

Jason Michael Mullen – Provenance

PROVENANCE

By

Jason Michael Mullen

INT. CELL BLOCK B - MORNING

Fifth floor mezzanine. A succession of uniformed cells stretch the length of the four walls, a series of staircases connect each floor together.

The floors are patrolled by Guardians, dressed in black, full body armour, steel-toed boots, tactical gloves and helmets featuring fully darkened glass visors.

A BUZZER SOUNDS. In unison the doors to the cells automatically slide open.

Non-descript men and women emerge singularly from their dwellings. They are all clothed in translucent boiler suits. A series of embedded LED lights are encapsulated into the fabric, currently unpowered.

ADAM BENSON (29) steps out from his cell. His affectless face focuses on a 4-sided jumbotron which is suspended from the rafters. A series of jumbotrons connect to the floors above and below.

Each screen has the word PROVENANCE displayed.

A second BUZZER.

The LEDs in the boiler suits power up, gradually emitting a coloured light. A seemingly random choice of blues, greens, yellows and whites.

The screen dissolves, with the buzzer, into a colour co-ordinated list of job roles. The screen displays: GREEN - AGRICULTURE, WHITE - AQUAPONICS, BLUE - BOTANICS, YELLOW - HYDROPONICS, RED - NUTRIENT RECYCLING.

Adam takes a swift look at his suit, it's blue, he turns and heads towards the stairwell at the end of his row and filters into a line of blue suits.

INT. BOTANICS - MICROPROPAGATION DEPARTMENT

The room is hot, humid and fuggy. A fine mist of water vapour clouds the air.

Several blue suited individuals carry out various tasks, taking tissue samples and treating plantlets.

Adam removes plantlets from the plant media and transfers them to a pre-conditioned compost pot.

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2.

A female colonist stops in her tracks. She is sweating profusely, the colour is quickly draining from her face. Her eyes start to roll back into her head. She faints.

Out of a fast acting impulse a fellow colleague, COLONIST 4FT79-ALPHA, catches her in his arms, then almost instantly drops her with a THUD to the ground.

The BUZZER SOUNDS, a Guardian steps forward and a built in speaker system, in his chest plate, crackles into play.

SPEAKER SYSTEM

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha you have been issued with an infraction. This has been recorded in your personal file.

A red ring appears and stays lit around his left wrist.

The colonist's suit starts to flash between blue and red.

COLONIST 4FT79-ALPHA

No, it was an accident!

Another red ring appears, same as before but on his right wrist.

His suit continues to flash.

SPEAKER SYSTEM

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha you have been issued with a second infraction. This has been recorded in your personal file.

Adam is frozen, his mouth agape.

Two Guardians enter.

The colonist looks panicked, he knows to shut up. He looks all around him before backing away from the passed out colonist. He backs himself firmly against a wall and tightly closes his eyes. His chest enlarges with every anticipative breath.

A Guardian approaches and takes hold of the passed out colonist under her arms and drags her out of the room.

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha's suit stops flashing and returns to blue, all apart from the permanent red rings on his wrists.

INT. MESS HALL

Adam sits alone in company. His bowl consists of a pink, gelatinous blob and a handful of mixed vegetables. He briefly catches a glimpse of the others at his table devouring their unappealing globules.

He checks the time on the wall ahead of him.

A ticker clock displays 12:28:37. Each second loudly TICKING into existence.

Adam positions himself away from the clock and its inane TICKING only to find himself watching the blank expressions on the colonists faces as they make superfluous SLURPING noises as they rapidly shovel food into their mouths.

Adam faces forward, he appears deeply frustrated.

ACHOO, a sneeze fills the room. No one dare look, move or even blink. Only the sound of the clock remains as all extraneous background noise comes to a cease.

Adam looks to the Guardians expectantly. TICK, TICK, TICK.

THE BUZZER. The clock shows 12:30

People ascend. They begin shuffling their way back to their departments.

INT. CELL BLOCK B - EVENING

The colonists all stand in front of their open cells, facing the jumbotron.

The screen enters a slide show of information. The first page displays COLONY: PROVENANCE (ALPHA SECTOR)

This dissolves to the second page, which gives information regarding infractions: Infractions 3, Nutritional Recycling 0. Stats and graphs of daily, weekly, monthly and annual infractions are displayed.

The next slide is a performance record of departments productivity: GREEN - AGRICULTURE 99%, WHITE - AQUAPONICS 100%, BLUE - BOTANICS 98%, YELLOW - HYDROPONICS 100% - OVERALL REDUCTION IN PRODUCTIVITY: 3%.

The final slide is a notice which reads: "Thank you for all your hard efforts, your dedication will repair and grow our once great society. Remember what we have to gain, forget what we have lost and continue to work together in aid of our cause - The Creator"

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4.

During the slide show presentation, Adam's eyes wander as he drinks in the blank, lifeless expressions of the other colonists, cell by cell, floor by floor until his gaze reaches cell six on the third floor.

Stood there is EVANGELYN ADDIDÓTTIR (29). She, like everyone else, is staring intently at the screen, but unlike everyone else, she is smiling; not with her expression but with her eyes.

Adam leans over the mezzanine balcony to get a better look.

She stands two floors beneath him but even from that distance her eyes are unprecedentedly wide and gleaming.

A Guardian approaches and signals Adam to step back in line. He quickly does so, eyes firmly fixed on the screen which fades to black before the word PROVENANCE displays.

INT. CELL BLOCK B - MORNING

The BUZZER SOUNDS. The cell doors slide open.

One by one they emerge, heads routinely rising to view the jumbotron, all apart from Adam whose eyes fixate on the sixth cell on the third floor.

Evangelyn emerges, head raised to the screen.

The second BUZZER of the day.

Evangelyn's suit turns green.

Adam looks down at himself, his suit turns blue. He looks back over to see her disappear into a sea of green boiler suits.

His eyes search for her before making direct contact with a male colonist, BENJAMIN BACH (58), white suit. They exchange an awkward gaze with one another. Adam breaks and follows the crowd.

INT. BOTANICS - MICROPROPAGATION DEPARTMENT

A colonist in a white boiler suit stops at the entrance to the lab. It's Benjamin. He is carrying a box of plastic containers all of which have different strains of algae in them.

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha approaches and takes the samples from him, careful not to make contact.

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5.

He carries it to a station where Adam sits cutting stems from green, glossy plants.

There is a crash, the botanists turn to see Benjamin stood in the doorway with another box of samples. Some of the samples have toppled onto the floor. The box is wet, algae runs down the outside.

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha approaches to take the samples, he slips on the algae and falls flat onto the ground.

COLONIST 4FT79-ALPHA:

Argh, my back!

Sheer panic engulfs his face, he looks over to the Guardian in the room who takes a step forward.

COLONIST 4FT79-ALPHA:

No, no, no!

A red ring appears around his neck.

SPEAKER SYSTEM COMMAND:

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha you have been issued with a third and final infraction.

His suit starts to flash again between blue and red.

COLONIST 4FT79-ALPHA:

It's not fair, it doesn't count!

The Guardian takes a firm hold of him and lifts him to his feet. His suit has now turned red. The red ring around his neck is glowing.

SPEAKER SYSTEM

Please make your way to nutritional recycling, your co-operation is appreciated.

He begins to kick and scream for help as the Guardian forcefully removes him from the room.

Adam is in disbelief, he looks over to Benjamin, who makes direct eye contact.

INT. MESS HALL - AFTERNOON

The colonists stare expectantly at the ticker clock which displays 16:29:53. Each second turning slowly into the next.

The BUZZER.

Everybody quickly stands and veers towards the nearest exit.

INT. NUTRITIONAL RECYCLING

A large sterile room with bright white walls, similar to that of a theatre. An auditorium faces a raised platform, almost stage like. On the platform is a large electric chair that sits neatly within a large, handled tub.

The auditorium is full of colonists all in their translucent state.

Colonist 4FT79-Alpha is escorted in. His suit red, which returns to its translucent state, leaving only the three red rings.

He is struggling to free himself from their vice like grips.

The guardians strap him into the chair.

They force a metallic headpiece onto him which is connected via a series of wires to the chair itself.

COLONIST 4FT79-ALPHA:

No please, help me! It's not fair,
I fell. It could happen to any of
you. Please!

They bring across a mouthpiece which they force into his mouth. He is fully strapped in and gagged.

SPEAKER SYSTEM

Nutritional recycling will commence
in 5,4,

A sea of gleeful faces look on with great anticipation, as if this is the only source of entertainment in the colony.

It is easy to spot Adam in the crowd by the expression of utter abhorrence on his face.

SPEAKER SYSTEM

3, 2,

(CONTINUED)

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7.

Muffled screams emit from the colonist as he thrashes around futilely trying to escape.

SPEAKER SYSTEM

1.

An electrical surge flows through the chair and headpiece. The colonist convulses in his seat, his body seizing in contradiction to how his body should move.

His face reddens as one by one the molecules of his very being are stripped away.

Adam turns away from the execution. Sitting behind him is Evangelyn, she looks on with saddened eyes.

There is a POP followed by a SPLAT

The colonist has vanished, just the chair remains with the head piece dropping from mid-air, landing on the seat.

The tub is filled with a pink unset gelatinous gloop.

Two of the kitchen staff enter. They take hold of one handle each and return back to the kitchen carrying all that remains of Colonist 4FT79-Alpha.

The colonists remain seated in a state of amazement.

The BUZZER SOUNDS.

INT. ADAM'S CELL - EVENING

A small square room consisting of a cot bed, toilet and basin. A small red light resides on the wall next to the cell door indicating it's locked.

Adam is lying flat out on his cot, eyes wide open, just staring at the ceiling. His brow twisted with contemplative concern.

The door begins to slowly slide open, but not automatically, it is being manually opened.

Adam sits up, perched fearfully on the edge of his cot.

Benjamin appears in the doorway his finger pressed firmly against his pursed lips miming for Adam to remain silent.

Adam mirrors his signal to acknowledge Benjamin's request.

Benjamin waves him out and heads off towards the stairs.

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8.

Adam stands, he is riddled with anxiety. His breath becomes uneasily heavy. He slowly nudges his way towards the door.

He ever so carefully edges his head out to see Benjamin stood at the foot of the stairwell, he is gesticulating for Adam to follow.

Adam raises his hand to cover his mouth as his breathing is becoming nervously audible. He shakes his head to himself, he can't do this, he takes another look at Benjamin who beckons him out with a more hasty gesture.

Adam takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and hesitantly takes a step out onto the mezzanine.

He opens one eye, the only person around is Benjamin. Sounds of patrolling FOOTSTEPS can be heard in the distance.

Benjamin gestures for him to hurry up.

Adam quickly follows.

INT. SECTION 412-B

Adam and Benjamin enter an abandoned part of the colony.

Benjamin starts to shift some large crates and boxes to one side, Adam reaches out to help move a box but restrains himself from doing so. He looks around nervously.

A door is revealed behind the crates. Benjamin runs his hand across the door. He feels around for something, his hand stops. He pushes firmly putting his shoulder into it and the door jerks open.

INT. ABANDONED ROOM.

Benjamin holds the door open as Adam enters.

The room appears to be an abandoned study. Bookcases donned with dust ridden books, comfortable, rich leather furniture, a free standing bar and in the centre of the room a chunky square wooden table with two chairs.

Adam is in awe as he looks around this hidden treasure trove.

Benjamin signals to one of the chairs for Adam to sit.

Adam tucks himself in under the table.

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9.

Benjamin sets down a hand crafted chessboard and pieces.

Adam leans in close to visually inspect the bizarrely shaped character pieces.

Benjamin puts down a low ball glass filled with a 1/6th of whiskey followed by the mostly filled bottle.

Adam gawks at the board and the drink with utter uncertainty.

Benjamin raises his glass in a salute and takes a big swig from it.

Adam tentatively picks up his glass. He pokes his nose over the rim and takes a sniff, he draws the glass to his lips and gently takes a sip.

The whiskey hits the back of his throat and Adam stifles a cough. Tears in his reddened eyes as he fights the urge to splutter out a sound.

Benjamin picks up his king's pawn and moves it to E4. He sits back in his chair and looks at Adam expectantly.

Adam picks up his king, the tallest piece on the board, and moves him to the free space beside Benjamin's pawn

Benjamin shakes his head and moves Adam's piece back.

INT. ABANDONED ROOM - EARLY MORNING

There are a lot less pieces on the board as there is a lot less whiskey in the bottle.

Adams eyes are glazed over and he desperately tries to focus.

His king is under attack and he moves him to a safe square. Benjamin smirks. He picks up his queen and moves it across the board closer to Adam's king.

BENJAMIN:

Checkmate.

Adam jumps up off his chair and turns to the door, his face white with shock, he has a look of consternation. He turns back to Benjamin who is perfectly relaxed.

BENJAMIN:

Relax, you're safe in here.

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10.

Adam shakes his head and points his finger at him, how is he doing this, he stands shocked in disbelief.

Adam desperately wants to speak, his mouth full and ready to burst, but he contains himself.

BENJAMIN:
We'll talk about it later, it's
late, we should get back.

Benjamin physically turns Adam to face the door and leads him out much to Adam's added astonishment.

INT. ADAM'S CELL - MORNING

Adam lays on his cot, his eyes open and wider than usual.

The BUZZER.

The red light aside the cell door turns green and the door slides open.

INT. CELL BLOCK B

Zombie like, Adam emerges from the cell, his suit slowly turning blue, was it a dream?

He peers out over the railings of the mezzanine, searching the third floor. Benjamin is gazing up at him, he signals a sly nod, it was real!

His eyes drift across the third floor, Evangelyn's eyes sparkle even more in her blue suit.

He looks again, her suit is blue, she's working in Botany today.

She looks up, their eyes meet, she quickly turns away and follows the others in blue.

INT. BOTANICS - MICROPROPAGATION DEPARTMENT

Adam stands watching Evangelyn taking cuttings from exotic plants.

He uproots a beautiful red plant from its planter and carries it over to her.

He stands beside her holding out the plant.

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CONTINUED:

11.

She is unaware of him standing there, soil drops from the roots and lands on her desk.

She looks up to see Adam standing over her. She reaches out to take the plant from him, he holds tight not letting go.

A Guardian stood at the door takes a step forward, the hint of a white suit stood behind him.

She looks back up at him. He smiles at her. Her eyes brighten. He loosens his grip and she takes the plant rehousing it into a nearby pot.

Adam returns to his station and the Guardian takes a step back.

A petri dish full of soil has been left at his station. Adam looks around for who might have put it there.

There is a noticeable amount of overturned soil. Adam digs into the shallow like grave and discovers a pawn.

As he inspects the chess piece he discovers lam has been carved into the base. Adam slyly pockets the piece.

INT. EVANGELYN'S CELL - EVENING

Evangelyn lays sleeping in her cot.

The door slides open.

Evangelyn shoots up, eyes wide like a deer caught in the headlights.

Adam appears in the doorway, his finger pressed firmly against his lips, mimicking Benjamin's actions from the night he was released.

He beckons her out.

INT. ABANDONED ROOM

Evangelyn enters. Her eyes widen with the wonders of the room. She spins from one item to the next, her beautiful big eyes absorbing the experience like a child playing in the snow for the first time.

She turns excitedly and smiles at Adam

(CONTINUED)

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12.

ADAM:

Hi.

She gasps and covers her mouth. She is pleasantly surprised by hearing his voice.

She uncovers her mouth.

EVANGELYN:

Hi.

Adam looks at her longingly and approaches.

He slowly raises his hand to her cheek, gently stroking the hair away from her face. He stares deep into her eyes.

He leans in gently kissing her lips.

INT. CELL BLOCK B - EARLY MORNING

Benjamin walks down the mezzanine and stops at Adam's cell.

The cell doors are already open.

He peers inside, Adam is nowhere to be seen.

INT. ABANDONED ROOM

Adam and Evangelyn are in the throes of passion, their naked bodies entwined as Benjamin enters.

His face instantly reddens with anger.

BENJAMIN:

How dare you.

They jump up, Adam shields Evangelyn's naked body from Benjamin.

She scrambles around getting dressed passing clothes to Adam.

BENJAMIN:

Get out.

Adam throws on his boiler suit.

ADAM:

Benjamin please, they'll hear you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

13.

BENJAMIN:

Get out!

INT. CELL BLOCK B - MORNING

The BUZZER.

Adam steps out onto the mezzanine, peering over the railings.

Evangelyn steps out of her quarters, her head routinely looks up, but not towards the jumbotron, her eyes fixated on Adam.

He mouths the word "hi" to her.

She gushes and mouths it back.

Adam looks smitten and is beaming down at her as his suit slowly turns blue.

His expression quickly changes as a look of terror washes away all colour from his face.

Evangelyn's suit, without warning, turns red including the three glowing red rings.

Guardians approach from either side. The other colonists on her floor throw themselves back against the wall, some even duck back into their cells.

Benjamin Bach stands observing from a shadowy corner of the floor.

She is speechless with shock and falls to her knees, she looks at the oncoming Guardians with pleading eyes.

They grab her from either side and force her back up onto her feet.

She shoots a look over at Adam.

ADAM

(yelling)

No!

She is dragged away for nutritional recycling.

SPEAKER SYSTEM COMMAND:

Colonist 24324-Alpha you have been issued with an infraction. This has been recorded in your personal file.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14.

A red ring glows around Adam's left wrist.

Guardians approach and apprehend Adam, his face contorted with confusion and anger.

He too is lead away.

INT. ABANDONED ROOM

Adam is thrown into the room. Benjamin sits at the table overlooking the chess board.

Benjamin indicates for him to take a seat.

Adam remains standing, arms defiantly crossed.

A Guardian approaches and firmly pushes Adam into the chair.

Benjamin moves king's pawn to E3.

BENJAMIN:

You have disappointed me Adam.

(beat)

Your move.

Adam sits with his arms rigidly folded. The Guardian takes a firm hold of the back of Adam's neck.

Reluctantly Adam moves his pawn H7 to H6. The Guardian releases their hold.

BENJAMIN:

I've been watching you, for a while now, and there's something special about you. You're not like the others.

Benjamin moves pawn C2 to C3.

Adam moves his knight to C6.

BENJAMIN:

You are one of two actually born within the colony, did you know that? I think it's safe to say that your parents definitely acquired infractions.

Benjamin moves his queen to B3

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15.

BENJAMIN: (CONT'D)
Your Mother anyhow.

Adam's nostrils flare his face awash with anger.

He grudgingly moves pawn F7 to F6.

BENJAMIN:
You remind me of her, you have her
defiant nature and your twin has
her eyes.

Benjamin moves his bishop to C4.

Adam's eyes fill with tears, he fights to keep them held
back, he can't be hearing what he's hearing.

Benjamin indicates for him to move.

Adam grabs his pawn from G7 and slams him onto G5.

BENJAMIN:
And because of you and your actions
your sister will share the same
fate as your Mother.

He slides his bishop slowly across the board to F7.

BENJAMIN:
Checkmate.

He meets Adam's strong Gaze with his own.

A tear breaks ranks and weaves its way down Adam's cheek,
dripping from his chin onto the defeated King.

BENJAMIN:
The sins of the father are to be
laid upon the children.

ADAM:
Let her go, please.

BENJAMIN:
The father shall not be put to
death for the children, neither
shall the children be put to death
for the father: Everyone shall be
put to death for their own sins.
The infractions stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

16.

ADAM:

But I was the one who broke the rules, I am the one who should have the infractions.

BENJAMIN:

As you wish.

He clicks his fingers and two further glowing red rings appear and Adam's suit turns red.

The Guardian grabs him, lifting him onto his feet.

BENJAMIN:

The creator giveth...

He clicks his fingers a second time and Adam's suit reverts to its translucent state and completely devoid of rings.

BENJAMIN: (CONT'D)

...and he taketh away.

The guardian releases his grip and takes his position at the exit.

ADAM:

Let me be there this afternoon to see her.

BENJAMIN:

If only I could, it may already be too late.

ADAM

No.

BENJAMIN:

I'm sorry son.

ADAM:

No!

Adam jumps up and charges the Guardian, knocking him to the ground. The Guardian grabs a strong hold of his ankle as he tries to escape.

Adam takes his free leg and stomps onto the Guardian's head, smashing the visor, revealing circuit boards and wires.

With one final stomp the Guardian powers down and loosens its grip.

Adam rushes off out of the room.

INT. NUTRITIONAL RECYCLING

The auditorium fills with gleeful colonists as they desperately try to beat each other for the best seats without suffering any infractions.

INT. SECTION 412-B

Adam hurtles down the corridor at breakneck speed.

INT. NUTRITIONAL RECYCLING

Evangelyn is brought in by the Guardians and strapped into the chair.

The sparkle in her eyes diminishing by the second.

INT. CELL BLOCK B

Adam rushes in at ground floor level and into the common area. He heads straight to the nearest exit.

A BUZZER.

The jumbotron springs to life, its screen displaying the face of the Creator.

CREATOR:

You must not eat fruit from the
tree and you must not touch it, or
you will die.

INT. NUTRITIONAL RECYCLING

The headgear is lowered onto her head and the mouthpiece firmly put in place.

INT. MESS HALL

Adam charges through the hall and exits straight out the other side.

A BUZZER

INT. NUTRITIONAL RECYCLING

A stifled scream as Evangelyn thrashes around in the chair.

INT. SECTION 273256-M

Adam furiously storms down the corridor towards nutritional recycling.

As he reaches the doorway he hears a POP followed quickly by a SPLAT.

INT. NUTRITIONAL RECYCLING

Adam enters with a primal SCREAM.

Two kitchen porters are carrying a large tub of the pink gelatinous sustenance.

Adam drops to his knees, sobbing with all his heart, as he cradles his head in his hands.

A BUZZER

The colonists form an orderly line and exit. Each stepping around and over Adam as they joyfully shuffle their way back to work.

Benjamin walks out onto the stage.

Adam raises his head, his bloodshot eyes focused intently as he watches Benjamin approach.

Adam raises his head to look up at him. He gently rests his hand on Adam's shoulder.

BENJAMIN

Relax, you're safe in here.

INT. CELL BLOCK B - MORNING

The BUZZER.

Adam steps out onto the mezzanine. His affectless face peers out over the railings as his suit once again turns blue.

A female colonist emerges from Evangelyn's cell. She routinely raises her head to view the jumbotron, her deadened eyes fixated on the screen.

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19.

Adam glances over to Benjamin and they exchange a
dispassionate gaze. Adam breaks and follows the crowd.

FADE TO BLACK