

5.7b - Articles from Inmate#5

A series of articles, written by inmate#5, were found in the vessel's memory. Consistent with the previously described damage and subsequent data loss (see 2.11f), these articles required considerable repair before they could be viewed.



An external analyst deemed the series to be a collection of poems. Of this analyst's 54 page review, only one observation is of pertinence:

"There is a marked variability in sophistication from one poem to the next. They were, perhaps, written over the course of a few years."

PAGE 01, External Review, PVIXR (Inmate#5's articles)

This aligns with the limited, salvaged logs (see 3.0).



Due to the damage, it is not known in what order Inmate#5 wrote these articles. The above information provides some means of guessing their chronology, as does the purported facts within them.

Here, the articles will be presented in the order that they were recovered and with the titles inmate#5 gave them.

HR 5603f

I washed his blood from the wall,
I ought to, I put it there.
I put it where plastic met metal,
breaking his skull to let all
his thoughts loose, trickle through floorboards
as thick as his last words, stuck
in the drains with the spit, the semen,
remains not fit for burying
just ejected into space but
at least I got a piece of him out of here.

We will, each of us, die in this box.
Only then will our bodies return home
to be stripped apart, stripped for parts,
walls scrubbed, bloods sampled,
papers written, paperclipped, delivered,
for pay-per-click fodder. Freak-show media.
Frontpage. Outrage. Top-10 Killers.

HR 1412b

El' talks when he sleeps | I rub his words on my skin | It's never my name

[Portions redacted, as per guideline IVa]

ASH

Callisto-Killer Sentenced to Life in Prison

████████████████████ known publicly as the Callisto-Killer, has been tried today and sentenced to life imprisonment aboard a maximum security vessel. They will spend the rest of their days warping from orbit to orbit around a randomised series of uncharted exoplanets.

Angela, 55, "Just send the ship into the sun."

Stephen, 29, "waste of taxpayers money bring back capital punishment ASAP"

Thomas, 32, "put me on the ship with them, I'll save some time"

Kathy, 41, "Go on a killing spree and get a galactic cruise as a reward, typical"

HR 3569f

Extended warping makes everyone a bit insane.
Nothing to see, say the odd wispy piece of light.
No illusion of being some place.

#3 insisted that #6 had taken her top.
Wasn't until she wiped his blood off herself
that she realised she had it on.

She blamed him for the mess, beat him some more.
He gargled a tirade against some injustice,
until finally dying on the floor.

She wouldn't depose of #6, "couldn't be arsed".
But it'd been agreed: put your bodies back in their cell.
I made #2 deal with it, after five days had passed.

Maggots were left in the trail of green and pus.
Maggots, in a sealed container lightyears from anything.
Perhaps they just exist inside of us.

#2 returned, gagging and clawing at their nose.
The sorry dribbles of wretch on their chin glistened,
reflecting the sphere of colours outside the windows.

A few gathered to see what planet it'd be.
Ice world, red dwarf, as common as they come.
"I told you all. Now pay up," said #3.
"I told you all. What's the problem?"

[Portions redacted due to an ongoing investigation. See, 12.0]

HR 2618g

I finally found the time for it, just went behind them and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Did them a favour, really.

[REDACTED] ?

More than anything else, it was their breath.

The p of a 'please' caught me in the eyes,

[REDACTED] the stench of toilet wine

up my nostrils. It didn't help them [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

cemented how much I hated them.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] rolling down their chin, as red as it smelt.

[REDACTED] heaving.

Pictures of [REDACTED]

family on the wall. How disappointed they must be

[REDACTED] shame.

[REDACTED] looking at [REDACTED]

their flickering face, to be specific,

I did at least feel a kind of post-masturbatory comedown

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] too familiar to be

affecting [REDACTED] fake emotion.

It wasn't personal, I just needed to

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'd

spent weeks imagining how

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

HR 7235c

Woke up
cold very
cold ship hull
damaged insulation
damaged
took blankets
clothes from other cells
huddled in bathroom insulated
in bathroom.

The smells of shit and piss, frozen in place but still there,
in place, shit and piss frozen in place, in a hole,
and in the porthole, a ringed planet.
Must have been dust collided with the ship. Dust from the ring.
Ellison's hand found my real skin under the polyester shell of dead men's.
He's not my body-type, masculine. Gross, actually.
A square of hair and veins. But
I'm kind, I played along.
Might make him feel better, he's alone
after all. He's warm
at least.

AUBREY

This planet's tidally-locked, one face always away from its star

They're more common than people think

It's just that settlers don't have the stomach for such worlds

Not anymore

No, not anymore. They can't deal with the disparity: constant day, constant night,

constant hot, constant cold. It's too much for their feminine sensibilities

All fucking pussies. No one's doing proper science, exploring

It's all metaphysics and feelings

Doesn't matter now though, stuck in this room

It doesn't. Better off, really. Away from it all

Let the snowflake-colonies melt

Didn't think I'd be alone though

I did

Didn't want to be, I mean

No one could handle me. I said it how it is

How it was.

[Due to severe damage, this article was only partially recovered.]

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 buoyant in the oily pitch'ÇØX «è=Áz%ÖŮiÇÉ"He couldn't do it himself, shouldn't have anyway. I helped, it was

 helping~ á`às°UI<"&^ Öü¾nÚ]¥I helped, it was helping

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JEAN

*We'll go to Newearth next year. Bring a friend.
I've been saving money and there's cheap flights.
You know it's the only colonised planet with 5 suns?
Can you imagine? We'll go next year.*

Pencilled by a dozen hands to the nearest millimetre that passed as humane,
my bathroom has a window.
I press my face around in it for crumbs and find seven stars;
a septenary, they'd once have said.
Only I've ever seen one, ever been, is even, here,
so fallen, drowning, breathlessly drawing,
the surface I fell from, long, having passed from place to thought.
It is almost gratifying, that the universe, now, is, for me, as it has always felt.

HR 8926u. That's what the window-feed calls the planet;
a catalogue designation, a number, like mine.
But I am its real parent: the eighth, the eyed, star.
It is nothing like Newearth but I will name it after my mother.
Perhaps she'd like that. Might make up for it all.

SAM

No, no, it's fine.

Get a cab in the morning.

It's no bother, honestly.

We don't have to share, there's a spare bed.

I make really good breakfast.

No, you've had a lot to drink, it wouldn't be safe.

I insist.

Sam. You're being rude now.

No, you are.

No, you can't. Just go to sleep.

You're making this harder than it needs to be.

Dakota

It seemed polite to look back at them.

upset,

angry,

forlorn,

upset,

angry,

stoic.

See, I can do it.

Even still: "Sociopath".

One of them was obviously Ash's mother,

those grey eyes.

Another was Casey's father,

the big nose.

Sam's wife did all the talking.

Said it would be "unjust" to have me neuro-recalibrated,

"an offence to those who had died".

I'm too ill for the cure, apparently.

Plus she didn't want to risk seeing my face ever again,

Well I remember her's.

Tear in the eye,

quiver on the lip.

[Due to severe damage, this article was only partially recovered.]

HR 3569a

We're only 18 million fucking kilometres from the star,
 orbiting some coal planet, the whole planet's charred.
 When we're on the far side, the ship can self-repair.
 But the shade only lasts 4 hours then we're back out
 where, I swear, the lick of a solar flare can reach us.
 The ship shuts down from overheating,
 #2 strips down, #7 tries sleeping but it doesn't work.

It's coming again, the white whiskers at the planet's edge.
 I can't think. We've been doing this for weeks.
 My skin is slickening. Breathe i~|T,,Í,æÿ&À<~ij/w
 quickening zífy&,š7iífH ,Ä-"&b 'è × I breathe.
 It can't go on much longer. Ä 'éÒépI
 We'll move on to somewhere else. I can get there.
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[Portions redacted, as per guideline IVa]



Crooked, almost perfectly off centre.
Obtuse to the letter. 90°, thereabouts.
Two weeks, the ship's been in its orbit yet I can't see the planet.
Nav-system must not account for it;
axial tilt, that is.
Fair enough, I suppose.
Under my nose! Literally under my nose,
an entire gas giant.
It dictates the comings, the goings, of my life, invisibly
yet so obviously there, just out of reach,
like a second brain.
I might burrow a hole through
the floor to
the outdoors to
just see what colour it is.
Green. It's pale green. Must be.

At least my solitary window is facing the sunny side.
I don't mind being unable to see. It's that I,
well I, sometimes--
The sense of nothing is,
I don't like it,
nothingness. Suicides's--
suicide's not right, it's--
that's what they'd like.
Yes. It'd be easier for them.
I don't want to give them that.
I don't want to give this planet someone's name either.
It can have mine.
It can have my name.

CASEY

I grew up in Dorian Peninsula, Earth.
Some would say that makes me 'privileged'.
Not true.
My father was a respected man,
my mother took care of me.
My education was the same as everyone else's.
I had some friends;
loved a few.
I resented those more powerful than me
and those less.

Sometimes I went to Callisto.
Sipped vodka and watched Jupiter spin,
the swirling hell quite handsome from a distance.
I was friendlier when I was drunk
and so were they.

Nice apartment, they'd always remark.
No, keep your shoes on. I'm cool, I'm relaxed.
And they would,
every time.
I let one of them walk out;
judged their character wrong, I guess.
It was a relief, getting caught.
I didn't have it in me to stop on my own.
And didn't want to.