



HIGH TIDE

Point Reyes is a hiking and camping spot, and it's getting busy ahead of the 4th of July. A new predator is stalking the beaches, though, and SAVE needs to find it quickly and deal with it.

Important Traits: Some combat skills are critical; the Seal-man is vulnerable to normal attacks, but difficult to kill. The three information skills (Investigation, Interview, and Research) are always important, but having a specialization in Tracking or Outdoors would be especially useful here.

Suggested Characters: Samar Alaraj, BB Bottomley, Maria Gallegos, Miakoda Lawrence, Alexander Nikolaidos, Siaro Talbek

Major Menace: Unknown hominid (“Seal-man”)

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SETUP

Point Reyes is a cape in northern California, about 30 miles from San Francisco. It is a popular tourist destination for hikers, campers, and animal lovers — visitors can see a wide variety of wildlife including sea-birds and elephant seals.

As the water warms and summer progresses, more people arrive at Point Reyes. Dedicated hikers and birdwatchers give way to campers and partiers. Was it the higher concentration of people that attracted the Unknown, or was something out in the ocean just *hungry*? It's impossible to know, but now the Unknown has come to Point Reyes.

The creature that swims into the cape is what SAVE calls an “Unknown hominid,” the same general type of creature as the “sasquatch” or “bigfoot.” This particular creature is mostly aquatic, living and hunting in the water and coming on land only occasionally. Like most predatory creatures of the Unknown, it will eat whatever kind of meat it can catch, but prefers human flesh. The “Seal-man” finds a series of small caves in

one of the small coves in Point Reyes and uses them to sleep and store food. During high tide, the cave fills and the Seal-man leaves the cave to hunt. At low tide, the creature retreats to its lair to feast.

SAVE

One evening, a pair of hikers spots the Seal-man and reports it on social media (though they weren't close enough to get a good look, which is fortunate for them). A blog called "Cryptids in America" reposts their encounter, and it goes viral (feel free to insert the social media platform of your preference). Point Reyes begins to get more foot traffic than usual, but no one sees the creature. A few days later, though, a pair of fisherman checking crab pots runs afoul of the Seal-man. It capsizes their boat and drags one of them down. It drowns him, but doesn't manage to escape with the body.

SAVE San Francisco, which had been monitoring the online activity, sends a team to investigate — a vague report on social media isn't much of a lead, but a fatality demands more scrutiny. SAVE provides transportation and camping gear as well as the contact information for the two hikers who saw the creatures initially (although the envoys on the mission are tasked with making contact in an appropriate way).

The envoys are instructed to assess the situation rather than take direct action; at this point, SAVE isn't completely convinced that they're not dealing with a hoax combined with an unfortunate accident. The Seal-man is very real, though, and still hungry.

TIMELINE

- Sunday, June 25, 2017:** The Seal-man swims in from the ocean and makes a den in a seaside cave (it fills at high tide, during which the Seal-man hunts).
- Monday, June 26, 2017:** Seal corpses wash up on the beach in the preserve, ripped open and gnawed. Fishermen trolling for salmon also find headless fish.
- Tuesday, June 27, 2017:** Hikers (Laura Patterson, 23 and Heidi Welling, 25) see the Seal-man on shore, slipping into the water. They pursue it but are unable to get a picture. Patterson posts "OMG just saw a bigfoot or something — Heidi said it was a seal but it was walking."
- Wednesday, June 28, 2017:** This post is reblogged by "Cryptids in America," which has more than 50,000 followers. An influx of hikers and campers begins to arrive at Point Reyes. SAVE San Francisco notes the event.
- Thursday, June 29, 2017:** A boat collecting crab pots is capsized and one of the fishermen (Harv Watson, 45) drowns. The survivor (Vince Hamker, 48) claims he felt something pulling him down. Watson's death is reported as an accident, but rumor immediately spreads that the "Seal-man" capsized the boat (which it did).
- Friday, June 30, 2017:** SAVE team is assigned to investigate. Camping gear is provided.
- START OF SCENARIO FOR PCs**
- Saturday, July 1, 2017:** The influx of hikers, campers, and amateur cryptozoologists continues. The Seal-man stays in its cave most of the day.
- Sunday, July 2, 2017:** Early in the evening, at high tide, the Seal-man drags Preston Gaines (25) into the water and eats him. Witnesses hear him scream and see him dragged away; video goes viral shortly thereafter. His body is not recovered (stuffed into cave). Gaines has a history of video "pranks," so his disappearance isn't seriously investigated.
- Monday, July 3, 2017:** More campers arrive. The Seal-man comes ashore at high tide (just after 8 PM) and uses the Shriek discipline to send a group of campers scattering. It chases down one of them (Amber Feldstein, 18) and snaps her neck, but is driven away when a loose dog charges it. It returns to the water. Police surround the area and take statements.
- Tuesday, July 4, 2017:** Shortly after midnight, the Seal-man ambushes the coroner's van taking Feldstein's body away. It takes her body and the bodies of the two attendants and drags them into the water, stuffing them into its cave. Later that night, the fireworks display drives it away; it swims out to sea and to a different coast, ending the case.

THE CASE

The bulk of *High Tide* takes place at Point Reyes, though the envoys will probably want to do some initial investigation and research before going out to the park. Likewise, they might choose to interview Vince Hamker or examine Harv Watson's body.

INTERVIEWING THE HIKERS – INTERVIEW

SAVE has contact information for Laura Patterson and Heidi Welling. Both women are working in office jobs in San Francisco; they are friends from college and enjoy hiking together. The envoys can contact them online, by phone, or in person (though cold contact in person requires a General Communication check to put them at ease enough to talk; they've been getting some strange social media activity lately).

- *Vital:* The woman saw a creature walking towards the water while at Point Reyes. They are both certain it was walking on two legs. Heidi says that it was “like a seal,” by which she means it was covered in brown fur, but Laura disputes this, say that it couldn't have been a seal since it was walking on two legs. If shown a map of the area, they are able to point out roughly where they were when they saw it.
- *Interest:* Heidi recalls that they saw the creature at about 3 PM (neither woman knows this, but the tide was in at this point). Laura mentions that the creature was “really wide, like almost like a gorilla.”
- *Esoteric:* The women mention meeting a man walking a dog just before seeing the creature.

VINCE HAMKER – INTERVIEW

Hamker lives in a trailer park about 40 minutes away from Point Reyes. His car has a hitch that used to hold his boat (the boat, of course, sank during the incident). If the envoys call ahead, he doesn't answer his phone. When they show up, he is drunk and obviously traumatized. His dog, Billy, a yellow lab, sits by his side and half-heartedly barks at visitors.

Interview checks with Hamker incur a –20 TN due to his inebriated state and depression; he's not unwilling to talk but he rambles on about his friend Harv and how they served in the military together. An envoy with the Crisis Counselor Edge that spends a scene talking with Hamker does not incur this penalty. Use of the Calm Discipline also gives Hamker a bit of clarity and lets him communicate without the penalty, but doesn't require a full scene.

- *Extraneous Clues:* Hamker tells the envoys about Harv's life — he grew up poor in Sacramento, took work as a butcher after he

was discharged from the Army, along with other interesting but irrelevant details.

- *Vital:* Hamker tearfully tells the characters that he and Harv went out in their boat to retrieve some crab pots. Something struck the bottom of the boat and then flipped it; Hamker thought it was an elephant seal, though they don't usually get near boats. Once in the water, Hamker felt something pulling him down. He kicked at it and swam for shore. Harv's body washed ashore later.
- *Interest:* Hamker also mentions that Billy (his dog) was there and swam ashore right after he did (while Hamker doesn't know it, Billy saved his life — the Seal-man is afraid of dogs).
- *Esoteric:* Hamker takes a big drink of whiskey and stares off into space, and says that he saw something below them in the water. It was big, it had hands, and it was holding on to Harv's ankle. He says that he kicked at it, but it kept pulling Harv down. Hamker claims he could see “fangs, or tusks, like a walrus.”

HARV WATSON'S BODY – INVESTIGATION

Getting access to Watson's body should present a challenge, but nothing the envoys can't handle if they're persistent and clever. A character with a medical license (like Siaro Talbek) can talk their way past a desk at the morgue, and a character using the Familiar Face discipline can just walk right in. Once inside, the envoys can examine Watson's body. It has been stripped of clothing, but the autopsy does not occur until July 1st (meaning that the envoys can get in before it happens if they move quickly).

- *False Lead:* Watson has a slash across the back of the head. It looks deliberate and clean. This occurred when his body was retrieved from the water (one of the officers had a multi-tool in his hand and it slipped) and is noted on the intake form, but that's easy to miss.
- *Vital:* Harv Watson died of drowning; this is easily verifiable by an examination of the body. There are no other visible wounds or bites on the body (other than the slash on his head).
- *Interest:* Examining the left ankle reveals an abrasion: slight scraping and bruising, probably inflicting immediately before death (this was from the Seal-man grabbing him and trying to pull him down). His personal effects log notes that his body was missing the left shoe.
- *Esoteric:* Watson's indicates that he was in good physical shape; he didn't drink to excess or smoke, and he was an accomplished swimmer and trained in CPR.

POINT REYES – INVESTIGATION

Once the envoys arrive at Point Reyes, they are probably going to want to look around and try to search for evidence of the Seal-man. Making an Investigation check at all depends heavily on being in the right place; talking to Heidi Welling and Laura Patterson or interviewing Vince Hamker gives them a place to start. If they just go out to Point Reyes “cold” and start looking around, allow them to make an Investigation check but turn a token light and state that it takes several hours of searching before they find anything useful (and now it’s getting dark).

Depending on where and when the characters undertake this investigation, a Tracking specialization might be useful. An Outdoors specialization almost certainly is.

- *False Lead:* The characters find the corpse of a bobcat thrown into the weeds near a road through the area. Its neck is broken, but it has no other significant wounds. The unfortunate animal was hit by a car. The driver, fearing that he might get in trouble for killing an endangered species, tossed it into the brush and drove off.
- *Vital:* The envoys find the body of a young elephant seal near the shoreline. Its head has been bitten off and large chunks of flesh torn away. The envoys can take measurements of the bite marks and gain more clues using Research (see Forensic Analysis).
- *Interest:* The envoys note that parts of the shoreline boast cliffs with rock walls. At low tide, these walls have shallow caves; at high tide, these caves are completely submerged. Getting to the caves at low tide is easy enough on foot, but high tide would require a boat and snorkeling or SCUBA equipment.
- *Esoteric:* The envoys find claw marks on the rocks near the seashore (the Seal-man sharpening its claws). They can clearly see a human-like pattern of digits, but the claws are wide. Based on the height of the marks, the creature is at least eight feet tall.

SEASIDE CAVES – INVESTIGATION

What happens when the characters investigate the caves depends very much on when they do it and whether you want to escalate this scene into a confrontation. At high tide, the Seal-man is out hunting and the caves are uninhabited, but to investigate them the envoys will need appropriate equipment (note, too, that while anyone can put on a mask and use a snorkel, SCUBA gear requires special training. If a player feels that their character would have had this training and has access to the equipment, you should allow that character to go diving in the caves. It would make for a superbly creepy scene!). At low tide, the creature is usually asleep in one of the caves, and so a successful Sense the Unknown check could find it. You may feel free to decide the creature is elsewhere when the envoys come calling in either case if it’s too early in the case for them to find the Seal-man, or have the Seal-man see and stalk them. See “Running High Tide” for more.

- *Vital:* The envoys find corpses in the seaside caves. Depending on how horrific you want to make this revelation and how far into the case it is, they might find corpses of animals (seals, fish, elk) or human beings (including Preston Gaines). This discovery calls for a Revulsion Resolve check, with a Trauma Rank set appropriately to what the characters discover. In any case, once they get over the shock, the envoys can gain data to use in Forensic Analysis.
- *Interest:* Some of the caves contain bones and gnawed fragments. These caves are larger and also have claw marks on the walls and fur wedged in cracks. These caves are obviously where the creature sleeps. At high tide all of these caves would be submerged.
- *Esoteric:* The envoys note which caves have corpses, which ones don’t, and which ones are large enough to accommodate the creature and have fragments — in short, they realize that it is stuffing prey into a given cave and then sleeping/feasting in one near it. Based on that pattern, they can figure out which cave it is going to sleep in next. What they do with this information is up to them.

PRESTON GAINES' ATTACK – INTERVIEW

This attack happens at about 6:30PM on Sunday evening. Preston Gaines is near the water by an inlet (the beach nearby is available for swimming but it's harder to get to, so it doesn't attract as much of a crowd). He is wading in the water when the Seal-man pulls him under and drags him out to sea. Two of his friends are filming him; Gaines is a vlogger and prone to making "prank" videos. The footage shows him wading about waist-deep in the water, then suddenly looking terrified as he's pulled under. The Seal-man is never visible on the video, and Gaines never resurfaces.

Using Investigation doesn't reveal much; the Seal-man simply swam in, grabbed Gaines, and pulled him out into deeper water. If the envoys are actually there when it happens, they might be able to intervene (see *Confronting the Unknown*), but otherwise they can't really find clues by searching the area — there's nothing to find. They can, however, question witnesses and Gaines' friends.

- *False Lead:* Gaines was a known prankster and had been known to create videos involving "ghosts" and other creatures leaping out and scaring people. His two friends swear that he had no plans to make such a video here.
- *Vital:* Gaines didn't even time to scream before he disappeared. Other people who had been swimming in the area can verify that there's no strong undertow or drop-off in this area (the envoys can verify that if they feel brave enough to go swimming).
- *Interest:* Gaines' friends state that he's a strong swimmer and can hold his breath for a "pretty long time."
- *Esoteric:* A hiker, walking down the beach after Gaines disappears, states that she thought she saw a man surface further out into the water, but the figure submerged again immediately, so she decided it must have been a fish or a seal. She saw ripples in the water heading for the rock wall (where the caves are).

AMBER FELDSTEIN'S ATTACK – INVESTIGATION/INTERVIEW

This attack takes place on Monday, July 3rd at roughly 8PM (again, high tide). The Seal-man comes ashore, finds a group of campers, and uses the Shriek discipline to terrify them (the envoys can hear this no matter where they are in Point Reyes). The Seal-man chases down Amber Feldstein, 18. It knocks her down and snaps her neck, but flees without her body when a dog belonging to another camper charges it. If you want to have the envoys show up while the Seal-man is still on land, go to *Confronting the Unknown*. Otherwise, they arrive after the creature has killed its victim but before the police arrive. The envoys can get clues both from using Investigation to look at the scene (Outdoors, Forensics, and Murder specializations would all apply) or Interview to talk to witnesses.

- *Vital:* Amber Feldstein's body lies on the ground a few yards from her tent; she was clearly trying to get back to it (panic response). Her head is twisted at a grotesque angle. Viewing this scene requires a Revulsion Resolve check (Serious Trauma). Her face and cheeks are bruised and claw marks are visible on her scalp; whatever grabbed her had hands big enough to palm her head like a baseball. Witnesses state that they heard an ear-splitting roar and they felt terrified that something was coming to kill them; they either fled or hid in tents. One witness remembers hearing a woman scream and then a dog barking.
- *Interest:* The envoys find tracks, both from the Seal-man (huge, flipper-like feet that make swoosh-like patterns where it walked) and from Amber. Amber's tracks are strange — she seemed to be trying to run but continually tripping or slipping. Witnesses can confirm this; they didn't see the creature (or if they did, they identify as "maybe a bear?"), but state that Amber seemed to be unable to keep her footing. They also confirm that the "bear" attacked her, but then a dog chased it off.
- *Esoteric:* The envoys find dog tracks — the animal charged straight for the creature and then chased it (from the creature's tracks, it was clearly running). If they talk to the dog's owner, she tells them that her dog slipped its leash and went running after the creature (the dog's owner is convinced it was the "bigfoot" that has been hunting Point Reyes, and of course she's not wrong). The dog is a small terrier, not intimidating in the least. It is unharmed.

CORONER'S VAN ATTACK SITE – INVESTIGATION

The Seal-man attacks the coroner's van as it leaves the Point Reyes area. The road bends close to the shore and the Seal-man lurches out in front of the van. The van strikes the creature, skids off the road, and comes to rest on its side. The Seal-man yanks the door open, kills the two attendants, and steals Amber Feldstein's body. As in the previous scenes, the envoys can intervene if they are present when this happens. Otherwise they'll just have to search for clues after the fact. They could learn about the scene by monitoring police frequencies or bribing/convincing an officer to tip them off if anything weird happens.

Examining the scene requires a Revulsion Resolve check (Serious Trauma).

- *Vital:* The van skidded off the road, rolled, and came to rest on the passenger side. The driver's side door has been pulled open with enough force to bend the hinges. The body of the driver is a few yards away; his neck is broken in much the same way as Amber's was. The other attendant is still in the front seat. He has two puncture wounds in his head, about six inches deep and roughly two inches in diameter (the Seal-man's tusks). The back doors of the van are open and a shredded body bag lies on the ground nearby.
- *Interest:* Tracks lead back toward the beach. They are fresh (if the envoys hurry, they might catch the Seal-man before it reaches the water).
- *Esoteric:* The front grille of the van is damaged and bloodstained. Fur caught in the grille resembles that of a seal.

FORENSIC ANALYSIS – RESEARCH

Use these results if the characters take bite measurements from a victim or otherwise manage to get forensic evidence from the Seal-man. Specializations such as Forensics or Zoology would be appropriate to use here.

- *Vital:* The bite measurements indicate a jaw shape similar to a human's, but based on the size of the bite marks the "man" would be over eight feet tall. The teeth are sharp and designed for rending and tearing flesh.
- *Interest:* Fur samples are similar to seal or sea lion, meant to protect the creature from cold water. The bite marks also reveal two tusks, strong and sharp enough to pierce bone.
- *Esoteric:* Hand and claw marks show that the creature has five fingers ending in bony claws. The hands are large enough to palm a human head, and the claws are strong enough to pierce the skull.

CONFRONTING THE UNKNOWN

The envoys might run afoul of the Seal-man at nearly any point during this case. If they take a very aggressive stance, they'll probably find it sooner, while if they sit back and wait, the creature has more time to hunt and kill before they find it. However, since Point Reyes is so big, you have a great deal of latitude in deciding when and where the confrontation happens (see Running High Tide, below).

The confrontation can go a number of ways, depending on the circumstances. If the envoys manage to lure the Seal-man far enough away from the water that it can't swim away, the fight is liable to be fairly quick. The Seal-man is tough, but if the characters shoot it a few times, it won't last long. If they engage it in the water, though, they should expect to lose — the Seal-man can use the Blunder discipline to render characters almost useless, then drag them down into the depths and drown them. A drowning character loses 10 STA per turn until they become exhausted, at which point the Seal-man automatically inflicts a Lethal Injury.

The Seal-man is vulnerable to mundane weapons and attacks, meaning that the characters should be able to kill it once they find it. The Seal-man tries to flee if it suffers a Major Injury, and it makes good use of its Blunder and Shriek disciplines to do so. In battle, it eschews disciplines and attacks with a bite or a claw (but hits an obvious threat with Blunder).

THE SEAL-MAN

EWS: 80
(Notable)

REF: 55

STA: 85

Injury: Superficial, Minor –10, Serious –20, Major –30, Critical –50, Lethal

Disciplines: Alert, Blunder, Hunter's Mark, Shriek

Aspects: Bane (dogs), Deadly Attack (claws and/or teeth; Serious Injury), Native Environment, Resilient, Sturdy, Tough

RUNNING HIGH TIDE

High Tide is a classic monster hunt (p. 200 of **Chill Third Edition**). The creature isn't clever or devious or out for revenge — it's just *hungry*. I've run *High Tide* a bunch of times at conventions (it actually started out as a case I put together for some Kickstarter backers from **Monsters**, so thanks to Mike Machado and friends!), so here are some things to consider:

- **This is an easy scenario...but don't let that fool you.** *High Tide* is a pretty simple case, really. The first report the characters get from Heidi and Laura is correct — it's a monster that's somewhere between a seal and a man. Just because there's not a grand mystery, though, doesn't mean that the scenario can't be effective as a horror story. Think about investigating the caves as the tide is coming in, and pulling out half a seal or a human body...and then having the Seal-man's head surface behind the characters' boat. One of the most effective scenes I've run was the characters interviewing Vince Hamker and him tearfully, drunkenly trying to convince them that he didn't abandon his friend Harv, that he *tried* to help him. You can play that pathos up, or you can make the scene a little more subdued if your players aren't into delving into that kind of trauma.
- **The bigger the group, the quicker the fight.** I've run *High Tide* with as many as six characters and it works just fine, but do be aware that with that many PCs, even if most of them aren't especially well-versed in combat, the final fight with the Seal-man is quick. That's fine. Long, drawn-out fights aren't in-genre anyway, because we tend to run out of effective, impactful descriptions of injury.
- **Beware Blunder.** Blunder is a *highly* effective discipline of the Evil Way. It basically knocks out the combat efficacy of anyone it's used on. If you've got a PC attuned to the Protective School of the Art, the characters have a way around that, but if not (and most of the times I've run *High Tide*, the characters haven't had that), the Seal-man can turn the envoys into bumbling klutzes in a few turns and head for the waves. Of course, that requires that a) the CM has the tokens or Arcane takeaways available and b) that the remaining PCs don't take advantage of the fact that while the Seal-man gets one action per turn, the PCs *each* get an action. Basically, you want to use Blunder to scare the players, but be aware that failing every roll isn't fun.
- **The PCs shouldn't fight the Seal-man in the water, but you should absolutely make that happen.** The Seal-man is deadly in the water. It doesn't drown, it's very strong, and you should absolutely impose heavy penalties on characters trying to fight while treading water. Fighting the Seal-man underwater should be scary as *hell*. Even if it's just a couple of turns, it's a perfect expression of what makes this case frightening.
- **Timing is everything.** As mentioned in the text, the CM has a great deal of control over when the PCs meet the Seal-man, simply because of the large area that the case covers. My usual rule of thumb is that I have them see the creature either when they're really *not* ready for it (and therefore likely to flee) or when they *are* ready for it (they've seen what it can do and they've armed themselves). The Seal-man isn't going to ambush a wary, armed crew, but it will absolutely attack a pair of envoys if the group has split up. As always, follow the players' lead on the investigation — give them clues, let them make theories, and think about the Seal-man's motivations and how the events on the timeline will play out.



More...

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ENVOY ACTIVATION NOTICE

tags: **Inbox****SAVE**

S **SAVE San Francisco**

(June 30, 2017, 11:05)

to: <Recipient List Blocked>

On Tuesday, June 27th, two hikers walking near the beach at Point Reyes encountered what they described as “a bigfoot.” One of them, Laura Patterson (23) posted on social media “OMG just saw a bigfoot or something – Heidi said it was a seal but it was walking” (“Heidi” is Heidi Welling, 25, her friend). Neither woman was able to get a picture of the supposed creature; they said it slipped into the water just after they saw it. Patterson’s post was then blogged by a site called “Cryptids in America,” which has more than 50,000 followers. The post brought an influx of hikers and “cryptozoologists” to Points Reyes the next day, but no other sightings occurred. SAVE noted that post, but absent a picture, the assumption was that the women had seen an extremely large elephant seal.

Unfortunately, on Thursday, June 29th, a boat out collecting crab pots capsized, leading to the death of a fisherman (Harv Watson, 45). His companion, Vince Hamker, 48, claims he felt something pulling him down. Watson’s death was officially reported as an accident, but rumor has spread among the bigfoot-watcher crowd that the “Seal-man” capsized the boat. Pictures are already spreading across the internet of this creature; thus far, however, all of the pictures have either been of natural animals (elephant seals, harbor seals, etc.) or are faked.

It is entirely possible that Patteron and Welling saw a pinniped and Hamker and Watson’s boat was capsized by accident (or after a collision with an animal; elephant seals are big enough to swamp a small boat). However, SAVE has decided that the situation merits at least a quick observation. You are to go to Point Reyes, observe the beach where the sighting supposedly happened, and determine if any Unknown creatures are involved. If a threat to human life exists and you can destroy it without undue risk to yourself or others, do so.

Do note, however, that between the “Seal-man” rumors and the upcoming holiday, the beaches will be busy. Camping gear is provided should you wish to stay at the Point overnight.

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