegade. The rest of this mission assumes Dr. Seylar was on the planet and found the holoship and lost her memory when she hit her head fleeing from the Son'a, and the players are free to invent a backstory for how they know her, but she is certainly not the only option.

Data is included in the TNG Player Characters pack and could be used, if some explanation could be found as to why the players and not the *Enterprise* were contacted about the problem.

To give a personal stake in the story, it may be a good idea to have one of the player characters, or an established supporting character from their ship, start the game on Ba'ku having already found the holoship, suffered memory loss, and taken the research team hostage. A science officer would make the most sense but if a player wants to volunteer, it would be a good idea to accept, regardless of their usual role. An organic character would lose their memory the same way Seylar did, by falling and striking their head (or other cognitive body part, depending on species) while fleeing from the Son'a. A mechanical character would lose their memory the same way Data did, by taking a disruptor shot that fries memory engrams and causes the artificial intelligence to fall back on its ethical subroutines.

The Flag Officer

Admiral M'Zas takes the place of Admiral Dougherty from the movie. Like Dougherty, M'Zas is initially convinced that the relocation plan is right on utilitarian grounds. Unlike Dougherty, M'Zas takes a fairly aggressive stance, requesting help from the players instead of rejecting it like Dougherty does, and is prepared to order a change of plans on his own initiative if the players can prove to him that either the metaphasic radiation is not the miracle cure the Son'a claim, that the technology to collect the metaphasic particles won't work, or that the Son'a are working for the Federation's enemies to give them a foothold in the Ba'ku system.

Prelude

The players' ship is on her way to a diplomatic mission, and the characters are getting ready to welcome the VIPs who have just come aboard. This would be a good time for the GM to set the exact timeframe that the mission takes place and any Dominion War events occurring around this time. The player characters can take this opportunity to express their feelings about being away from the front lines and/or transitioning to peacetime service now that the war has ended. How closely this mirrors the opening of the movie is up to the players.

If one of the player characters, or a supporting character from their crew, is currently on Ba'ku to play Data's role from the movie (see The Renegade above), now would be a good time to establish that fact.

Act 1: We Used to Be Explorers

Scene 1: One More Brush Fire

Captain's Log, Supplementary: Starfleet Command has ordered us to the Goren system to mediate a territorial dispute as soon as our mission to Evora is finished. Frankly I'm surprised the Federation decided to make the Evora a protectorate so quickly, but in view of our losses to the Borg and the Dominion, the Federation Council feels we need all the friends we can get these days. The Diplomatic Corps is busy with Dominion negotiations and they need us to put out one more brush fire.

During the reception for the Evora, the bridge calls the commanding officer with a transmission from Rear Admiral M'Zas, who the players would know is the Deputy Chief of Scientific Operations from Starfleet Command. M'Zas wants to talk to the captain and the chief medical officer. (If the renegade is a synthetic life form, the chief engineer should also be included.) M'Zas reports that their friend and colleague, Dr. Seylar, has been declared a renegade. She attacked the duck blind operation studying a pre-warp civilization on the planet Ba'ku in the Briar Patch and is holding the research team hostage. M'Zas plays surveillance footage of Seylar shooting two cloaked researchers in the middle of the Ba'ku village, stripping off her stealth suit, and blasting the observation post with her phaser, dropping its cloak as well. The Ba'ku can all clearly see it and the research team.

An **Insight + Medicine** check, assisted by the ships's **Comms + Medicine**, difficulty 1, has the footage paused and zoomed in when Seylar removed the helmet of her stealth suit, revealing that Seylar has a welt on her head consistent with blunt force trauma. (If the renegade is an artificial life form, the roll is **Insight + Engineering**, difficulty 1, and reveals damage from an energy weapon similar to the one Data suffered in the movie.) If asked about this, M'Zas truthfully says that he has no idea how it could have happened.

In light of the players' familiarity with Dr. Seylar, M'Zas is ordering them to postpone their mission to the Goren system and proceed at once to Ba'ku to apprehend Dr. Seylar and rescue

the hostages, as well as contain whatever cultural contamination this incident has already done to the Ba'ku people.

The players' ship will lose all contact with Starfleet upon entering the Briar Patch, and will need to make mission preparations before that happens.

Downloading all necessary information on the duck blind and the Son'a is a **Reason + Command** task, assisted by the ship's **Computer + Command**, difficulty 1, which reveals they were traditionally a nomadic people who raided inhabited worlds for precious metals, rare jewels, and slave labor. The Son'a conquered two pre-warp species, the Tarlac and Ellora, and integrated them into their society as a labor class. Momentum spends to Obtain Information can reveal the following, for 1 Momentum per revelation:

- The Son'a are infertile and have become desperate to prolong their lives by any possible means, including genetic manipulation and surgical techniques, and Son'a "body shops" are medical facilities where the patient's skin is stretched tight and toxins purged from the body as a life-extending measure
- Despite these and other measures, many Son'a are suffering from terminal diseases and nearing death, and without knowing their population numbers with any degree of accuracy, Starfleet Medical estimates the species may be extinct in as little as 10 years
- Starfleet Intelligence suspects that the Son'a are producing vast quantities of Ketracel-white on their colonies bordering Bajoran and Cardassian space, such as Devos II, and exporting it to the Dominion (if the war is now over, then this fact is proven from Dominion archives found on Cardassia Prime)

All this naturally raises the question of why the Federation would be involved with these people, and why they care about the Ba'ku system enough to be included in the duck blind operation. A **Reason + Science** test, assisted by the ship's **Computer + Science**, difficulty 1, shows that the duck blind was officially an anthropological study of the Ba'ku, and the Son'a originally proposed the study to the Federation, not the other way around, and there would otherwise be no scientific reason for the Son'a to participate—Starfleet doesn't need any Son'a assistance to carry out an anthropological study.

If the renegade is an artificial life form, a tricorder can be modified to deactivate him. This is a **Reason + Engineering** task with difficulty 2, and allows no-fail deactivation in Close range without a roll.

Finally, the Briar Patch has the Complication **Menace to Navigation 2**, which increases the difficulty and complication range of any Conn task and any task using the ship's Comms, Sensors or Engines by 2. Subsequent difficulty numbers in this mission do not include this malus and it should be added where applicable. This Complication does not apply inside the atmosphere of the Ba'ku planet. Before entering the Briar Patch, players may wish to perform a Chart Hazard task to negate this trait. This is a **Reason + Conn** task, assisted by the ship's **Sensors + Conn**, difficulty 3. Son'a and Dominion ships may be assumed to have successfully

charted the hazard before operating in the Briar Patch, but allied ships from the players' squadron will not, unless the players can transmit a copy of their charts.

Scene 2: Do You Know Gilbert & Sullivan?

Upon entering the Briar Patch, the players' ship must drop to $\frac{1}{3}$ impulse power to safely navigate the false vacuum fluctuations and supernova remnants here and avoid overheating the impulse manifolds. Communications into and out of the Briar Patch are impossible due to these obstacles unless an Advantage changes that fact.

Arriving in orbit of Ba'ku, a character who does not have the Young Officer Career background makes an **Insight + Engineering** test, difficulty 4. If successful, the character's sense of hearing tells them something is wrong with the torque sensors. An NPC will confirm that the torque sensors are misaligned by 12 microns. When this player character was an ensign, she could detect a 3-micron misalignment.

The Son'a flagship is in orbit as well and hails the players. M'Zas appears on screen, flanked by Son'a boss Ahdar Ru'afo, and says he hasn't got good news. Dr. Seylar used the mission's scout ship to attack the Son'a in orbit yesterday. Ru'afo interjects that the Vulcan has become dangerously violent and must be eliminated. M'Zas hopes it won't come to that, but gives the players only 12 hours to apprehend Seylar before the Son'a take matters into their own hands.

Scanning the planet is a Difficulty 5 task using **Reason + Science**, assisted by the ship's **Sensors + Science**. Success indicates around 600 life signs clustered near the Ba'ku village, but it is impossible to distinguish species. There is no sign of the scout ship. Failure yields only high-resolution photos of the Ba'ku village showing that the hostages are being held in an outdoor square near the center of town. Either way, the main takeaway is that the rings around the planet are emitting high levels of metaphasic radiation which interferes with the sensors. To get more accurate readings, it will be necessary to take a small craft down into the atmosphere and scan at very close range.

Once the players have taken their shuttle or other small craft into the atmosphere, Seylar shows up in the scout ship to intercept them. Maneuvering close enough to dock with the scout ship is an opposed task, with both Seylar and the pilot using **Daring + Conn** assisted by their craft's **Engines + Conn**. The players will remember from her dossier (or from having her onboard their ship) that Seylar was in rehearsal for a production of HMS *Pinafore* and this might prove a good distraction. "Never Mind the Why and Wherefore" is a good choice for a female renegade, and "A British Tar" works well for a male renegade as in the movie. Singing convincingly enough to distract her is a **Presence + Command** task assisted by the shuttle's **Comms + Command**, difficulty 3, and results in an Advantage for the opposed piloting task. Once docked, Seylar will then throw both ships into a barrel roll toward the ground in an effort to break free. The player characters can board Seylar's scout ship with a **Fitness + Conn** task difficulty 2 and subdue her with melee or phaser attacks or a coerced mind meld. Social conflict to get her to "come quietly" automatically fails.

Alternatively, the players might just shoot away the scout ship's shields and beam Seylar into a force field. Use space combat rules to resolve this conflict, treating each layer of the atmosphere as a zone, with no warp allowed.

If a player character mind-melded or otherwise telepathically linked with Seylar to subdue her, that character becomes aware that Seylar has a fanatical drive to protect the Ba'ku from the Son'a rooted in righteous anger and indignation, but she cannot remember why.

Scene 3: In the Event of a Water Landing

With Seylar safely in custody, the players will need to send an away team to the Ba'ku village to rescue the hostages and assess the cultural contamination. Upon beaming down, any telepathic or empathic characters will immediately be struck by the sense of peace and well-being surrounding the village from all of the minds present, including the hostages. In the town square, the away team finds the "hostages" from the research team enjoying an alfresco feast with the native villagers. The Ba'ku have no titled rulers, but their unofficial leaders are Anij and Sojef, who welcome the away team to the village. If told about Seylar's capture, they express relief that she is safe and mention that she was suffering from some sort of amnesia they were not able to repair. Through this conversation, the player characters learn that the Ba'ku are capable of warp travel and advanced technology but choose to live without it. The research team members are free to go, and the Starfleet personnel will gladly beam back to the players' ship. The Son'a will refuse, preferring to wait for transport back to Ru'af's ship, unless persuaded with **Presence + Command** or **Medicine**, difficulty 2.

The Starfleet hostages are in excellent health—improved muscle tone and energy, better than before being guests of the Ba'ku. The Son'a, if any, will refuse examination or treatment so can be confined to quarters or sent packing to Ru'af's ship at the chief medical officer's discretion. If the players scan the Son'a without their consent, or manage to persuade one to submit to examination or treatment, the scan is a difficulty 0 task that will later reveal the Ba'ku are the same species once they have scanned a Ba'ku as well.

The players can now report to Admiral M'Zas that the mission was successful: Seylar is in custody, the hostages are free, and because the Ba'ku are an advanced, spacefaring civilization the cultural contamination is minimal. M'Zas congratulates them and inquires whether Seylar has any justification for her actions—she is likely to face a court-martial and he is concerned for her future. Seylar is still unconscious, but the players can inform M'Zas that she is suffering from amnesia. M'Zas sees no reason Seylar should not remain onboard the players' ship for now, as they are to resume their peacekeeping mission to the Goren system and depart the Briar Patch as soon as possible. At this point, an opposed **Insight + Command** task against the Admiral's **Presence + Command**, will tell the players that M'Zas is hiding something and cannot be trusted. If the players fail the task, an NPC might point out that Seylar's career depends on finding out why she did what she did, and whether she was sane at the time, so delaying their departure to investigate may be prudent.

Sickbay (or the brig) calls, reporting that Seylar is awake. If the renegade is an artificial life form, this scene might take place in main engineering instead. Although the Son'a claim that Seylar fired at them, the chief medical officer disagrees. An **Insight** or **Reason + Medicine** task, difficulty 1, clearly diagnoses blunt force trauma to the side of Seylar's head as the cause of her amnesia, which appears to be the result of striking her head on a rock during a fall. Defensive wounds on her forearms indicate a hand-to-hand struggle as well.

At this point, any characters who have technological implants, for example someone with cybernetic or Borg lifepath options, begin to experience headaches and soreness around those devices. **Insight + Medicine** or **Engineering**, difficulty 1, indicates the devices are functioning normally.

Seylar is awake and can be questioned. With Vulcan literal-mindedness, she will start singing *Pinafore* again when asked the last thing she remembers, but admits to having no memory of anything before that after following some Ba'ku children into the forest, observing them playing in hills near a dam, while she was under stealth.

Retracing Seylar's steps on the surface does not require a roll if she accompanies the away team. Otherwise it is **Reason + Conn**, difficulty 3. A number of Ba'ku, including Anij, follow them into the highlands outside the village. The away team arrives at a lake surrounded by mountains—the trail ends here. A tricorder scan, **Insight + Science**, difficulty 1, shows kelbonite deposits in the mountains limiting the tricorder's accuracy and range, and an anomalous reading at the bottom of the lake in the center.

An Obtain Information spend reveals this anomaly is a neutrino signature.

Should a player character wish to open the dam and lower the lake's water level, this is a **Fitness + Engineering** task, difficulty 2. If a character does not need to breathe, is amphibious or aquatic, or has an Advantage like wearing an EV suit, the difficulty is reduced to 1. Seylar or one of the Ba'ku should suggest this course of action if the players don't think of it, and if they initially refuse, the Ba'ku will take out a rowboat and drop a stone into the lake on top of the anomaly; it comes to rest halfway down the lake as if perched on top of an invisible surface, requiring the lake to be drained for further investigation. When the water drains, it visibly flows around the outlines of an invisible shape the size of a Scale 3 craft and glistens in the sun. **Insight + Conn**, difficulty 0, will indicate that the hull is clearly of Federation, if not Starfleet, design.

The away team can now use a rowboat on the lowered surface of the lake to reach the cloaked ship. Anij will insist on coming along, as will Seylar if she is present. The players can open the airlock remotely with a tricorder with **Reason + Engineering** or **Security**, difficulty 2, and success at a cost is allowed. Once inside, they find an incomplete but perfect simulation of the Ba'ku village. If the players haven't figured it out by now, **Insight + Command**, difficulty 1, will tell them this ship must be intended to transport the Ba'ku off this planet without their knowing.

At this point, a squad of Son'a goons hiding in the holodeck attacks, one for each player character present. Spend Threat to take the first turn, and if possible, be sure to inflict an injury on someone, ideally Anij or Seylar, and spend Threat for a Knockdown effect, sending them flying out the airlock and into the water. Unconscious and unable to swim, this person will drown on the next turn unless a player can rescue her and swim to shore using **Fitness + Security** or **Medicine**. If the players are thinking quickly, they could use their own ship's transporters to beam the Son'a directly into the brig rather than engage in combat. Otherwise, once at least two Son'a are stunned, the entire squad evacuates by beaming back to Ru'afu's ship in orbit.

Act 2: A Fountain of Youth

Scene 1: Sunrise

At this point, any characters who have technological implants will have to go to sickbay, reporting the symptoms have increased to the point of making them unfit for duty. **Reason + Medicine**, assisted by the ship's **Sensors + Medicine**, difficulty 1, will show that their bodies are regenerating tissue and the implanted devices will need to be removed because they are being rejected. Adjust any character sheets accordingly. Obtain Information yields 1 of the following per Momentum spent:

- These changes are due to the metaphasic radiation emanating from the planet's rings
- Metaphasic radiation also accounts for the improved health and vigor of the Starfleet hostages from the duck blind operation
- A noted increase in incidence of impulsive, adolescent or "adult child" behavior among crewmembers might also be attributable to metaphasic in exposure
- Once removed from the metaphasic radiation, the physical and psychological effects on the patient are likely to be reversed, and the consequences of long-term exposure cannot be reliably extrapolated from patients with such short exposure so far

Seylar will suggest questioning the Ba'ku about this if the players do not think to, since they have lived with the metaphasic radiation for a long time. A visit to the village will prompt Anij and Sojef to tell their story (at least, the part that doesn't include the Son'a). If Seylar is present, no roll is needed, otherwise it is **Presence + Command**, difficulty 1. The Ba'ku long ago fled a homeworld where technology had created a dystopia and threatened their species' survival. 300 years ago, they arrived on this planet, chosen for its isolated location and protection from long-range sensors, hoping to build a new life away from the dangers of the rest of the galaxy. They soon discovered that the metaphasic radiation from the planet's rings continually regenerated their bodies, although children still grew normally until sometime in their 20s. The Ba'ku have been essentially immortal since arriving, although a few colonists died in accidents, as disease and injury are quickly healed by the metaphasic radiation, and aging stops and, in those already elderly, reverses. Some of their young people, born on the planet, left for space over a century ago seeking a faster pace of life, but the Ba'ku have not heard from them since and have no interest in leaving.

Should it occur to the players to request permission to scan the Ba'ku, or if Seylar suggests it, they may be able to fill in some gaps that the *Enterprise* crew missed in the canon version. Persuading them to consent is **Presence + Command** or **Medicine**, difficulty 4. If Seylar is present, this reduces the difficulty by 1, and if the Ba'ku were present when the players discovered the holoship, difficulty is further reduced by 1. The scan itself is **Insight + Medicine**, difficulty 1, and shows that the Ba'ku's bodies are thoroughly "soaked" with metaphasic radiation. Obtain Information reveals one of the following per Momentum spent:

- The Ba'ku are now dependent on the metaphasic radiation in order to keep them alive because the radiation has destroyed their bodies' natural ability to function—without it they would not simply resume aging normally but start decaying from the inside out, leading to a very painful death. This includes any children born on the planet in the last 300 years, and young adults who would not normally be expected to die of old age by itself at this time.
- Long-term exposure to metaphasic radiation would eventually have the same effect on most other species as well, meaning any Federation settlers would also become dependent on the metaphasic radiation to survive and could never leave the planet either.
- With only 600 settlers, the Ba'ku lack sufficient genetic diversity to procreate and survive as a species if they had to reproduce normally with their original lifespan of 100 years or so, meaning that removing them from this planet or destroying the metaphasic rings would doom their entire culture and civilization to extinction

If the players have taken any scans of Son'a personnel by this point in the story, they will also learn that their DNA is identical—the Son'a and Ba'ku are the same race.

By now the value of the metaphasic radiation should be obvious, along with the reasons someone would want to remove the Ba'ku and claim it for themselves. It should also be obvious that for Starfleet to do so would be to commit a violation of the Prime Directive vis-a-vis the Ba'ku.

Scene 2: One Federation Blunder After Another

Son'a battlecruisers arrive in orbit to reinforce Ru'afu's flagship: 2 normally, but more can be added for 6 Threat apiece. Should the player characters scan them, **Reason + Science** assisted by **Sensors + Security**, difficulty 3, will reveal that they carry isolytic weapons. A complication here means the Son'a are aware of the scan and call for additional reinforcements for the battle in Act 3.

M'Zas will hail the players' ship again, demanding they leave orbit at once and return any Son'a who may be aboard. Whether the players even get on the channel with him and how they handle the situation is up to them. However, one way or another, M'Zas will insist on speaking at least to the captain, with Ru'afu at his side.

This encounter will decide whether M'Zas sides with the players or with the Son'a. Ru'afo should ham it up, furious at M'Zas's Federation idiocy now that the holoship has been exposed, and burst a blood vessel in anger. He will storm out if M'Zas doesn't ask him to leave first. Now it's down to the players to deal with the Admiral, representing the traumatized, war-weary, no longer idealistic Federation.

The Admiral will speak first and then alternates arguments with the captain and any other player characters present, making many of Dougherty's arguments from the movie, as well as some from the fans:

- The Ba'ku are not indigenous to the planet and were not meant to be immortal, so removing them would simply restore their normal development and is not a Prime Directive violation
- The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few—the Son'a have developed a way to harvest the metaphasic particles in the rings, so they can be used to advance regenerative medicine throughout the Federation, but it requires a thermolytic reaction that would render the planet uninhabitable for decades
- Only the metaphasic particles in the rings are concentrated enough to produce regenerative effects, so harvesting from elsewhere in the Briar Patch will not work
- The Son'a have too many people who will die before the necessary 10 years of normal exposure to the metaphasic radiation in the rings can heal them, so establishing a separate colony for them elsewhere on the planet will not save them
- This plan was approved by the Federation Council and issued as a direct order to the Chief-in-Command of Starfleet, to the Chief of Scientific Operations, to M'Zas, and to the players. In the chain of command, they do not have the discretion to disobey orders from the elected civilian government.

The players have the following arguments available:

- Harvesting the metaphasic particles in the ring will disperse them and render them ineffective, just like the other particles in the Briar Patch, so the Son'a procedure will not work
- Even if it works, destroying the rings will leave only a finite supply of particles which will extend life for the Son'a now and not help anyone else; whereas leaving them intact could save billions of terminally ill people forever, even at the cost of staying trapped on the planet for life
- The Prime Directive does not allow Starfleet personnel to weigh the number of lives involved when deciding whether it applies—it is not utilitarian
- Use of the cloaked holoship is a violation of the Treaty of Algeron, which would cause problems with the Romulans if it should ever be known
- The Federation Council voted to approve this plan without all the facts before them and without knowing it would be a Prime Directive violation, so the situation has changed and they need to know before Starfleet proceeds further.

Persuading M'Zas to back down is a **Presence + Command** task with Difficulty 7, which makes it impossible unless Advantages bring it down to 5 or lower. Any of these pieces of information, if discovered by the players earlier, are now Advantages, reducing the difficulty by 1 for each that the players can bring to M'Zas's attention.

- The Son'a have been producing ketracel-white for the Dominion, and are therefore enemies of the Federation, probably lying, and about to give the Dominion a strategic foothold on the Federation-Klingon border (if the Dominion War is going on, this reduces difficulty by 2 rather than 1).
- Metaphasic treatments cannot be developed from the planet's rings because any patient exposed to enough radiation to save their lives and/or permanently stop aging would die if exposure was ever reduced or stopped, just like the Ba'ku
- The Son'a and Ba'ku are the same race, which means the Federation has to back out for the same reason it refused to take sides in the Klingon Civil War: it is an internal matter and the Prime Directive forbids interference
- Son'a ships are using isolytic weapons which destroy subspace and are banned under the Second Khitomer Accords, so siding with them will put the Federation in hot water with the Klingons and every other major government, since even the Romulans have not stooped to using isolytic weapons (if the Dominion War is over, this reduces the difficulty by 2 rather than 1)

When ready, the players should make their final summation to M'Zas and roll.

Failure means M'Zas orders the players to leave the Briar Patch immediately. "File whatever protests you wish. By the time you do, this will all be over."

Success means M'Zas agrees that the particle collection should be delayed until the Federation Council can review the new evidence—but he doubts the Son'a will agree to wait. He will suggest that the players send a comm buoy with his own and their ship's logs and a request for reinforcements. The players can still do this even if M'Zas is not persuaded, but will not have an important advantage: M'Zas provides the players with schematics of the Son'a ships, including their sensors, to more easily sneak the buoy past them. He reveals that the Son'a have a backup plan in case Starfleet doesn't cooperate using the holoship: attack on the village by unmanned drones. He is not sure whether they will use lethal or non lethal weapons. Knowing the risks to his own safety, M'Zas will go to Ru'afo and try to stall him, and orders the players to evacuate the Ba'ku to safety and take their ship beyond the Briar Patch's comm interference to establish real-time communication with the Federation Council. "My authentication code should get their attention. I will buy you as much time as I can. Godspeed, Captain."

Either way, M'Zas will then beam back to Ru'afo's ship, leaving the players to determine how to proceed with the next stage of the mission.

Scene 3: Saddle Up

“Just beam up the Ba’ku”

It may occur to the players to just beam the Ba’ku aboard their ship to protect them from the attack on the village, rather than lead them into the cave system. If he is on the players’ side, M’Zas will explicitly order them not to, since the last thing the Son’a deserve is a fait accompli of an uninhabited planet by the time the players manage to contact the Federation Council. A similar argument should come from an NPC on the crew if M’Zas is hostile. Also, the Ba’ku will refuse to leave if asked.

Sending the comm buoy undetected is a **Control + Engineering** task, assisted by the ship’s **Weapons + Engineering**, difficulty 3. M’Zas’s data on Son’a sensor capabilities, if given, reduces the difficulty to 1. Success at a cost is allowed. Failure means the Son’a shoot down the buoy, so there will be no reinforcements available and nobody outside the Briar Patch will know what the players have learned. A complication means the Son’a are aware that the buoy escaped and their plan has been exposed, and will call in their own reinforcements to make sure the Federation and Klingons can’t stop them.

Some characters will need to stay on the planet and move the Ba’ku into the cave system, where the kelbonite will shield them from sensor detection and transporters. The remaining characters will take their ship out of the Briar Patch to expose the Son’a’s treachery to the Federation at large. Players should decide now how to split the party. Seylar will volunteer for the away team on the planet if she is present. Players should now spend the Opportunity (Momentum) and Escalation (Threat) cost for any equipment they are bringing to the planet; at a minimum, transport inhibitors and phaser rifles are recommended since it will be extremely difficult to accomplish the mission without them. The away team can beam down or take a small craft; if they opt for the latter, they will need to camouflage their landing site from the Son’a or cloak the vessel, or else the Son’a will destroy it from orbit when the battle starts.

The players’ ship then breaks orbit, appearing to follow orders and abandon the Ba’ku.

Persuading the Ba’ku to leave does not require a roll, since they are at the mercy of the Son’a if they stay where they are. However they will refuse to carry weapons, so the players will have to do the fighting. The villagers will assemble while the players set up transport inhibitors around the village, with Anij and Sojef showing the way, making sure everyone is present before heading for the mountains and taking refuge in the caves.

As the Ba’ku leave the village, explosions light up the night as Son’a shuttles destroy the village. As most of the Ba’ku make it into the trail lined with kelbonite, a small boy stumbles leaving his home and Seylar (if present) or Sojef goes back to help him. The nearest transport inhibitor is blown up by a Son’a disruptor shot and both of them are immediately beamed away.

Now without the transport inhibitor covering them, the players must each make a **Fitness + Conn** or **Science** roll to sprint to the trailhead, or one of them must roll **Daring + Security** to lay

down a burst of covering fire to confuse the shuttles long enough to escape. Either is difficulty 2. Failure means another player character is beamed away before the away team escapes down the trail and the shuttles withdraw.

At this point, the players can surmise that M'Zas, even if not persuaded, is preventing the Son'a from using deadly force, because a few strafing runs from the shuttles would have killed all the Ba'ku. However there's no guarantee how long that will last, and they need to get to the shelter of the caves as quickly as possible.

Act 3: You Can Still Go Home

Scene 1: Feeling Aggressive Tendencies

Following the kelbonite deposits is a **Fitness + Conn** or **Science** task, difficulty 1. As long as they are following the kelbonite deposits, the Son'a will be unable to beam up the Ba'ku using their ship's transporters. Failure means that the players and the Ba'ku stray from the kelbonite and can be beamed up en masse, and the "ground" part of the story skips to Act 3, Scene 2 as they are all captured.

In space, the players' ship is still an hour from transmission range and proceeding at $\frac{1}{3}$ impulse power. Any Son'a battlecruisers that arrived in Act 2, Scene 2 will begin in Extreme range and attack. Spend Threat to take the first turn and engage in one round of combat. Fire the isolytic wave when you can get into Medium range. Rolling an Effect means that a subspace tear forms, and the player must either evade it (**Daring or Control + Conn**, assisted by **Engines + Conn**), difficulty 3, or else eject the warp core to stop the tear.

Son'a shuttles appear overhead while the away team and Ba'ku are resting, dropping airborne drones. 4 are under the gamemaster's direct control, the rest are abstracted for now. Bringing in 4 more drones costs 1 Threat and should be done any time the GM has fewer than 2 drones available. Spend Threat to take the first turn. Any successful ranged attack on a character means that character is attached with an isolar tag and beamed to the orbiting Son'a flagship, whether or not an injury was inflicted. At this point it should become clear that there are too many drones to fight, and the only solution is to retreat into the caves immediately.

Scene 2: We're Through Running from These Bastards

Resume the space battle. In this round, if the comm buoy was successfully sent, an NPC ship from the players' squadron arrives at Extreme range to reinforce them. The players can spend 2 Momentum or a point of Determination to add another allied ship. However, the Son'a will also bring in their reinforcements now as well. The GM can spend up to 6 squadron points here if the Son'a detected the comm buoy being sent, and additional squadron points can be purchased for 1 Threat each. If the Dominion War is happening, it would be best to bring in Jem'Hadar or Cardassian ships here to make it clear which side the Son'a are on. Otherwise, Son'a ships will do.

Inside the caves, sealing the entry with a force field converted from what's left of the transport inhibitors and a tricorder is a difficulty 1 **Reason + Engineering** or **Security** task, unless portable shield generators or a similar piece of equipment were brought along, in which case it is difficulty 0. Dozens of Ba'ku are missing, in addition to any player characters abducted by the Son'a. The cave shakes as Son'a shuttles bombard the mountains to try to force the Ba'ku out—or kill them. The structure of this cavern will not hold up under bombardment for long, so the characters will need to find an escape route with sufficient kelbonite to protect them, which is a **Reason + Conn** or **Science** task, difficulty 2. The players can then use phasers to cut a route from the caves back out into the mountains and escape with the Ba'ku.

In space, the Son'a will concentrate their fire on the players' ship, ignoring the NPC reinforcements for now. The players now have two choices: defeat the Son'a conventionally using the space combat rules or attempt the Riker Maneuver. Let them take the first turn this time once they have chosen. The Riker Maneuver is a gated challenge which takes the place of their ships' turns in this round of combat.

- Flying safely through the nearest gas cloud dense with metreon particles requires **Daring** or **Control + Conn**, assisted by the ship's **Structure + Conn**, difficulty 3
- Collecting metreon particles using the Bussard ramscoops is a **Daring + Engineering** task, assisted by the ship's **Structure + Engineering**, difficulty 3
- Timing the release of the metreon particles to coincide with the next firing of a Son'a weapon is **Daring + Security**, assisted by the ship's **Structure + Security**, difficulty 3

Successfully executing the Riker maneuver destroys all Son'a and Dominion ships and ends the space combat.

On the surface, Son'a ground troops (one for each remaining player character) attack, having tracked the column from the cave system. If any of the Son'a fall wounded or are scanned for any other reason (**Reason + Medicine**, difficulty 1), the players learn that the Son'a and the Ba'ku are the same species if they don't know that already. Once this has happened, 4 drones arrive. Engage in combat or until either Anij or Sojef and the highest-ranking player character have been abducted.

Scene 3: I Promise You Won't be Court-Martialed

Aboard the Son'a flagship in orbit, any captured player characters and Ba'ku are held in a large brig behind a force field. Ru'afo shows up and demands that the players call off their ship, as it has damaged or destroyed his ships. M'Zas, if not persuaded, threatens the players with court-martial if they don't comply. If M'Zas was persuaded earlier, he does not make any such threat and chastises Ru'afo for attacking a Federation starship and the village without consulting him and demands that the Son'a withdraw from the system until he can speak with the Federation Council. Ru'afo declares he is going to launch the thermolytic injectors and begin collecting the metaphasic particles, and in six hours anything on the planet will be dead or

dying. The collector will launch in a matter of minutes. This would be a good time for the players to reveal that they know the Son'a and Ba'ku are the same race if they haven't already. Anij or Rojef now recognize Ru'afu as Ro'tin, and his right-hand man Gallatin as Gal'na, two of the young Ba'ku who tried to take over the colony and were exiled 100 years ago. Ru'afu declares those names—those children—are gone forever. **Insight + Command** or **Medicine**, difficulty 2, reads that Gallatin doesn't feel the same way, and misses home.

If persuaded, M'Zas warns Ru'afu that if he launches the injectors while the planet is still inhabited, the Federation will hunt him down to the ends of the galaxy, and Ru'afu responds by having two of his guards seize M'Zas and remove him from the room. If not persuaded, M'Zas merely asks to speak to Ru'afu in private since the players are not cooperative, telling them he did it all for the Federation.

Ru'afu then orders Gallatin to separate the Starfleet hostages from the Ba'ku, moving them to the stern cargo bay of the ship. Gallatin objects that the stern isn't shielded from the metaphasic radiation so they will all die when the injector fires, which of course Ru'afu knows. As the Son'a guards start rounding up the Ba'ku, the players can try to persuade Gallatin to change sides, which is an opposed task of **Presence + Command** or **Medicine** against his **Control + Command**.

Failure means Gallatin won't cooperate, and the players will have to defeat him and the guards in combat, then proceed to the bridge to confront Ru'afu. The climax would therefore be a suicidal attack on the bridge, with Ru'afu deploying the injectors after three rounds of combat against his Nausicaan warriors, 2 for each player character, unless the players can subdue him first and use his communicator to shut off the collector. Should the characters die heroically failing but with good role playing, the players' ship might arrive in orbit just in time and blow up the collector before it can activate.

Success means Gallatin sends the other guards away with the Ba'ku and gives the players the inside scoop: the collector can only be disabled from the bridge, which is too heavily defended to attack, and Ru'afu can always override commands to the collector from his personal communicator. The characters now have two choices, with time short: contact their ship to see if they can ride to the rescue in time, or contact the away team for a plan based on deception.

Option 1: Brute Force

The players' ship, and any allied ships surviving the space battle, would have to exceed $\frac{1}{3}$ impulse power to have any chance of returning to the planet before the collector finishes its activation sequence. Making the micro-warp jump successfully is a **Control** or **Daring + Conn** task, assisted by the ship's **Engines + Conn**, difficulty 5, complication range 4. A complication should be used to knock out critical ship systems, particularly weapons. The engineer can negate this complication range with a **Control + Engineering** task assisted by the ship's **Structure + Engineering** to hold together the structural integrity field while at warp in the Briar

Patch. The ship can then fire phasers or torpedoes at the collector; time is almost out so they will only get one turn for this. Ramming is of course an option if the weapons are disabled.

Option 2: Deception

The away team should modify the holoship with a replica of the Son'a bridge and its simulation footage of the thermolytic reaction, **Reason + Science**, difficulty 3. If M'Zas shared schematics, it makes recreating the bridge much easier, and reduces the difficulty to 1.

For the next phase, they must fly the mission scout ship and, if they brought one, their small craft. They will need to modify their phasers to fire tachyon bursts, which is a **Control + Engineering** or **Science** task, difficulty 2, and should be done before takeoff. They will need to engage in space combat against the Son'a flagship. Once at least two phaser hits have landed on the Son'a, the enemy will reset his shield harmonics (Modulate Shields task if you want to make the NPC crew roll for it, optional), giving a brief window of opportunity for point-to-point transport. Beam the Son'a bridge crew to the holoship, **Daring + Engineering**, assisted by your small craft's **Sensors + Engineering**, difficulty 3 unless any advantages apply. The players can now move safely out of weapons range. It is their choice whether to return to the surface or remain in orbit.

The player characters onboard the flagship, along with Gallatin, can now access the bridge and deactivate the collector remotely, which is a difficulty 2 task using **Reason + Command**. Locking the rest of the crew out of the ship's systems is a **Reason + Security** or **Command** task, difficulty 2. Failure means the crew will help Ru'afo by disabling the flagship's weapons and Scene 4 takes places next. Success means they cannot help, and with the players in control of the flagship, they can fire its weapons to destroy the collector.

If the mission scout ship or another small craft is still in orbit, their weapons can be used to destroy the collector as well.

Scene 4: Time's Up (Optional)

Should the players have failed to destroy the collector despite these options, Ru'afo now becomes aware of the holoship ruse and beams himself over to the collector, restarting the injection sequence. Gallatin cannot disable it remotely without Ru'afo's access codes. However, Gallatin knows of a self-destruct system that can only be accessed from onboard the collector, with only a two-second delay before detonation. One minute (one turn) before separation, cryogenics tanks will vent combustible gas inside the collector.

It will take two turns before the injectors detonate, wiping out all life on the planet. The players can choose how to use those two turns. Overriding the crew lockout so they can fire the flagship's weapons is an opposed **Reason + Security** test against the Son'a flagship and NPC crew, with the ship's **Computer + Security** assisting the enemy. Whether or not they succeed, the player characters can also concentrate fire from any available small craft on the collector in

an effort to destroy it before the two turns are over. Its shields are down so this should not be difficult, and 5 points of damage will destroy the particle collector.

If that option is not pursued or is impossible because all available craft had their weapons disabled, the player characters can beam over to the collector to engage the self-destruct sequence. Point-to-point transport to the computer platform is a difficulty 3 task, **Control + Engineering**. Success at a cost means the players materialize lower than they should, and have to spend a turn climbing the scaffolding inside the collector to reach the computer, which is a **Fitness + Conn** or **Security** task, difficulty 1. Threat should be spent to increase complication range and/or difficulty to due Ru'afo laying down suppressing fire. At the beginning of the next turn, the combustible gas vents throughout the collector interior, raising the complication range of any energy weapon fire to 4. A complication means a friendly is blown off the scaffolding and lands too far away to participate further. This can also be used to make a non-lethal attack against Ru'afo by igniting gas near him and blowing him further down the scaffolding, away from the players.

An Interact minor action with the computer, once reached, initiates the self-destruct sequence. The players should then signal the Son'a flagship or their small craft for beam-out before the two-minute countdown destroys the collector and them with it. If neither is available, the players' ship arrives just in time to beam them out. Either way, the last thing they hear is Ru'afo hammily screaming "No!" as the transporter grabs them from the exploding collector.

Conclusion

If Ru'afo was captured alive, his body finally gives out and he dies after cursing the players and the Federation.

If M'Zas was not persuaded to help the players, his body is found in the flagship's medical bay, stretched to death by the Son'a equipment apparently at Ru'afo's orders. If M'Zas was persuaded, he was found being tortured for the prefix codes to the players' ship and is now in their sickbay recovering from his injuries. The Federation Council has suspended operations in the Ba'ku system while they conduct a top-level review.

The surviving Son'a surrender unconditionally. Sojef and Anij are uneasy at the prospect of reuniting with the Son'a, but seeing one of the long-lost renegades embracing his Ba'ku mother gives them hope.

Appendix

Dr. Seylar (major NPC)

Known to the players, Seylar is a long-serving Starfleet doctor most recently assigned to Narendra Station and now on detached service with the duck blind operation, Seylar is the default option as the Renegade if no player character is selected for the role.

Traits: Vulcan, Memory Loss

Attributes

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
11	8	8	10	7	12

Disciplines

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
3	1	1	2	4	5

Foci: Composure, Osteopathy, Emergency Medicine, Xenobiology, Telepathy, Epidemiology

Values:

Research is formalized curiosity

Everyone has the right to his or her own life

Every problem has a solution, every disease a cure

The best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered

Talents:

Nerve Pinch


Mind Meld


First Response

Veteran

Attacks:

Unarmed (2 , knockdown)

Phaser type 2 (4 , charge)

Nerve pinch (6 , 1H, intense, non-lethal)

Rear Admiral M'Zas (major NPC)

Traits: Caitian

Attributes

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
8	10	8	10	11	10

Disciplines

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
5	2	3	1	4	1

Foci: Starfleet protocol, social psychology, organizational communication, game theory, grand strategy, bureaucracy

Values:

The mission comes first

Know your enemy

Trust, but verify

Information is power

Talents:

Collaboration: Command

Crisis Management

Cold Reading

Veteran

Attacks:

Unarmed (4:👊, knockdown)

Phaser type 2 (6:🔫, charge)

Ahdar Ru'afo (major NPC)

Traits: Son'a, Dominion Sympathizer

Attributes

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
11	10	9	10	7	7

Disciplines

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
5	1	4	1	1	4

Foci: Intimidation, deception, stealth, hand disruptors, metaphasic particles, regenerative medicine

Values:

The Federation is full of useful idiots

I will take revenge on the Ba'ku

I am always one step ahead

I do not take orders from you

Talents:

At All Costs: When a Ru'afo declares his attack action, he may add an additional point of Momentum as long as he is not dealing Non-lethal damage.

Particle Engineering: When dealing with subatomic particles and the effects of radiation, Ru'afo may ignore the effects of any Condition for the scene and may roll an additional d20 when attempting to understand the nature of these effects.

Back-Up Plans: Whenever Ru'afo or an ally fails a task, he may add 1 point to the GM's Threat pool.

Veteran: Whenever the character spends a point of Determination, roll 1 🎲. If an Effect is rolled, immediately regain that spent point of Determination.

Attacks:

Unarmed (5 🎲, knockdown)

Disruptor pistol (7 🎲, vicious 1)

Gallatin (notable NPC)

Traits: Son'a

Attributes

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
9	8	8	10	9	9


Disciplines

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
2	1	4	2	3	1

Foci: hand to hand combat, shipboard tactical systems, reconnaissance

Attacks:

Unarmed (5 , knockdown)

Disruptor pistol (7 , vicious 1)

Son'a Goon (minor NPC)

Traits: Son'a

Attributes


Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
10	12	12	3	10	5

Disciplines

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
0	1	3	0	0	0

Attacks:

Unarmed (4 , knockdown)

Disruptor pistol (5 , vicious 1)

Escalation 2: Disruptor rifle (6 , vicious 1, accurate)

Attack Drone

Traits: Robot, Airborne

Attributes


Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
8	9	9	7	8	7

Disciplines

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
0	1	4	1	0	0

Attacks:

Transporter tags (special): no Stress damage is inflicted, the victim is beamed away upon hit

Escalation 2: Disruptor cannon (7 , vicious 1)

Son'a Battlecruiser

Traits: Son'a Warship

Attributes

Comms	Computer	Engines	Sensors	Structure	Weapons
8	8	8	9	11	11


Departments

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
2	3	4	2	1	1

Scale: 6 Power: 8 Shields: 15 Resistance: 8

Crew: Proficient (Attribute 9, Discipline 2)

Attacks:

Phaser Array (Energy, Medium, 10 , Area or Spread, Versatile 2)

Photon Torpedoes (Torpedo, Long, 7 , High Yield)

Isolytic Array (Energy, Medium, 10, Area or Spread, Vicious 2)

Talents:

Improved Impulse Drive

Ablative Armor

Ramscoop Enhancement

Ru'of's Flogship

Traits: Son'a Warship

Attributes

Comms	Computer	Engines	Sensors	Structure	Weapons
8	8	9	8	11	9

Departments

Command	Conn	Security	Engineering	Science	Medicine
3	2	2	2	1	4

Scale: 4 Power: 9 Shields: 13 Resistance: 4

Crew: Talented (Attribute 10, Discipline 3)

Attacks:

Phaser Array (Energy, Medium, 6, Area or Spread, Versatile 2)

Photon Torpedoes (Torpedo, Long, 5, High Yield)

Isolytic Array (Energy, Medium, 6, Area or Spread, Vicious 2)

Talents:

Command Ship

Advanced Sickbay