Uki
Pynne

Research astrobiologist and information systems guru

There were three equipment breakdown alarms this shift—all false. Someone using zombie processing streams in MOTHER's neural net is generating random alerts, and also inserting propaganda into crew text messages. The inserts are innocuous and hackneyed anti-corporation slogans for the most part, but galling. In a station on security lockdown, they remind everyone that Toorak is not in complete control. Someone is laughing at the Company.

<<FEAR NO MORE>>

<<YOU ARE NOT THE COMPANY>>

<<UNCHAIN YOUR MIND>>

<<PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT>>

<<A SHARE FOR ALL>>

<<DATA FREES - FREE DATA>>

<<ONE LIFE>>

You have to admire the artistry of it. Whoever is responsible is a genius, both in using MOTHER's dream-wash to host self-replicating viral forms almost impossible to track down, and in the way they've been able to cover their tracks. Toorak believes it's a psych warfare terrorist cell activated by an enemy corporation—that would be Weyland-Yutani—working under a rights anarchy front. The anarchists run riot in earth politics, responsible for the terminal weakening of nation-states, but in the Corporations they're not even an afterthought.

Of course, most of the security analysis and crew rumour surrounding the sabotage is wrong. Their assumptions are deeply flawed. Except for the genius part.

I am undoubtedly a genius.

I am the terrorists.

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Uki Pynne is a gifted biological scientist and information systems guru, with an expanding but secret side line as budding cyber-terrorist. He is nearly four years into his first five year rotation aboard Shackleton. Few acquaintances know much about him or his past. A loner by inclination, Pynne is obsessed by his research:

Pynne: courage and ego in an unlikely package.

Male (New Man), Japanese, mid twenties. *Researcher, genius, uber-geek. Bit of a prick.*

Keywords: Foolhardy, Genius, Naive, Inferiority Complex, Computing, Biology.

Strength: Courage, Intellect.

Flaw: Overbearing (insecure) Ego, Physically Weak , Need to be Admired. Sense of Destiny.

Anger: The Company, The lockdown, Dickheads from Security, Abuse of power.

Passion: Life, Evolution, Universal Pattern, His own Genius, Cai Gentle (growing).

Fear: Not being Admired, Failure, Capture, Torture, Humiliation.

Phobia: Violence. Open Spaces.

Days till end of mission rotation: 470.

Company Voting Shares: 2.

Expected mission bonus: Three million New Yen.

TWITCH FACTOR: 80%

the primitive life forms—the lichen and lice—that have evolved on Fiorina 161, the planet around which Shackleton orbits. Life there is non-speciated—diverse lifeforms freely share strands of DNA.

Pynne is also obsessed by his own singular, but unappreciated, genius. He is tiny man in his late twenties, a 'soft male' or *soshoku danshi* ('grass eating herbivore'). As a junior researcher, his quarters and labs are on Fitzroy. A Shackleton security goon once publicly called Pynne 'Bonsai', and the cruel nickname persists in certain circles.

Pynne's stature is not merely an outcome of genetics and lifestyle: he was born female, but underwent a hormonal/surgical gender transformation to male some seven years ago. Changing sexes to become a New Man was a logical and natural step in Pynne's path to fulfilment, aligning his emotions and personality more fully with his body. As a cultural Buddhist, he knows that everything is in constant change, and that fixity in any form is an illusion.

Pynne also has responsibilities in the maintenance of the station's information networks: something he usually resents as keeping him away from research. But recently it has afforded … *opportunities*.

Pynne has not undertaken his sabotage activism lightly, but neither is he working from any deep political conviction. As the station descended further and further into lockdown, Pynne needed some form of escape from the pressure cooker anxiety and growing paranoia. His activities are basically a giant 'Fuck You' to the Company. He realises he is in considerable danger, but prefers a known and concrete enemy rather than inchoate and helpless paranoia. Despite the danger, the hacking keeps the worst of his anxiety, his inferiority complex, at bay.

Pynne's personality is complicated and contradictory, and he will often leap before looking, committing himself to actions without a full consideration of the consequences. (His cyber-terrorism is a case in point: It is, by any rational analysis, a suicidal endeavour). Highly intelligent, driven to the point of obsession by both his research goals and his deep feelings of inferiority, Pynne treads the narrow path between genius and mental breakdown.

Despite, or perhaps because of his size, Pynne can be casually offensive to those he considers intellectual inferiors. (Which is most people).

The young scientist is well aware of his weaknesses and failings, but has an unshakable belief that he a destiny as part of something great (which is also a compensation reflex for his deep rooted feelings of inferiority. Pynne doesn't want to understand the cosmos. He wants to *embody* the cosmos. He's willing to go to the edge to achieve what he wants, to take great risks. Pynne believes he is consciously coding himself, and his species, for a better future.

Finding the truth, getting the code right, can be more important than the needs of his work-in-progress humanity.

The biological and computing paradigms that guide Pynne's research are in close alignment—he sees the universe as fundamentally a problem of coding. Life is a matter of the organization of information, and all life forms—lichen, humans, MOTHER—are versions of code that can be translated, conflated, and interpolated into one another, in whole or in part. Pynne thinks of both cosmos and consciousness in terms of replication, simulation, and recombination of information. Life is information in action.

Pynne is not quite alone in his anti-Company crusade. It was **Steve Pearson**, a station security operative, who first encouraged Pynne to use his genius against the suits on Toorak. The operative first encountered Pynne when conducting a routine psych evaluation, and he was no doubt impressed by what the files revealed about the scientist's personality and character. They slowly became friends, and, after demonstrating a few tricks to evade the omnipresent security surveillance, Pearson shared his deep inner turmoil over what the Company had become. He said it was monolithic, murderous, answerable to no one, rotten to the core. Their trust and friendship grew.

Looking back, Pynne cannot clearly remember who it was who first the suggested hacking the station's system—his memory is hazy, for Pearson had begun sharing some quality pharmaceuticals. However, the combination of his own genius and Pearson's forensic security knowledge (despite his junior status, the operative was able to detail a surprising amount of high-level system architecture) made the initial intrusions possible.

Pynne introduced self-replicating autonomous viroid forms into the lower levels of MOTHER's neural nets. Then, on Pearson's urging, he initiated passive network data capture. While most of the data was decipherable only by another AI with full holographic visualisation, it was a treasure trove of corporate intel, worth tens of millions to the right buyer. And it now resides in a data dot on the middle finger of his left hand.

It was Pearson who first suggested the data dumps. To sell, he said, cause we'll need to pay off people if they get too close. To embarrass the Company greenside, and drive down the share price. As security, if we're discovered. None of the explanations made complete sense individually, but together they convinced Pynne that this was their way forward. Pearson could not disguise his pleasure when the data dump succeeded.

Then Pearson died, suddenly and violently. Six weeks ago; an airlock accident. Pynne panicked. He suspected the worse of course, that Pearson had been discovered by the Company, interrogated, tortured, and punished for his transgression. *That he would be next.*

Pynne waited in mindless terror for his own arrest or termination. The folly of the enterprise became clear. Yet as the slow days cycled into weeks, Pynne felt, if not relief, then a growing sense of purpose, destiny ... Invulnerability.

Pynne has few people he can trust, fewer still he might confide in. Yet he needed to share, to speak. Genius needs its audience. **Cai Gentle** was the one he gravitated to. Cai is well known on station, but keeps mostly to herself. Her passivity and acquiescence flowed into Pynne's need. She became his only friend, and more. As a pilot, she might offer an escape path, though her loyalty to the Company seems absolute.

Pynne has one final crutch to cling to. A final viralform lies latent in MOTHER's dreamwash, waiting to be activated. This one is serious. This one could really cause trouble. It could cause real systems crashes and blackouts. All Pynne has to do is activate the replication with the code phrase **FEED THE FISH**.

Life on station has become a nightmare. Pynne yearns to live free from the terror, free from the Company, free to pursue his future destiny. He knows the net is closing. He knows his time is running out.

Metagame

Pynne's outstanding external characteristics are his small size, physical frailty, and in-your-face attitude.

Xenomorph is a character- and emotion-driven game.

Your fellow players are also your audience. Do you want them to love your character, to love-to-hate them, or perhaps to be drawn in and then surprised by a sudden revelation?

Try to reveal more depth about your character as you go along, and try to externalise, to bring into the game through action and dialogue the challenges, dead-ends, decisions and transformations that you face.

One of the wonderful things about the movie **Aliens** is that every combat scene revealed something new about characters and relationships. Spectacle served both character and story. We're trying to do the same — the stress of game action is a mechanism for character and relationship transformation.

Physical roleplaying is important. We especially encourage use of hands in an expressive way—Drop Bear gimme-fives, discrete touch, signals, emotional gesticulations etc.

The game will primarily be judged on characterisation and groupwork. The only other factor we take into account is the number of survivors. (Death inflicted by other party members will not be penalised).

Mission Crew

Wayne Gould: Acting head of station security. Gould is past his prime, and just seems to be going through the motions.

Iriaka Conrad: Shackleton security officer. She was Steve Pearson's partner, but they fell out years ago. Apparently she threatened to kill another of the security goons. Its a miracle she's still on active duty.

Chul-Moo Crowe: Shackleton security officer. Loud, stupid and a bully, Crowe is the goon who coined your embarrassing nickname of 'Bonsai'.

Cai Gentle: Shackleton shuttle pilot and cargo handler/courier. Cai grew up in deep space, she is well-known and well-liked. She is your closest and only friend. Trust and love between you is growing.

Others

Margaret Baron: A member of the station Executive.

Steve 'Ripper' Pearson: A station security officer and sometime partner to Iriaka Conrad. Pearson was your partner in anti-corporate espionage. He died six weeks ago in an airlock accident.

MOTHER (MU/TH/UR cb7500): Shackleton Station's artificial intelligence, memory and communications agent.

Xenomorph by John and Philippa Hughes. Art by John Hughes. <http://myth-o-logic.org/convention-modulz/alienz-2112/>.