

Arc 3 Seq 1 | Command Acquisition

Narrative Purpose

Transitions duo from cockpit isolation to Command authority via Cultist's cocky instincts. Establishes player as "bodega clerk" everyman volun-told into sysadmin role.

- Emotional tone: Cocky dominance → pragmatic delegation.
- Immediate goal: Secure Command Deck access + sysop privileges.
- Mechanical purpose: SocialCapital flag + environmental interaction tutorial (knock vs. mash).

Narrative Breakdown

Beat 1 | Cockpit Exit Pivot

Player ignores Technician's plea; Cultist presses his advantage with cocky bloviation, halting exit to assert dominance before Command push.

- **Camera:** First-person, locked to seated perspective then auto-stand (scripted—no player control during exchange).
- **Audio:** Cockpit hum stabilizes; Cultist voice rises confident, edged with arrogance.
- **Environmental Cues:** Dim amber strips; frost on viewport.
- **Objective / Task:** None.
- **Player Feedback:** UI objective "Reach Command Deck"

Actions:

- Auto-dialogue triggers on stand.
- Cultist reaches out, hand takes player by the wrist to halt forward motion (scripted animation: firm grip, slight pull-back tension).

Dialogue (Auto-Start):



Cultist (*smirking*) "Hold—You chose well; commander's our ticket. When he spins the gates, my hauler flies clean. You saw the dark—told you we'd need him."

Option A – Defer Choice

- **Result:** Cultist preens, releases wrist, leads out immediately; duo exits hauler. Grants "SocialCapital".
- **Dialogue:**

“ **Player** (*nod*) "Yeah, You're probably right."
Cultist (*cocky griny*) "Smart. Keep up—Command awaits."

- **Purpose:** Fuels Cultist power fantasy; banks player leverage for Beta assist.
- **Trait:** Adds SocialCapital

Option B – Push Back Choice

- **Result:** Cultist shrugs indifferently (expects skepticism), releases wrist; player leads exit. No flags.
- **Dialogue:**

“ **Player** (*firm*) "Commander's no guarantee—could be a dead end."
Cultist (*chuckle, amused*) "Doubt suits the uncalled. Lead on, clerk."

- **Purpose:** Establishes early player independence; Cultist tolerance intact.

Notes:

- No relationship hit on Push Back ("unenlightened" tolerance).
- Wrist-grab animation sells dominance physically.

Beat 2 | Bridge Lockout

Duo exits hauler into short access hallway facing small bridge door (submarine-cramped for 5 officers max). Lockout panel glows red; Commander treats arrival as minor interruption amid routine crisis.

- **Camera:** Full Control.
- **Audio:** Steady corridor hum; faint terminal beeps leak through door.
- **Environmental Cues:** Red panel displays "LOCKOUT"; buckled frame shows tremor damage.
- **Objective / Task:** Gain bridge access.

- **Player Feedback:** Panel highlights on approach; UI objective "Reach Command Deck" holds.

Actions:

- Panel interactable (error buzz on use).
- Door knock option unlocks after first panel or Cultist line.
- Cultist stands nearby, arms crossed.

Dialogue (Auto-Trigger on First Panel Buzz):

“ **Cultist** (*casual, abstract*) "Knock knock, Commander."

Triggers:

- First panel → buzz + Cultist line → knock unlocks.
- Knock → brief pause → Commander responds.
- 10x panel mash → Commander responds irritated.

Option A – Knock Path

- **Result:** Door stays locked; Commander responds neutrally.
- **Dialogue:**

“ **Commander** (*tin-toned, preoccupied*) "This station's on lockdown. Better have a good reason to be here."

- **Purpose:** Rewards observation; teaches scan > mash.
- **Transition:** Beat 3 | Sysop Delegation.

Option B – Panel Mash Path

- **Result:** Door stays locked; Commander responds annoyed but procedural.
- **Dialogue:**

“ **Commander** (*irritated, busy*) "You're not one to take a hint, huh? Now that you have my attention—what do you want?"

- **Purpose:** Tolerates persistence; reinforces Commander's workload.
- **Transition:** Beat 3 | Sysop Delegation.

Notes:

- Commander tone: Busy workstation focus—lockout normal, visitors unexpected.
- Dual paths tutorial environmental interaction naturally.

Beat 3 | Sysop Delegation

Commander recognizes duo via tiny-station intimacy, then executes classic switcheroo—flipping Cultist's gate entitlement into mutual troubleshooting labor.

- **Camera:** First-person, fixed on intercom during exchange (door stays locked).
- **Audio:** Terminal clacking; tinny intercom distortion; Cultist voice confident.
- **Environmental Cues:** Red "LOCKOUT" persists; locker beside door pings ready post-exchange.
- **Objective / Task:** None (storytelling beat).
- **Player Feedback:** HUD flashes "Sysop Access Granted" on final line; Alpha trunk marker appears.

Actions:

- Cultist leans to intercom (auto-sequence, no player control).
- Locker unlocks automatically post-dialogue (spectral selector inside).

Dialogue (Auto-Sequence):

“ **Cultist** (*confident*) "Hauler Dock 3A. Gate's dark—we need you spinning it."

Commander (*keys clack*) "Dock 3A... only ship there. You're not alone—is that the bodega clerk?"

Cultist (*nod to player*) "Yeah, shop kid."

Commander (*recognition*) "ID pings clean. Bodega kid... right."

Cultist (*pressing*) "Commander, no offense, but we really need that gate live."

Commander (*brisk*) "You need the gate live? Perfect—listen up. The Alpha, Beta, and Gamma trunk lines all drained voltage when the network went dark. I'm pushing sysop access to your ID now; you'll be my remote hands. Follow the paths, run diagnostics at each junction, and I'll handle the endpoints from here. Start with Alpha—the selector's in the locker. Good Luck." (*end comms sound*)

Cultist (*shocked*) "Well, that was..." (*short breath*) "I think he means this." (*points to locker*)

Triggers:

- Locker interaction enabled → acquire spectral selector.

- Step end → [Arc 3 Seq 2 | Network Diagnostics](#).

Notes:

- Sysop targets clerk ID only (Cultist as guest lacks one)—establishes player as primary operator.
- Tiny-station intimacy: Dock 3A uniqueness + bodega recognition = instant credibility.
- Switcheroo: Client entitlement → recruited labor. 25 seconds max.

Narrative Intent

Converts Cultist's cockpit dominance into Command Deck authority pipeline. Player evolves from "unenlightened clerk" to volun-told sysadmin via tiny-station intimacy ("bodega kid" recognition). SocialCapital flag creates forward leverage without derailing duo momentum. Reinforces theme: limited roles collapse under crisis—hauler entitlement, clerk procedures, Command isolation all yield to mutual utility.

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