

An e-letter to the Editor of the Monument Chronicle, 7/22/22

All Zentraedi were programmed to be literate - we were pilots, after all. Of course, those of us who passed certain tests got more... "interesting" jobs. Me, I got stuck watching huge banks of sensors. Engine performance readouts, and the like. Boring work, not fit for a warrior. But, on one of those boring shifts, something happened that changed my life, and indirectly, the course of history. Though, you may not see it that way.

It started when one of the screens went blank - well, almost blank. There was some text about a directory error. I dutifully reported it to the bridge, and was told to ignore it, until such time as our maintenance rotation came up for the Factory Satellite. But, there was something about it; a siren call, some humans would say. I started tinkering with the screen, typing in my own words, to see what happened. Eventually, I typed the word for "directory", and hit enter.

The screen filled with all kinds of things... Program & data file names. That was it - I was hooked. I kept experimenting with other words, and variations of words. Along the way, I blundered into the ability to create, edit and save files. At first, I just used this newfound creativity to keep a journal of what I had figured out, in this strange new world. But, as I looked more and more at the odd language patterns in the files I opened, I started to comprehend. That was in the Earth year 2007, or abouts. In 2008, I started experimenting with writing my own programs; they were simple, and buggy, but it was exciting in ways I couldn't describe.

By 2009, I had written a program that monitored all those data screens for me. And, it was a hit with that program, that alerted me that we were closing in on Zor's fortress. Breetai himself complemented me on my eye for detail. Truth is, had I been watching the actual readouts, I would have missed it.

Still, it got me to wondering. Who is this Zor guy, and why were we looking for his ship? I started exploring other parts of the computer system, eventually finding my way into Exedore's logs. There had always been stories about Zor, but they were as insubstantial as radar ghosts. This, however, would have gotten me shot, had I told anyone else at the time.

I started to discover things we Zentraedi weren't meant to know, like how Zor helped create us, but not for the purpose of being warriors. But, why was Zor's ship sized for Micronians? More and more of it started to come together, and the reports from Rico, Bron & Konda were the final pieces I needed. Zor had been a Micronian himself, not a giant of giants like Dolza would have us believe (as it would make him like Zor, to us). And, if he'd died only a few decades earlier (instead of dozens of centuries), as Exedore's logs indicated, then all Zentraedi history was a fabrication.

Kurita might have been the one who micronized us, but I was the one who got us in a position to be stowaways in Khyron's reversal of the Daedalus maneuver, by manipulating crew assignments and transfers with my computer skills. I also was the one making it so easy for Minmei's following to spread through the fleet, as form of computerized contraband. That manipulation got us our rides post-micronization, with Khyron's force. Only a few of us came forward when we defected; the rest stayed hidden, though I hung out with Kurita while we were on the SDF-1 (the

two most tech-wise Zentraedi, we stuck together). In fact, we were learning about human recreation at an arcade, when the now-famous video game battle between the Sterlings occurred.

After Dolza, however, it was easy for us who'd stayed hidden to slip in with the Zentraedi being Micronized to save resources. A few of the other Zentraedi had heard of my skills, but I turned down all their job offers. I was free, now, and freaks like Khyron wanted to bring back the Bad Old Days. It hurt when Macross City was destroyed, especially the loss of friends, like Rico & company's girlfriends. Given where the attacks occurred on Christmas and the final battle's damage, I probably only survived because I was in Monument taking illegal human computer classes at the time.

Monument was never home for me; too many people here still act like the Zentraedi owe them something, not realizing that it was people like me that made it possible for them to survive. I lost friends fighting Dolza, and to Khyron's attacks - just like any other human. Does their deaths mean any less, simply because they were decanted from the same clone chambers as those who sided with evil? Guilt by association is something humanity was supposed to leave behind after the troubles that caused the Global War, and the wars since, trying to keep the world unified against further threats.

Last week, I finally got tired of it. I hacked a Southern Cross payroll account, laundered it through a dozen legit sources, and scored my own personal reparations for how you Terrans have been jerking us Zentraedi around. I'm taking myself out of the game - I'm looking forward to some nice rest and relaxation in the Southlands, surrounded by beautiful señoritas who want to know it's true that not all parts of a Zentraedi are shrunken equally. In fact, by the time you get this, I'll already be there. I just thought I'd wave goodbye as I left.

P.S. I hope you printed a hard copy of this out; because I hacked the paper's system two weeks ago, and you opening this file triggered the Easter egg I left behind. Tell your fascist editors that they've only themselves to blame for it, given the slander and libel they've printed for years about we Zentraedi who just wanted to fit in with our fellow humans. Depending on how fast you read this, you've got two to five minutes before your system is totally slagged.

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